POCKET COPY

LEGENDARY METAL SMITHS AND EARLY ENGLISH LITERATURE

J. L. BRADLEY

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

LEEDS UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF ENGLISH

AUGUST 1987

Abstract

Title: Legendary Metal Smiths and Early English Literature
Author: James Lyons Bradley Degree: D.Phil.
Submitted: August 1987

'Legendary Metal Smiths and Early English Literature' is a study of Christian religious influence on the portrayal of a powerful technology, metallurgy, in Old English verse. Starting from the controversy over the supernatural role of metal smiths in a metrical Anglo-Saxon charm, it proceeds to explore the impact of Christian thought on attitudes to the metal-worker in late antiquity and early medieval Europe. Significant and contentious characterizations of the smith in the Cain legend, the lives of the saints, and legends of Christ are discussed in turn. A chapter on heroic verse and another on wonder-working discuss, among other topics, the theory that Anglo-Saxon metal smiths were regarded with fear and superstition. The thesis put forth by the author in the course of this survey is that the critical approach which explains the concern of Anglo-Saxon literature with smithcraft as little more than an irrational primitivism finds little support in the religious writing of the period. What requires explanation is not the view that metallurgy was a matter of Christian concern, but the assumption that it was not. While this study is primarily concerned with mapping literary themes, it is not confined to the world of the imagination. Holding that themes, in order to be appreciated, must be perceived, where possible, in the light of the historical conditions in which they flourished, it devotes part of its space to a consideration of the latter. It examines the role of the monastic movement in disseminating an idealistic view of industry; describes the achievements of Anglo-Saxon metal-working; and attempts to appreciate some of the real hardships faced by workers in the Anglo-Saxon forge. The insights gained from this approach lead ultimately to a new reading of the metrical Anglo-Saxon charm with which the study began, a reading which, rather than peering backwards into the pagan past, looks forward to subsequent and more familiar examples of the forge in literature.

To Diane Margaret

and

In Memory

of Hubert Lyons

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ii

List of Plates v

List of Figures vi

Preface vii

CHAPTER I: Introduction 1

CHAPTER II: Smithcraft and the Race of Cain 21

CHAPTER III: Smithcraft and the People of God 42

CHAPTER IV: The Master of All Masters 87

CHAPTER V: Metal Smiths and Heroes 138

CHAPTER VI: Smithcraft and Wonder-Working 186

CHAPTER VII: The Power of Legendary Metal Smiths: Conclusion 213

APPENDIX: Old English *Smið* 227

List of Abbreviations 235

NOTES 237

BIBLIOGRAPHY 261

LIST OF PLATES

Bound in the thesis are xerographed duplicates: the original plates are located in a pocket inside the back cover of the University library copy.

Plate 1: Joseph the Blacksmith, Ingleton, North Yorkshire,

D. M. Bradley 130

Plate 2: Weland's Forge and the Adoration of the Magi, Franks

Casket, *British Museum* 163

Plate 3: Weland's Forge, Leeds Cross, *Leeds University* 166

Plate 4: Leeds Cross, *Leeds University* 167

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: St Eloi and the Devil 67

Figure 2: St Dunstan and the Devil 81

Figure 3: Christ in the smithy 88

Figure 4: Psalm 12 (11) 111

Figure 5: Halton Cross 168

Preface

The scope of this thesis is described in the abstract and the introduction (Chapter I), so that there is hardly any need of a formal preface. A word ought to be said, however, regarding the term 'legendary'. The sort of 'legend' I have in mind is not restricted to the hagiographical type, but is what the *Oxford English Dictionary* describes as 'a traditional story popularly regarded as historical'. I have adopted a neutral stand on questions regarding the historical accuracy of these legends. Such questions are no doubt interesting, but would be more profitably debated in another forum. It may also be explained that some discretion has been exercised in the selection and presentation of material. The well-known figure of Weland has been treated (in Chapter V), for example, with less detail than Tubalcain (Chapter II) or Jesus the Smith (Chapter IV and Appendix), two themes with which the modern reader is relatively unfamiliar. In addition, the treatment of Greek, Latin, Irish and folk-lore materials is intended merely to illustrate certain general topics pertaining to English literature; a fuller account was, under the circumstances, hardly possible.

The following books and articles listed in the Bibliography have been especially valuable: Elisabeth Frenzel, 'Stoff- und Motivgeschichte'; R. J. Forbes, *Metallurgy in Antiquity: A Notebook for Archaeologists and*

Technologists; Abbé Texier, *Dictionnaire d'orfèvrerie, de gravure et de ciselure chrétiennes*; Carl-Martin Edsman, *Ignis Divinis*; and J. H. G. Gratton and C. Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine.* I have profited too from Jane Acomb Leake's *The Geats of Beowulf: A Study in the Geographical Mythology of the Middle Ages*; Dr. Leake's study, which deals with legendary nations, has provided a useful pattern on which to build a study of legendary metal smiths, a pattern for which I am most grateful. I am also grateful to Professor T. A. Shippey and his colleagues in the School of English, Leeds University, for their encouragement, criticisms and good advice; and to the Association of Commonwealth Universities and several members of my own family in Canada, for giving generous financial support during the long years that were required to complete this brief dissertation. It is fitting and pleasant, finally, to add that Claire Winstone, a graduate of Hull University now living in Vancouver, has expertly set the text in computerised Century type using TEXTFORM, a remarkably versatile word processing programme written by the Computing Services department of the University of Alberta.

West Point Grey,
Vancouver, British Columbia,
January, 1987.

LEGENDARY METAL SMITHS

CHAPTER I: Introduction

How strangely gleams . . .
The red light of the forge!
(Longfellow, *The Spanish Student*, iii, 4)

For some time now controversy has been growing over the identity of seven metal smiths in a celebrated Old English charm. Entitled *Wið Færstice*, the charm purports to treat a *færstice* (a sudden pain or stitch perhaps caused by lumbago or rheumatism), an ailment which it attributes to *esa gescot* (the shot of gods), *ylfa gescot* (the shot of elves), or *hægtessan gescot* (the shot of a witch). *Wið Færstice* (hereinafter abbreviated to *WF*) then describes the forging of a knife by a smith and the manufacture of spears by six smiths, but the significance of this activity has proved persistently difficult for modern scholarship to explain. Initially, it is true, attention was diverted to purely textual matters, for the charm's twenty-nine lines show some signs of corruption. They are known from only one source, the assorted collection of Old English and Latin charms, prayers and medicinal recipes which is entitled *Lacnunga* and preserved in an early eleventh century Anglo-Saxon manuscript, British Museum Harley 585.[1] One line of *WF* is nearly illegible in the MS, while others are grammatically peculiar. In addition, *WF* stylistically resembles Old English alliterative verse, but frequently departs from the expected pattern. Initially, *WF* posed a challenge to editors. First printed in 1841

by Thomas Wright, *WF* has been often re-edited and several emendations have been proposed and debated. Textual controversy has, however, abated since a number of modern editions were published in the 1940's and 1950's.[2] By contrast, literary analysis of *WF* is a more recent phenomenon, but since 1900 scholarship has notably turned to problems of interpretation and increasingly today attention is focused on the charm's uncanny allusion to smiths, now regarded as a major crux.

These unidentified metal-workers are mysteriously poised between hostile supernatural forces and a reassuring exorcismal formula. Their function in the charm is certainly not apparent at first sight, although the context is vivid enough:

Wið færstice feferfuige and seo reade netele, ðe þurh ærn inwyxð, and wegbrade; wyll in buteran.

Hlude wæran hy, la, hlude, ða hy ofer þone hlæw ridan,
wæran anmode, ða hy ofer land ridan.
5 Scyld ðu ðe nu, þu ðysne nið genesan mote.
Ut, lytel spere, gif her inne sie!
Stod under linde, under leohtum scylde,
þær ða mihtigan wif hyra mægen beræddon
and hy gyllende garas sændan;
10 ic him oðerne eft wille sændan,
fleogende flane, forane togeanes.
Ut, lytel spere, gif hit her inne sy!
Sæt smið, sloh seax lytel,
* * * iserna, wundrum swiðe.
15 Ut, lytel spere, gif her inne sy!
Syx smiðas sætan, wælspera worhtan.
Ut, spere, næs in, spere!
Gif her inne sy isernes dæl,
hægtessan geweorc, hit sceal gemyltan.
20 Gif ðu wære on fell scoten oððe wære on flæsc scoten
oððe wære on blod scoten

oððe wære on lið scoten, næfre ne sy ðin lif atæsed;
gif hit wære esa gescot oððe hit wære ylfa gescot
oððe hit wære hægtessan gescot, nu ic wille ðin helpen.
25 Þis ðe to bote esa gescotes, ðis ðe to bote ylfa gescotes,
ðis ðe to bote hægtessan gescotes; ic ðin wille helpan.
Fleoh þær * * * on fyrgenheafde.
Hal westu, helpe ðin drihten!
Nim þonne þæt seax, ado on wætan.[3]

(Against a sudden stitch, feverfew and the red nettle
that grows into the house and waybroad: boil in butter.
Loud were they, lo, loud, when they rode over the mound,
Were resolute (of one fierce mind) when they rode over the ground.
5 Shield yourself now, that you may escape this evil.
Out, little spear, if you be in here!
(He, or I) stood under linden-wood, under a light shield,
Where the mighty women talked up their strength
And sent their screaming spears.
10 I want to send them back another,
A flying arrow, from the forefront, against them.
Out, little spear, if it be in here!
A smith sat, struck a little knife,
* * * of irons, exceptionally strong.
15 Out, little spear, if you be in here!
Six smiths sat, worked war-spears (slaughter spears).
Out, spear, not in spear!
If a piece of iron be here within,
Work of witch, it must melt away (*or* heat must melt it).
20 If you were shot in the skin, or were shot in the flesh,
Or were shot in the blood,
Or were shot in the body, never may your life be injured.
If it were the shot of gods, or it were the shot of elves,
Or it were the shot of witch, now I will be your help.
25 This be thy remedy for the shot of gods, this thy
remedy for the shot of elves,
This thy remedy for the shot of witch; I will be your help.
Fly away there * * * to the mountaintop!
Be well! God be your help!
Take then the knife, plunge it in the liquid.)[4]

Who are the smiths so forcefully presented in the middle of the charm (lines 13-14 and 16)? This is a difficult question to answer and

the difficulty is one of association, not of terminology. Technically these artisans, denoted by Old English *smið* (plural *smiðas*), are making a knife and battle-spears. As Anglo-Saxon knives and spears were made of metal—usually iron—there has never been any hesitation in translating *smið* in this context simply as 'smith', its Modern English descendant, even though the modern form ('smith'), according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, denotes metal-workers exclusively while the Old English form ('*smið*') is said by the Bosworth-Toller *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* to mean a carpenter as well as a metal-worker. But this semantic difficulty need not detain us at present: in *WF* we are dealing not with carpenters, but with metal smiths.[5] Nowhere else in Old English literature, however, are smiths portrayed, as they are here, in juxtaposition with an otherworldly host of riders, fearsome women armed with spears and incantations, and the shot of witch, elves and gods. The charm itself presents no obvious clues about the nature of the smiths' relationship to the malevolent power which has induced, or the beneficent source which will heal, the 'sudden stitch' which supernatural evil has caused with little spears or 'shot' (*gescot*) of iron. Nor are we told why there are, in all, seven smiths and why one of them is making a knife (line 13) while the rest are forging battle-spears (line 16). To answer such questions one obviously needs to know more about the religious and literary associations of the metal smith in Anglo-Saxon England. The charm's anonymous author was undoubtedly alluding to a well-known belief or legend, but today it is difficult to find

his source in the diminished remains of Anglo-Saxon lore.

Such a legend or belief would not be without interest, nor should we be surprised to learn that much scholarly effort and ingenuity have been expended in trying to solve the identity of these smiths and explain their role in the charm. From the outset, an interesting aspect of the problem was its potential to shed light on the status of metallurgy in early medieval thought; at the same time it was believed that the primitive religious background of northern Europe would provide some insights. The early nineteenth century researches of Jacob Grimm into pre-Christian Germanic beliefs had drawn attention to the supernatural associations of metal smiths in continental traditions as well as to the interesting fact that smiths are more noticeable in saga, epic and folk-tale than they are, it seems, in more modern genres of literature.[6] To many this was to suggest a definite link between paganism and smithcraft in early medieval Europe. At the same time, Grimm had commented on *WF* itself, noting that the concept of elf-shot was wide-spread in folk belief and suggesting that it might be linked with paganism.[7] Henceforth it thus seemed natural to perceive *WF* primarily as a relic of Iron Age magic in which was revealed a breath-taking glimpse of primitive Germanic superstitions linking the metal smith with picturesque, but irrational, beliefs of undoubted mystical appeal.

The nature of such beliefs turned out to be rather hard to establish, however. The pagan Anglo-Saxon smith is shrouded in obscurity.

To be sure, the smiths of the Dark Ages were highly accomplished craftsmen, skilled in working iron, gold and other metals. Little is known about them, however, except what may be gleaned from those of their products which have come to light in archaeological excavations. The treasure found at Sutton Hoo, for example, was made by an unknown goldsmith considered by experts to be one of the greatest masters of his art ever to have lived.[8] Other finds have shown that contemporary blacksmiths were skilled in the manufacture of iron weapons.[9] Yet archaeologists have been able to tell us little more. Writing in 1915, the art historian Baldwin Brown was able to state that most of the metal objects (many of fine workmanship) discovered in Anglo-Saxon pre-Christian graves were of native origin, but he had to concede that

> further questions arise as to where, by whom, and under what conditions the native manufacture was carried on. It is disappointing to state that there is practically no evidence, and very little that even amounts to a hint upon this interesting and important subject. Conjecture may be aided to some small extent by analogues drawn from other countries or periods, but of direct information as to the processes and conditions of Anglo-Saxon craftsmanship there is almost total dearth.[10]

It is true that since Brown's era archaeology has in fact shed new light on the material processes involved in Anglo-Saxon smithcraft, but nothing has come to light regarding magical beliefs related to metallurgy, if such existed, at that time.[11] Given this dearth of background information and the puzzling vagueness of *WF* itself about the relationship between

smithcraft and the supernatural in Anglo-Saxon England, it is hardly surprising that scholars have come up with conflicting explanations of the smiths of *WF* and their identities.

As appropriate superstitions were not to be found in native Anglo-Saxon sources, scholars had to look elsewhere. Conveniently, the Finno-Scandinavian world is replete with exotic traditions involving smithcraft, magic and the supernatural. Smiths are invoked in Finnish charms, while in Old Norse texts there is much detailed information about legendary and mythological smiths such as the elves associated with the wizard-smith *Völundr*, or *Wielant*, who as *Weland* is mentioned briefly in a number of Old English texts and who is often referred to as 'Wayland' in current English orthography. As elves are also mentioned in Old English texts (albeit never in connection with Weland or smithcraft), scholars were quick to associate the smiths of *WF* with elf-smiths and the figure of Weland, whom they portrayed as a wizard on the Scandinavian model. Although this association has remained rather vague, it has provided the framework for a perennial debate concerning the smiths' role in the healing process intended by the charm. It is assumed that the smiths are in some sense magical, but whether they are good or bad magic is unsettled.

The view that the smiths are good magic stems from the anthropological work of Felix Grendon. Grendon compared Anglo-Saxon charms with those of Finland, Germany and many other nations. He

provided what became the recognised, 'orthodox' interpretation of *WF* and a succinct explanation of its structure:

> The spell is intended to cure a sudden twinge or stitch, possibly rheumatism, supposedly due (see lines 3, 8, 19, 23 and 24) to shots sent by witches, elves and other spirits flying through the air. The charm falls naturally into five divisions: i (lines 1-2), A recipe for a magic herbal concoction; ii (lines 3-5), The epic introduction; iii (lines 6-17), The attack of the flying demons and the exorcist's three retaliatory measures,—flying dart, knife forged by the smith, and spears wrought by six smiths; iv (lines 18-28), The principal incantation; v (line 29), A final direction to the exorcist.

Grendon identified the smiths with beneficial 'retaliatory measures': in support of this interpretation he cited a Finnish charm in which 'spears and arrows have been hurled by a malignant sorcerer, while the healing exorcist threatens to attack the evil one with pincers made by the great smith Ilmarinen'.[12] Ilmarinen is the smith-god of Finnish folk-lore. By analogy Grendon suggested that the smith in line 13 of *WF* was 'Wayland possibly'. Grendon also hinted that the other smiths might be elves, but his pioneering analysis provided no further explanations for these tentative conclusions. Yet although Grendon could not identify the smiths with any certainty, his view that the smiths were beneficent quickly won acceptance. Those who have adopted it include Wilhelm Horn, C. W. Kennedy, Godfrid Storms, Howell Chickering and Gert Sandmann.[13]

The opposing view that the smiths are bad magic stems from an article published in 1911 by A. R. Skemp only two years after Grendon's. Skemp approached the charm as a self-contained formal unit, yet although

his analysis subjected *WF* to close reading, it depended nonetheless on assumptions based on Scandinavian sources. Thus he identified the smiths making spears in line 16 with elves (as Grendon had tentatively done also), but he argued that these were malevolent and linked with the *ylfa gescot* of lines 23 and 25. In a parallel manner the riders and chanting women of the first part of the charm were to be identified, respectively, with the gods and witches of the incantation. The practical advantages of this interpretative strategy were twofold. In the first place, the 'magic' of the charm could be explained as its power to overcome evil by naming it. The evil was seen to be introduced vaguely in the first part of the charm as riders, women and smiths and to be named explicitly in the latter part of the charm as gods, witches and elves. A second advantage of this interpretation was that it divined in the structure of *WF* a tight, organic unity which would increase its value according to the canons of literary taste. The major disadvantage of Skemp's approach was, however, egregious: he could not adequately account for the single smith of line 13. This smith destroyed the neat, tripartite symmetry essential to Skemp's interpretation, for the charm distinguishes this smith from the rest, though no parallel distinction is made for the elves and their shot. Furthermore, the knife which this smith is making is apparently to be identified with the knife which the physician uses in line 29. Doesn't this then suggest that the knife and its smith in line 13 are beneficial? Skemp had to concede that this was indeed most probable. Rather than abandon his

case, however, he asserted that the text was corrupt and that line 13 ought to be transposed with line 16, 'so as to give first the danger, then the remedy'.[14] Despite its difficulties, Skemp's view has been most influential. Its adherents include Grattan and Singer, Wilfrid Bonser, C. L. Wrenn, Minna Doskow, and Stanley Hauer.[15] It is interesting that among Skemp's disciples many either implicitly or explicitly deviate from Skemp's own position by assuming that the smith of line 13 is bad magic also. This has led to the view, expressed in more general works of medieval history, that there was a universal belief among the early Germanic tribes that smiths were the cause of disease.[16]

It is not easy to do justice here to the subtlety and ingenuity displayed by both sides in the continuing debate over the smiths of *WF*. The most revealing summary to date, however, is that given from the Grendonite camp by Howell Chickering. Chickering sharply criticizes Skemp's interpretation: remarking that the equation of the triplets 'riders/women/smiths' and 'gods/witches/elves' is 'quite forced', he rightly judges that Skemp's proposed alteration of the text is too free. On the other hand, Chickering himself concedes that the view that the smiths are good magic has not brought us any closer to identifying the smiths, though he pleads, rather lamely, that 'while no Germanic legend is in plain sight here, it may be to simply say "smith" in a charm was to invoke Weland somehow'.[17] What we may conclude from Chickering's candid summation is that neither camp has been able to identify the

smiths to everyone's satisfaction. Indeed, F. P. Magoun once expressed profound dissatisfaction with the way in which the smiths of *WF* were being treated: Magoun warned that 'one must be very wary in projecting on to the Anglo-Saxon scene Old-Scandinavian, specifically Icelandic concepts and procedures . . . of which many are perhaps quite late and specifically Scandinavian'.[18] In spite of this cogent advice, no one has been prepared to undertake a detailed study of the role played by smithcraft in specifically Anglo-Saxon texts.

Chickering's defence of the Grendonite position has recently received two replies from scholars supporting the Skempist line, Minna Doskow and Stanley Hauer. Their interest in the smiths demonstrates that the problem of identification is far from being successfully solved. This is confirmed by Hauer, the most recent to write on this matter, who states that 'the presentation of the seven smiths, lines 13-17, initiates the central portion of the lyric and remains a major crux that no critic of the poem has been able to elucidate completely'.[19] Yet as recent attempts to solve this crux, including Hauer's, have done little but recapitulate with more subtlety the arguments of Grendon and Skemp, it is difficult to see how the old approaches can yield new answers. Thus if one is to undertake another investigation into the possible sources for these smiths, it is surely time for a fresh approach. There is a deep-seated need for more convincing analogues here, ones which link smithcraft with the supernatural on the one hand, medicine on the other and in addition have clear links

with Anglo-Saxon England. A fresh approach is needed to clarify the relationship between the single smith of line 13 and the six smiths of line 16 and to throw light on the role of these smiths in the charm. Finally, it would be helpful if a new approach could increase our understanding and appreciation of *WF* as a poem in the context of other Old English poems. It is the aim of the present study to present new ideas which will fulfill these requirements.

Research into the problem of the smiths has been severely hampered by the assumption that Anglo-Saxons associated metal smiths primarily with pagan legends and magical powers. So deeply rooted is this approach that we tend automatically to resort to foreign legends of questionable relevance to the Anglo-Saxon scene and never think to ask whether this is really an appropriate way to treat Old English material. This inflexible esteem for what appears to be wild and primitive in fact presents a distorted picture of what Anglo-Saxons were capable of perceiving in the metal smiths' forge. In the quest for the smiths of *WF*, *Beowulf* is the only native text which has been called as witness and the conclusions which have sometimes been drawn from this poem's allusions to legendary smiths will not, I believe, stand up under serious cross-examination. Otherwise, not a single Anglo-Saxon text has ever been cited which might show that Anglo-Saxons believed in elf- or wizard-smiths. Such total lack of support from native sources for the current theories about the role of legendary smiths in *WF* and Anglo-Saxon England

emphasizes the need for a fresh approach to this subject.

Since the association between smiths and pagan magic is merely an assumption, one may discard it in order to approach the matter from the opposite tack: namely, that the smiths are inspirational, an element of an essentially heroic outlook on disease and suffering to be found in *WF*. And we might assume further that pious influences have a bearing on the matter: they have, in fact, proved relevant to the understanding of other charms and recently critics like Doskow and Hauer have begun to look upon *WF* as the work of a Christian author.

Initially, scholars and critics valued *WF* more as an anthropological document than as a work of art. Their *Zeitgeist* was inspired by romanticism and their quest was to search for Anglo-Saxon paganism.[20] They hoped to find recollections of primitive, Germanic rituals and they readily imagined that in *WF* they were dealing with the work of a *bona fide* pagan 'medicine man'. The nineteenth century literary historian Stopford Brooke, for example, reverently attributed *WF* to the antiquarian interests of the poet Cynewulf out on a Wordsworthian ramble in a rural Anglo-Saxon neighbourhood:

> . . . Cynewulf walked on, nor was he fated to leave the place till he had heard something more heathen still. For now a little way in the wood he came to a hill whence the trees had been cleared, and he saw a man crouching doubled up on the ground in sudden pain of a stitch caused by witchcraft; and another, who stood by, held a shining linden shield over him as if to guard him from weapons shot at him, and was anointing him with a salve of fever-few and the red nettle, which had grown through a fence, and waybroad (*plantago*), which it was his habit, for he

> was a witch-doctor, to keep by him, having first boiled it in butter, that he might heal those whom the fierce elves shot with their spears. So Cynewulf drew near to listen, hiding in the fringe of the wood, and he heard the man singing this pagan song [i.e. *WF*]. . . .[21]

It is noteworthy that Brooke's approach delights in those wild and picturesque associations which could prove so exhilarating to nineteenth century minds. Indeed, a long time was to pass before antiquarian curiosity relaxed its grip on modern sensibilities enough to permit a more critical appreciation of this charm. It was not until 1948 that Kemp Malone raised its literary status appreciably by praising it as 'a little masterpiece of its kind'.[22] A further twenty years were to pass before this seminal insight bore fruit in the form of a long article by Howell Chickering devoted to the charm's rhetorical technique.[23] Yet although critical appreciation seems to have firmly established itself with the studies of Doskow and Hauer, it has not been able to deal adequately, it seems, with the problem of the smiths. The snag is that our understanding of legendary metal smiths still derives from the uncritical romanticism of the nineteenth century. The smiths of *WF* are still scrutinised for evidence of supposed Anglo-Saxon pagan beliefs rather than in the light of Anglo-Saxon literary tradition. What we need to do is to extend the methods of literary criticism to the legendary metal smiths of Anglo-Saxon England.

The thesis presented here is that a solution to the problem of the smiths in *WF* is to be sought, not in the 'unknowable unknown' of primitive Germanic superstition, but in the climate of opinion surrounding

the legendary metal smiths found in Anglo-Saxon writings. Here we shall encounter intellectual and spiritual traditions which have their roots in late classical Mediterranean civilisation and which, after they reached Anglo-Saxon England in the 7th century, supplemented the native esteem for the metal smith's art. We shall look for clues to the identity of the smiths of *WF* in the writings of scholars and monks and in the popular customs and pious traditions of medieval religion, as well as in the techniques and conventions of Old English verse. We shall discover and examine a relationship between the forge and the supernatural realm which is more or less independent of pagan magic, but closely linked to the dogma, ethics and spirituality of the early medieval Church. And we shall find that in Old English verse the presentation of the smith is typically idealised and that legendary smiths are portrayed in an heroic and inspirational light.

Medieval literature presents us with a colourful gallery of legendary metal smiths. In the next chapter we shall commence a survey of these varied and distinctive characters by starting at the beginning with the legend of the first smith, Tubalcain. Tubalcain was related to the evil race of Cain and therefore it is pertinent to investigate whether his legend adversely affected attitudes to the forge in the Middle Ages. Subsequently, in Chapter III, we shall look at some of the legendary smiths who emerge in the early medieval period. The literature devoted to these figures sheds additional light on attitudes to the metal smith at this time. Chapter IV

introduces us to legendary accounts of Christ as a metal smith; these have, in the past, been equated with Germanic paganism, but we shall provide interesting and little known evidence that the legend of Christ the Smith is an expression of Christian beliefs and of some significance for Anglo-Saxon studies. In Chapter VI we re-examine the 'magic' of *WF* in the light of the Christian perspective on disease and healing prevalent in Anglo-Saxon charms; in particular we shall focus on the role which a legend of wonder-working in the forge might play in the charm. Chapter V, meanwhile, examines the way the smith is treated in Old English verse and deals with the legendary gold- and weapon-smith Weland. In our seventh and concluding chapter we shall attempt to apply the results of our research by offering a new and somewhat more penetrating reading of *WF*. Finally, an Appendix has been necessary in order to examine and re-assess the meanings which have been assigned to Old English *smið* by the standard dictionaries: material brought forward in Chapter IV makes such a reassessment most necessary.

I have attempted to gather enough material to show that there was a favourable attitude to smithcraft in Anglo-Saxon England, an outlook that was not based on Iron Age magic, but which associated the metal smith with heroic and religious ideals and a considerable literature of the forge, now lost or neglected. Of course I have not been able to gather all the legends dealing with smiths, but I believe that those which I have found are significant and prove my case. As this material is not well known, I

have on occasion found it necessary to quote at length in order to substantiate my argument; nevertheless, I have tried to keep quotation to an absolute minimum, where possible. For the convenience of the reader Greek and Latin passages are cited in published English translations, but when a published translation of a Latin text was not available I have quoted the original and given a literal translation of my own. I have also thought it necessary to make use of material from times before and after the Anglo-Saxon era as such material deepens our understanding of the issues involved. This is especially evident in the case of Christ's associations with the forge, where, in order to appreciate their significance for Anglo-Saxon studies it is necessary to trace their origins and subsequent history.

Whereas previous explanations of the role of smithcraft in *WF* drew upon early nineteenth century German scholarship and its dominant interest in Germanic customs and have their basis in the assumptions of that scholarship, my own attempt to solve the problem of the smiths has been stimulated by the views of more recent specialists who have approached the study of Anglo-Saxon civilisation with an ever-increasing awareness of, and sensitivity to, the Christian background. This approach has influenced the study both of Old English poetry and the Anglo-Saxon charm, with the result that it is becoming more difficult to assert that *WF* is not a Christian poem. Although it refers to the *ese*, pagan gods comparable to the Icelandic *Æsir*, these are now thought to proclaim rather than

disqualify a Christian perspective. For, as Stanley Hauer points out,

> it is altogether fitting that the *æsir* should be employed by a Christian poet as disease-bringing evil spirits, for many of the Germanic gods and mythological beings were transformed by zealous Christian missionaries into demons, devils and other workers of mischief.[24]

In addition, those who specialize in the history of Anglo-Saxon medicine now emphasize the importance of the Christian background also, for the healing and care of the sick were important functions of the medieval Church.[25] Even though we know nothing of *WF*'s author or his education, it is a fair assumption that he would have known of Christian traditions of the forge in the vernacular and it is not impossible that this same person read Latin as well.

An important aspect of comparative study concerns the availability of sources. How widely were Christian traditions relating to the forge disseminated in Anglo-Saxon England? This is a question which I have not been able to attempt in any detail, as it would involve highly specialised study, but which is, nonetheless, relevant. Fortunately, there is the work of J. D. A. Ogilvy to fall back on; several of the sources we shall deal with are listed in his monograph, *Books Known to the English, 597-1066*, which, although it has been criticised for 'omissions . . . and some deficiencies in method',[26] has become a basic tool of Anglo-Saxon studies. Of somewhat older date, but especially useful in our case, is M. L. W. Laistner's *A Hand-List of Bede Manuscripts*, which allows us to

glimpse the influence of Bede in the dissemination of a number of our themes. It is now well established that there were Anglo-Saxon libraries containing books on history, general science, cosmography, medicine, saints' lives, patristic works, grammar and Christian as well as some pagan classical poetry. J. E. Cross has pointed out that many among the 'generations of scholars who laid foundations for our present study of vernacular Old English literature . . . assumed and often confirmed the concept of "the literate Anglo-Saxon", realising that such phrases as "books tell us", "as it says in books", which are sprinkled about the poetry and prose, were not meaningless formulas'.[27]

While it is true that some of the works I refer to were probably never known in Anglo-Saxon England, I have included them in order to give more background to the development of Christian legends of the forge. (This would apply particularly to the Greek texts cited in Chapter II and perhaps to some of the continental and Irish legends in Chapter III.) The availability of key sources—for example the *Vitae Patrum* and certain writings of Josephus, Ambrose, Augustine, Cyprian and Isidore—is, however, well established. Furthermore, much of my argument depends on native Anglo-Saxon writing, principally certain works of Bede which are known to have been well disseminated and widely read.

Bede's knowledge of Christian Latin authors is well-known, though nonetheless astonishing. As Bede lived within a century of the conversion of England his extensive reading is a tribute to the English love of books

and respect for Mediterranean culture. Through the great eighth century library at York and York's famous scholar, Alcuin, much of this learning was transmitted to the centres of the Carolingian Empire.

If the eighth century was a golden age of English learning, the ninth, characterised by the Viking raids and invasions, was leaden with ignorance. But although Latin almost ceased to be studied, a programme of restoring monasteries and reviving Christian culture generally was instigated by Alfred the Great. Under the stimulus of contacts with the Continent, learning recovered in the tenth century. This was an age in which old monasteries were rebuilt and new ones founded, old books recopied and new ones, like the homilies of Aelfric, written. It was an age characterised by an attempt to spread among those who knew little or no Latin the wisdom acquired in previous centuries. English translations of the Bible were undertaken, English versions of saints' lives made more readily available, and the learning of Latin itself was made more pleasurable. In this ferment of intellectual effort the perception of smithcraft found, for example, in the Latin Fathers and Bede undoubtedly made headway. Thus, whether *WF* was composed in the first seed-time of English Christianity, or in subsequent centuries, it is very probable that it was subject to the influence of Christian traditions of the forge.

CHAPTER II: Smithcraft and the Race of Cain

> Wonder with mee
> Why plowing, building, ruling and the rest,
> Or most of those arts, whence our lives are blest,
> By cursed *Cains* race invented be.
> (Donne, *The Progresse of the Soule*, Stanza lii)

Doubts about the contribution of the practical arts to human welfare have frequently turned on interpretations of legendary accounts of how these arts began. In Judaeo-Christian tradition the arts of animal husbandry, music and smithcraft were linked with 'cursed Cain's race' in three terse verses of the Book of Genesis (verses 20-22 of Chapter iv). The inventor of metal-working was Tubalcain (verse 22) and in Jewish and Christian writing Tubalcain and his forge have often been used to prop up an unfavourable attitude to smithcraft; for smithcraft, which has contributed so much to human violence and greed, is among the most controversial of all the arts. Influential Jewish authorities portrayed Tubalcain as a rapacious warlord steeped in the crimes of the race of Cain. Apocryphal tradition, moreover, attributed to fallen angels at war with God the growth of metallurgy among men. These writings were not unknown in Anglo-Saxon England after the Conversion to Christianity in the early seventh century and it is important to ask whether they adversely affected native attitudes to the smith. In early medieval commentaries on Tubalcain and the origins of smithcraft we have an untapped source of information about

attitudes to the forge for the period in which *WF* was probably composed. A first insight, then, into the problem of the smiths in *WF* should be discernible if we survey the treatment of Tubalcain in the works of ancient authorities. Accordingly, we shall turn to the works of Origen, Claudius Marius Victor, Augustine, Cyprian, Isidore and Bede, as well as to the Book of Enoch and the writings of Philo Judaeus and Josephus, to find out if the legend of Tubalcain would of necessity have encouraged unfavourable attitudes to the forge in Anglo-Saxon England.

It is of some significance for medieval interpretations of Tubalcain that Genesis does not explicitly condemn metal-working and its originator. Telegraphically brief, the account of Tubalcain and the first forge is at once vague and suggestive: 'Zillah bore Tubalcain; he was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubalcain was Naamah' (iv, 22). At first sight, this account of the first smith is devoid of spiritual or moral implications. We are told nothing of Tubalcain's character, or the reasons for his inventiveness, or its results. The absence of any explicit condemnation of Tubalcain could be interpreted favourably as a sign of the forge's beneficial contributions to civilisation. We shall see that the positive aspects of smithcraft were, in fact, not overlooked by Christian commentators. As their Jewish predecessors had, however, written most unfavourably of Tubalcain, Christian writers who felt positively about smithcraft were faced with somewhat of a challenge if they attempted to gloss the legend of the first smith.

In Jewish tradition, the context of the Tubalcain legend in the Book of Genesis was most significant. Tubalcain was perceived as a small theme suspended between two very large ones, those of Cain and the Deluge. Cain was the first murderer and the first to persecute those faithful to God. Tubalcain was among the last generation of Cain's descendants, for God punished them with the Deluge in which they all perished (Genesis iv-vii). Tubalcain was thus clearly tainted by association with these two terrible themes. The larger patterns of Genesis suggested that metallurgy was the invention of an impious race and that smithcraft was inherently evil. Three Jewish works of classical antiquity were influential in giving expression to such an unfavourable view of the forge: The Book of Enoch, Philo's *The Posterity and Exile of Cain* and Josephus's *Antiquities of the Jews*.

The Book of Enoch elaborates on the evil associations of the forge in Genesis and emphasizes the malignant role which smithcraft must have played in antediluvian decadence. Enoch is a composite work, both prophetic and apocalyptic in nature, composed in Palestine in the second century B.C.[1] Although it was denied canonical status by the Church, St Augustine refers to it in *The City of God* and medieval Christians apparently knew of it also.[2] It purports to be the work of the Enoch who was seventh in the line of descent from Adam through Seth (see Genesis v. 18) and it gives a more colourful account of events preceding the Deluge than is found in Genesis.

In its account of the origins of metallurgy the Book of Enoch tells of fallen angels who mated with human women to produce a race of giants. The giants were an evil, warlike race: they 'consumed all the acquisitions of men' and then 'turned against them and devoured mankind'.[3] They 'began to sin against birds, and beasts, and reptiles, and fish, and to devour one another's flesh, and drink the blood' (vii, 5). Against this background a fallen angel called Azazel promoted the arts of the smith and

> taught men to make swords, and knives, and shields, and breastplates, and made known to them the metals (of the earth) and the art of working them, and bracelets and ornaments, and the use of antimony, and the beautifying of the eyelids, and all kinds of costly stones, and all colouring tinctures.
>
> (viii, 1)

The results were catastrophic. 'There arose much godlessness, and they committed fornication, and they were led astray, and became corrupt in all their ways' (viii, 2). Decadence presents itself as an immediate consequence of the introduction of smithcraft into human affairs. While no mention is made of Tubalcain (an indication, perhaps, of insufficient evidence against him), we are given a more explicitly unfavourable picture in Enoch of the origins of smithcraft than in the Genesis account of Cain and the Deluge.

Unfavourable accounts of the origins of smithcraft are found also in the writings of Philo Judaeus and Josephus. Philo, a Hellenized Jew of

Alexandria, lived in the first half of the first century A.D. and wrote extensive allegorical commentaries on the books of the Old Testament. Among these, *The Posterity and Exile of Cain* is relevant for its explanation of the Tubalcain legend. Philo sees in smithcraft a symbol of evil and an appropriate emblem of Cain, Tubalcain and all men who, like them, lead profane, sensuous lives:

> for the soul that is vehemently concerned about bodily pleasures or the materials of outward things, is being ever hammered on an anvil, beaten out by the blows of his desires with their long sweep and reach.[4]

Moreover the evil in smithcraft is not only symbolic, but also real. Smithcraft is appropriately associated with the ungodly because 'all these people are warmakers, and that is why they are said to be workers in iron and bronze, and these are the instruments with which war is waged' (ii, 395). Philo's perception of the Tubalcain legend is clearly unfavourable. The forge is not only associated with the evil of war, but also becomes a metaphor of the godless soul; it is, indeed, emblematic of an insidious bond between the first murderer and the first smith.

The evil similarities between Cain and Tubalcain are further elaborated by Josephus (37 A.D.- c. 100). His Jewish history, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, written in Greek, but widely read in Latin translation in the medieval West, adds to the Genesis account of Tubalcain a number of unsavoury details. These stem from the blood relationship

between Cain and the first smith. Josephus indicates that Cain's depravity was shared by all his descendants, even Tubalcain. The first smith is thus portrayed as furthering the work of his ancestor. Josephus says that Cain

> indulged in every bodily pleasure, even if it entailed outraging his companions; he increased his substance with wealth amassed by rapine and violence; he incited to luxury and pillage all whom he met, and became their instructor in wicked practices.

These practices instituted by Cain were further encouraged by the first smith, who

> surpassing all men in strength, distinguished himself in the art of war, procuring also thereby the means for satisfying the pleasures of the body, and first invented the forging of metal.

In addition to violence and gross sensuality, Josephus indicates that artfulness was also one of the characteristic foibles of Cain's descendants. The first smith invented a new technology, but Cain had anticipated this with numerous innovations, for he

> put an end to that simplicity in which men lived before by the invention of weights and measures: the guileless and generous existence which they had enjoyed in ignorance of these things he converted into a life of craftiness. He was the first to fix boundaries of land and to build a city, fortifying it with walls and constraining his clan to congregate in one place. [5]

There is a clear indication here that Josephus placed metal-working within the tradition of nefarious inventions instigated by Cain, for it too was a product of that cunning craftiness by which human society was perverted. As in Philo, the forge is closely linked with man's corruption and sinfulness.

The unfavourable picture of the forge presented in these Jewish writings was not without influence among later Christian writers and it doubtless possessed a certain authority. Origen, for example, writing at Alexandria in the first half of the third century, refers to the smith as 'a son of Cain'.[6] Yet if one looks at the treatment of the Tubalcain legend in Christian writers of the fourth century and later, one sees a remarkable transformation in the attitude to the forge taking place. We may illustrate this with reference to several works, including those of Claudius Marius Victor, Augustine, Cyprian, Isidore and Bede. In general, it may be said that these writers show a tendency to put a more favourable gloss on the significance of man's invention of metal-working.

This tendency is remarkably expressed in the *Alethia* of Claudius Marius Victor, a Christian poet of the fourth century. The *Alethia* is a metrical paraphrase of Genesis from the Creation to the destruction of Sodom. It is surely significant that Victor devotes considerable space to the invention of metallurgy, but avoids, however, any reference whatsoever to the Tubalcain legend. Victor considers the forge to be an unmitigated blessing and he dissociates the invention of metallurgy from the evil race

of Cain by ascribing it to Adam and Eve. According to Victor, God gave the knowledge of metal-working to Adam and Eve as a sacred gift (*munum sacrum*) to console them after they had been expelled from Paradise. Victor in fact goes into considerable detail in describing how this came about. He says that shortly after they were expelled from Eden, Adam and Eve accidentally set ablaze the forest around them. The heat of the blaze caused the metals in the earth to erupt before the couple's astonished eyes; whereupon they quickly learned to pound the metals into various shapes. This account of the origins of metal-working owes much to the *De rerum natura* of Lucretius (*c.* 95 - *c.* 55 B.C.) which similarly attributes the discovery of metals to a pre-historic forest fire. Yet Victor differs in one important detail from Lucretius's account. Lucretius, who has been described as 'a missionary, whose purpose is to deliver men's minds from the intervention of divine powers in the events and affairs of the world', attributes the origins of metal-working entirely to human ingenuity.[7] Victor, on the other hand, tells us that God was the real source of metallurgical knowledge, for Adam and Eve

> recognize that it is the help of God, and they rejoice that, though no particular act of virtue had followed upon their transgression [i.e. in disobeying God in Paradise], yet their first prayer had been heard; and so to the Father most high they ascribe the gift, the fire itself with all its blessings and the understanding by which He revealed to them the fire's usefulness.[8]

This passage, which indicates a favourable attitude to the forge entirely at

odds with Jewish authority, helps to explain why Victor has evaded the legend of Tubalcain. Victor was a poet who claimed the right 'to be allowed to weave the poet's fiction into the story of faith' (*Alethia*, Book II, lines 4-5, p. 332): doubtless he felt that the Tubalcain legend with its unfavourable associations with Cain in Jewish tradition was inappropriate to his own more favourable Christian view of the forge.

Victor was charged by posterity with being too fond of secular literature and it is thought that his work had little subsequent influence.[9] Nonetheless his approach to the invention of metal-working in Genesis has parallels in later Christian sources. Indeed, the attribution of smithcraft to Adam and Eve is not confined to Victor's *Alethia.* Adam and Eve are depicted as smiths in Byzantine carving: in one example, illustrated by Erwin Panofsky in *Studies in Iconology* and dated *c.* 1000, Adam hammers at an anvil while Eve works the bellows. Unfortunately, Panofsky is unaware of the possible source of this iconography in Victor's poem; it is a matter which might well be further investigated.[10] Another curious parallel to Victor's account of the invention of metallurgy occurs in the work of the twelfth century exegete Peter Comestor. Peter does not attribute the invention to Adam and Eve, but to Tubalcain; he does, however, like Victor, make use of the Lucretian theory of the forest fire causing the metals to erupt from the earth.[11] It would be interesting someday to know if Peter was influenced directly by Lucretius or whether he was following a tradition derived from Victor.

Another and much more subtle parallel to Victor's approach to the invention of metallurgy is to be found in Augustine's highly influential work, *The City of God*. Written shortly after Alaric's sack of Rome in 410, this work contrasts the eternity of the Christian Church with the impermanence of secular institutions. The latter, according to Augustine, are signified in Scripture by the history of the race of Cain: a race which lived without God and accordingly perished in the Deluge. Augustine deals at length with the Cain story and discusses the significance of Tubalcain. What is remarkable about his treatment of Tubalcain is that he avoids any mention of the invention of smithcraft. Tubalcain's purpose in Genesis is, according to Augustine, revealed through allegory. Augustine unravels the hidden meaning of this allegory numerologically by drawing attention to the fact that Genesis iv, 19-22 makes Tubalcain one of the *four* offspring of Lamech, the *seventh* in descent from Cain. This, for Augustine, is most significant, because 'when Lamech had been shown to be the seventh from Adam, so many of his sons were listed as to bring the number to eleven, which signifies sin. For three sons and one daughter are added'.[12] Augustine passes over in silence the more obvious fact that the sons of Lamech are also mentioned to account for the origins of the arts. He, like Victor, appears to be evading the Genesis account of the origins of smithcraft. Why? Like Victor, Augustine probably took a more favourable view of metal-working than Jewish authorities and this view was difficult to harmonize with the sinfulness of the race of Cain.

Augustine tells us in another, later passage of *The City of God* that the practical arts are, indeed, blessings:

> Man shows remarkable powers of mind and reason in the satisfaction of his aims, even though they may be unnecessary, or even dangerous and harmful; and those powers are the blessings he enjoys in his natural powers which enable him to discover, to learn, and to practice those arts. Think of the wonderful inventions of clothing and building, the astounding achievements of human industry!
>
> (Book XXII, Chapter 24, p. 1072)

This passage is followed by a long list of the various arts, including, even, 'all the weapons against his fellow-men in the shape of prisons, arms and engines of war'. These, Augustine admits, are 'the consolations of mankind under condemnation, not the rewards of the blessed'; nevertheless, he argues that the arts are a favourable indication of what human nature is capable of achieving and he asks rhetorically, but dramatically:

> What then will those rewards be, if the consolations are so many and so wonderful? What will God give to those whom he has predestined to life, if he has given all these to those predestined to death?
>
> (p. 1075)

Such optimism ill befits the notion that Tubalcain, the inventor of smithcraft, was a man steeped in sin and it is easy to see why Augustine should avoid mentioning the invention of the arts in his discussion of Cain. By leaving out any reference to Tubalcain's forge, Augustine, like Victor, subtly evades the question which Genesis iv, 22 had

begun to pose for Christian thought: How might the legend of Tubalcain be reconciled with a more favourable attitude to metal-working than is found in the Jewish authorities?

This question was evaded by other Christian writers also. The presentation of Tubalcain and his forge in the medieval period is often free of explicitly unfavourable associations and damaging controversy. An early medieval example occurs in the *Heptateuchos* by the fifth century Gallican poet, Cyprian. The *Heptateuchos* is a metrical version of the Old Testament from Genesis to Judges. It has been said of Cyprian's version that in it he 'adheres closely to the *Itala*, the pre-Vulgate version, and does not allow himself to be tempted into poetical excursions in search of descriptive beauty';[13] nonetheless he gives us this pleasing vignette of Tubalcain at work in his forge:

> Tobelum mox Sella parit, cui fundere rivos
> aeris erat moris ferrumque incude subactum
> diversis formare modis stridente camino. . . .[14]

(Soon, Sella bore Tubal, whose habit it was to pour streams of brass, and to shape iron through various means by working it on the anvil while the forge roared. . . .)

These elegant lines derive in fact from Juvenal. In the ninth century they were in turn imitated by an Anglo-Latin Christian poet, Aethelwulf, in his pleasing encomium of the saintly smith, Cwicwine. Aethelwulf must have thought them flattering.[15] They suggest that, whatever Cyprian

might have thought of Tubalcain's ancestry, he was not disinclined to look favourably on the forge.

Another and more influential Christian writer who deals with Tubalcain is St Isidore of Seville (c. 560-636). Isidore manages to convey to his readers a picture of the first smith which is no more unfavourable than that found in Genesis. In his universal history, *Chronicon*, Isidore maintains a neutral terseness concerning the Tubalcain legend:

Hac quoque aetate Jubal ex genere Cain artem musicam reperit, cujus etiam frater Tubal Cain aeris ferrique artium inventor fuit.[16]

(Also in this age Jubal of the race of Cain discovered music, and his brother Tubal Cain was the inventor of the arts of bronze and iron.)

In the *Etymologies*, meanwhile, Isidore was to prompt speculation that Tubalcain might well have contributed to the invention of music, for he mentions the Pythagorean notion that music was originally inspired by the sound of hammers.[17] Indeed, in later medieval iconography, Tubalcain is sometimes represented as an inventor of music. Chaucer's Black Knight, one recalls, invokes a somewhat apocryphal account of the matter when he speaks of his own talent for music in *The Book of the Duchess*:

> Trewly I dide my besynesse
> To make songes, as I best koude,
> And ofte tyme I song hem loude;
> And made songes thus a gret del,
> Althogh I koude not make so wel
> Songes, ne knewe the art al,

As koude Lamekes sone Tubal,
That found out first the art of songe;
For as hys brothres hamers ronge
Upon hys anvelt up and doun,
Therof he took the firste soun. . . .

Such linking of Tubalcain with his brother Jubal's discovery of music was fairly widespread in the late medieval period, in part due to the influence of Isidore.[18]

Isidore's brief and not explicitly unfavourable presentation of Tubalcain is significant as much for what it does not say about Tubalcain as for what it does say. Isidore was familiar with the work of Josephus and could easily have copied Josephus's unflattering portrait of Tubalcain in *The Antiquities of the Jews* mentioned above. He chose not to, however, and the result is more favourable to smithcraft. A not unfavourable impression of the Tubalcain legend is also given in medieval reference-works by compilers who knew of Josephus and cited his version of the legend in a distorted form. This occurs in the work of Remigius and Peter Comestor. In Latin the relevant passage of Josephus says:

Iobel autem qui ex altera natus est fortitudine cunctos excellens res bellicas decenter exercuit, ex his etiam quae ad libidinem attinent corporis enutrivit, ferrariam artem primus invenit.[19]

(Moreoever Iobal [i.e. Tubal] who was born of the other [wife], excelling all men in strength, fitly engaged in martial pursuits; he nourished by these means those things which pertain to the pleasure of the body, and first invented the art of iron-working.)

Remigius says:

Josephus dicit: 'Tubalcain res bellicas decenter exercuit artem ferrariam docuit: quaedam etiam quae ad libidinem oculorum pertinent, adinvenit.[20]

(Josephus says: 'Tubalcain fitly engaged in martial pursuits and taught the art of iron-working: also, he devised certain things which pertain to the pleasure of the eyes.')

This is a more pleasing picture of Tubalcain: his interest in war is no longer tied to his physical lusts, which, indeed, have been transformed into merely an interest in providing things which please the eyes. A somewhat different version is given by Peter Comestor. Peter says:

Sella genuit Tubalcain, qui ferrariam artem primus invenit, res bellicas prudenter exercuit, sculpturas operum in metallis in libidinem oculorum fabricavit.[21]

(Sella begot Tubalcain, who first invented the art of iron-working, prudently engaged in martial pursuits, and made carvings laboriously (*operum*?) in metals tending to the pleasure of the eyes.)

This presents Tubalcain as a prudent warrior and an elegant craftsman: a not unattractive and rather courtly image and one which certainly improves upon the violent character originally sketched by Josephus. Clearly there is a hint here of a more favourable attitude to the forge among medieval Christian writers than is found in the Jewish authorities.

How did medieval Christians defend their relatively favourable attitude to the forge against the less favourable implications of the

Tubalcain legend and the ancient Jewish authorities? The last writer we shall consult, the Venerable Bede, was aware of the problem posed by Genesis iv, 20-22 and his commentary on these verses in his book *In Genesim* is a remarkably elegant defence of Christian interest in the practical arts. Writing at Jarrow in *c.* 721, Bede, who knew both Josephus's *Antiquities* and Augustine's *City of God*, attempted to explain Josephus's account of Tubalcain within the context of Augustine's theology. His remarks on the invention of the arts accordingly move through three dialectical stages: first, he shows why the arts mentioned in these verses of Genesis are associated with evil; second, he shows how they have been reformed through grace; and third, from this analysis Bede draws a solemn conclusion.

In contrast to other Christian writers, Bede's commentary on the Tubalcain legend is remarkable for its severity. Indeed, Bede begins in a way which suggests that he is going to take a less favourable view of the arts than Claudius Marius Victor or Augustine, one more in harmony with Josephus and the Book of Enoch. For Bede says:

Cuncta haec quae filii Lamech invenisse vel legisse referuntur, ad cultum vel ornatum vel inlecebras huius vitae pertinent. Nihil autem tale Abel, nihil tale natus pro eo Seth aut nepotes eius fecisse leguntur; sed velut peregrini in terra simplicem duxisse vitam probantur.[22]

(All of these things which Lamech's sons are reported to have discovered or invented pertain to the refinement or ornamentation or the snares of this life. Neither Abel, nor he who was born in his place, that is, Seth, nor Seth's offspring are observed to have done anything of this sort; they are proven to have lived a simple life as nomads in the world.)

Bede substantiates this observation by reflecting on each of the three arts Lamech's sons invented. Of metal-working he is especially critical:

Si qui vero cuncta opera quae de aere ac ferro fiunt sollerter intuetur, manifeste cognoscit quia si recte naturalem legem servaret genus humanum, etiam de paradisi gaudiis culpa praevaricationis expulsum, nequaquam his omnibus opus haberet. Unde haec omnia a filiis maledictionis esse constat inventa. . . .

(pp. 87-88)

(If one carefully reflects on all the works made of bronze and iron, one plainly perceives that if the human race had lived in accordance with natural law even after it was expelled from the joys of Paradise for the sin of disobedience, by no means would it have had a need of any of these things. Wherefore, it is clear that all these things were invented by the inheritors of the curse (*filiis maledictionis*)).

This statement about the origins of metal-working is more forthright than the other Christian writings we have looked at in explicitly tying the forge to the sin of Cain. It apparently reflects the influence of Josephus, yet Bede's argument works, not through recourse to apocryphal details, but through a pointed comparison with the prelapsarian age when mankind lived in blissful ignorance of iron and bronze. Nonetheless, if Bede had finished at this juncture, we would be quite justified in equating his attitude to the forge with that of the early Jewish authorities.

Bede goes on, however, to dissociate these remarks from any such blanket condemnation of the arts. In his subsequent comments he shifts his perspective and shows that smithcraft and the other arts are capable of pleasing God and benefiting man. Bede says that in the post-lapsarian

UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY
LEEDS

world the arts are not inherently sinful, for

> degenerante humano genere a castitate prime conversationis etiam boni Dei famuli pro communione vitae socialis aliquotiens huiusmodi rebus operam dabant.
>
> (p. 88)
>
> (as the human race degenerated from the initial purity in manner of life, even the good servants of God gave attention to matters of this sort on several occasions in order to share in communal life.)

Having thus allowed that in the present state of mankind the arts may be benign, Bede immediately draws a crucial distinction between their proper and improper uses. Human experience showed this distinction quite clearly:

> magna utique distantia, quia nimirum reprobi talibus quasi summo suo bono delectabantur. Electi vero his aut omnimodis abrenuntiant, aut pro commodo vitae huius aliquo, donec ad aeternum perveniant, sicut viator stabulo sive viatico, transeuntes utuntur.
>
> (p. 88)
>
> (the difference was especially great, since the sinful treated such things as their highest good. The elect either by all means renounce these things, or use them in passing for some convenience of this life, until they arrive at eternity, just as a traveller makes use of a hostel, or provisions for a journey.)

This distinction reflects quite clearly the division of mankind into two distinct groups, the one profane, the other pious, made by St Augustine in the *City of God*. Moreover, Augustine had made a distinction between natural blessings, such as the arts, and the much more valuable gifts of

grace which are given by God only to the elect. While the profane may receive some consolation from the arts, the godly, meanwhile, enjoy the 'capacity for the good life, the ability to attain eternal felicity, by those arts which are called virtues, which are given solely by the grace of God in Christ to the children of the promise and of the kingdom' (*City of God*, Book XXII, Chapter 24, p. 1072). Bede shows how these virtues of the elect are reflected in their just use of the arts. Concerning the forge Bede says:

Erant in populo Dei viri docti in 'cuncta opera aeris et ferri', necnon et argenti et auri; sed hos ipse hanc artem ad constructionem sui tabernaculi transferre praecepit. Propheta quoque gaudia dominicae incarnationis evangelizans, opera ferri noxia tollenda atque in melius commutanda praedixit, 'Et conflabunt,' inquiens, 'gladios suos in vomeres et lanceas suas in falces; non levabit gens contra gentem gladium, nec exercebuntur ultra ad praelium.'

(p. 88)

(There were among God's people men 'learned in all the works of bronze and iron' and of silver and gold as well; but He himself instructed them to apply this art to the construction of his Tabernacle (1 Kings vii). The Prophet, as he was preaching the joys of the Lord's incarnation, also foretold that hurtful works of iron must be taken away and altered for the better, saying, 'and they will hammer their swords into ploughshares, their spears into sickles. Nation will not lift sword against nation, there will be no more training for war' (Isaiah ii, 4)).

For Bede, then, there is such a person as a virtuous smith. To counter the profane smiths who find their archetype in Tubalcain, Bede directs us to pious smiths who have served the people of God in a peaceful and constructive fashion.

Furthermore, Bede implies that the example of such men is extremely important. In a solemn conclusion to his commentary on the origins of the arts, he warns that men neglect to regulate the arts at their peril:

Nec praetereundum neglegenter quod cum homines adulterio inquinari, cum pascendis pecoribus amplius iusto insistere, cum modis musicis dissolvi, cum fabrilibus operam dare artibus coeperunt, tunc diluvio sunt superveniente deleti. Sed cavendum solertius ne hos huiusmodi rebus ultra modum irretitos ultimus dies inveniat, cum etiam Dominus de die iudicii loquens commemorato hoc tempore, ad cautelae nos studium incitet, dicens: 'Sicut enim erant in diebus ante diluvium comedentes et bibentes, nubentes et nuptum tradentes usque ad eum diem quo intravit Noe in arcam, et non cognoverunt donec venit diluvium et tulit omnes. Ita erit et adventus filii hominis.'

(p. 88).

(Nor is it heedlessly to be passed by, that when men began to be befouled with adultery, to insist upon feeding more cattle than was just, to be enervated with music, to give attention to the arts of metal-working, then by the Deluge which befel them they were destroyed. But one must take heed lest the Last Day discover these entangled in affairs of this sort beyond measure, because even the Lord, speaking of the Day of Judgement by calling to mind this time, spurs us to the study of precaution, saying, 'For in those days before the Flood people were eating, drinking, taking wives, taking husbands, right up to the day Noah went into the ark, and they suspected nothing till the Flood came and swept all away. It will be like this when the son of man comes' (Matthew xxiv, 38-40)).

Bede encourages a cautious attitude to the arts and urges his readers to practise moderation and discipline. Yet while he is unfavourably disposed to immoderation in the pursuit of smithcraft, he is nonetheless favourably disposed to this art when it serves God and the proper needs of the community. His treatment of the Tubalcain legend thus rests on a

distinction between two approaches to the art of metal-working, the one profane and the other holy, a distinction which Bede delineates with notable gravity.

Although Bede's commentary on the Tubalcain legend is remarkably cautious and thoughtful, in its treatment of the forge it is comparable to other Christian writings. Like Bede, Christian authors show a marked tendency to extricate the forge from the evil implications of the race of Cain. The fact that the Bible placed the originator of smithcraft, Tubalcain, among the last of Cain's descendants was not an insurmountable obstacle to a favourable attitude to the forge in medieval Christian writing. Nonetheless, the Tubalcain legend helped to shape medieval perception of the forge to the extent that it suggested that not all smithcraft was necessarily justifiable and that therefore a vital distinction needed to be drawn between the smithcraft which was unscrupulous and worldly and that which piously conformed to the laws of God. We shall presently see that this distinction forms the basis of a considerable pious literature of the forge and gives rise to many favourable portrayals of metal-workers not only in Anglo-Saxon England, but also, among other places, modern America.

CHAPTER III: Smithcraft and the People of God

> The blacksmith did not hobble here
> To the small church, on the hard hill,
> In summer, to be told of stars;
> He came with meek and tempered will;
> He came, this hoarest of bent men,
> To hear Old Hundred sung again.
> (Mark Van Doren, 'Old Hundred')

For the metal smith, the road to respectability in religious writing was hard and steep, yet ultimately he was destined for a pious reputation. Since the beginning of the fifth century A.D. religious writers have praised metal smiths for their piety, humility, discipline and wonder-working, yet for much of classical antiquity the prevailing attitude to the forge inclined towards condescension and disdain. If medieval (and modern) authors speak of the spiritual achievements of smiths as well as their typical vices, it is probably because they inherited from the Desert Fathers who founded community monasticism a tolerance of disciplined manual labour and a reverence for pious industry. This inheritance is a chief reason for the strange vitality of legendary smiths down to modern times. Early medieval writers display a lively interest in stories about smiths and the supernatural. The motifs of these stories recur in modern European and American writing and in oral tradition.

The link between legendary metal smiths and Christian piety needs to be emphasized. Indeed, it is wise to approach the legendary motif of

the pious smith with some caution and a judicious awareness of the extent and variety of medieval legends of the forge. In the past, partisan scholarship has either romanticised or denigrated the status of the smith in the early Middle Ages on the basis of only a limited survey of this material. The Abbé Texier, in his monumental *Dictionnaire d'orfèvrerie, de gravure et de ciselure chrétiennes*, published in 1857, laid particular stress on the favourable side of the record and was able to paint an exceptionally rosy picture of early medieval regard for the smith:

> Les vieux maîtres, qui dans ces âges lointains travaillaient les métaux, nous apparaissent tous couronnés de l'auréole de la sainteté. . . . La religion accorde donc à cet art une protection particulière. [1]

What had impressed Texier were the numerous legends of saintly smiths; his *Dictionnaire* includes pious sketches of many of these holy craftsmen. Some, like Billfrith, an eighth century Northumbrian goldsmith, are not widely known; others, like the Merovingian St Eloi (*c.* 588-660) and the Anglo-Saxon St Dunstan (909-988) have enjoyed a perennial fame. Such examples are impressive. Yet how representative are they of medieval thought? It has been possible for less piously motivated historians to create the impression that such figures were indeed unrepresentative, for there are many examples of early medieval legends in which the metal smith is exposed to harsh criticism. Pointing to a tale recounted by Bede about an impious smith who went to Hell, the historian H. R. Loyn has

indeed hinted that the smith was perhaps the victim of class prejudice. Such a tale suggests to Loyn that 'the status of a smith in England does not seem to have been particularly exalted'.[2] Such a conclusion, however, does not take into account the numerous favourable legends of the forge alluded to by Texier. Indeed, once one has looked into the matter of legendary smiths in some depth, one may well doubt whether it is feasible to regard individual legends of the forge as mere expressions of public opinion. Something more than that is involved.

Indeed, a far wiser approach to the portrayal of the legendary smith in the medieval period is possible. A much deeper understanding of this subject is within reach if we give due recognition to the bearing which Christian values had on medieval attitudes to work. The importance of humility and discipline in Christian life must first be grasped before we can fully appreciate the significance of the legendary smith. Prior to tackling these legends themselves, let us first, then, pause to survey the manner in which the metal smith is presented in Scripture and in the influential writings of St Basil, one of the founding fathers of monasticism, and to consider the overall effect of Christian values on attitudes to work. In Christian thought one readily detects a certain tension between profane and holy industry. We have detected this tension already in commentaries on the Tubalcain legend, and will encounter it once again in medieval legends of the forge.

Christian attitudes to work

How do men distinguish between work which is pleasing to God and that which is displeasing? For the early Christian communities humility and discipline were significant: their presence in the workman could indicate greatness of spirit. Furthermore, the implications of this belief were little short of revolutionary and worked against the prevailing distaste for manual work inherited from the Hellenistic world. This distaste for manual work, what one recent historian has called 'the classical contempt for manual labour and the crafts',[3] probably reflects aristocratic opinion and anti-democratic feeling. Arnold Hauser observes that in this period the craftsman is associated with 'banausia':

> in Plato's eyes every specialization, every sharply defined occupation, is vulgar (banauson) and such banausia is a characteristic feature of democratic society.[4]

Hauser's explanation of this feeling is worth quoting:

> This low estimation of people who have to work for their living, this contempt of all work done for gain and even of productive work in general, originates in the fact that such activities—in contrast with the primeval aristocratic pursuits of government, war, and sport—smack of subordination and service. . . Such work is assigned to slaves because it is despised, not despised (as was formerly supposed) because done by slaves.[5]

Examples of this attitude may be found not only in the writings of Plato,

Aristotle and Plutarch,[6] but also in the Old Testament. The Book of Sirach, composed *c.* 190 B.C., expresses a certain disdain for manual workers, including the metal smith, as men who 'cannot expound discipline or judgement, and . . . are not found using proverbs' (xxxviii, 34). The smith, for example, is portrayed with some realism in his unpleasant forge:

> So too is the smith sitting by the anvil,
> intent upon his handiwork in iron;
> the breath of the fire melts his flesh,
> and he wastes away in the heat of the furnace. . . .
> (xxxviii, 28)

While Sirach concedes that such workmen are needed to build a town and 'keep stable the fabric of the world' (34), it firmly maintains that they are unfit for public office (33).

Such a condescending view of the manual worker may not have been universal in Hellenistic Judaism and there is evidence of a new attitude to manual work emerging at the beginning of the Christian era. The Biblical scholar John L. McKenzie has written that

> in Judaism of N[ew] T[estament] times the work of the hands was by no means contemned; even the rabbis made it a point of pride to know a trade by which they could support themselves. . . .

This new attitude to work, which flew in the face of classical authority,

was especially characteristic of the first followers of Christ, however: as McKenzie points out, St Paul 'himself was a tentmaker, a trade to which he resorted in his apostolic travels' and

> in the Pauline writings work is accepted as a necessary part of human responsibility (Ephesians iv, 28; 1 Thessalonians iv, 11; 2 Thessalonians iii, 10-12), and by work here is meant the work of the hands.[7]

According to St Paul, work was not to be disdained as beneath a Christian's dignity; rather it was necessary to living a pious life of humility and love on the model of Jesus, who himself was said to have been an artisan (Mark vi, 3) or the son of an artisan (Matthew xiii, 55).

Yet while Paul encouraged his fellow Christians to support themselves in a humble fashion by manual labour, he was certainly not motivated by a sentimental fondness for artisans in general. There is implicit in the material pertaining to the missionary experiences of Paul a tension between Paul's recommendation of manual labour and his unfortunate experiences with certain metal smiths. On one occasion in the Pauline epistles Paul speaks quite harshly of a certain smith (otherwise obscure) about whom he complains,

> Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will requite him for his deeds. Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message.
>
> (2 Timothy iv, 14-15)

Another artisan who strongly opposed Paul's message was the Ephesian silversmith Demetrius, evidently because Paul's attacks on idolatry threatened to deprive him of his livelihood making shrines of the pagan goddess Artemis. As in the Old Testament polemic against idolatry, very little sympathy is shown toward the smith who earns his living serving pagan cults. In Isaiah, for example, there is the following satiric description of the idol-smith:

> Who fashions a god or casts an image, that is profitable for nothing? Behold, all his fellows shall be put to shame, and the craftsmen are but men; let them all assemble, let them stand forth, they shall be terrified, they shall be put to shame together.
>
> The ironsmith fashions it and works it over the coals; he shapes it with hammers, and forges it with his strong arm; he becomes hungry and his strength fails, he drinks no water and is faint.
>
> (xliv, 10-12)

In the account of Demetrius and his agitation against Paul given in Acts, there is a similar attempt to expose the vanity of idols and their makers:

> For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the craftsmen. These he gathered together, with the workmen of like occupation, and said, 'Men, you know that from this business we have our wealth. And you see and hear that not only at Ephesus but almost throughout all Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable company of people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods. And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may count for nothing, and that she may be deposed from her magnificence, she whom all Asia and the world worship.'
>
> When they heard this they were enraged, and cried out, 'Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!'
>
> (xix, 24-8)

Demetrius managed, in fact, to spark an angry demonstration against Paul and his followers (29-34). Clearly, not all artisans would have been favourably regarded by Christians. To be acceptable in Christian eyes manual work, in fact, was to be subject to the discipline of the Christian community.

An emphasis on spiritual discipline in the workshop is notable in the writings of St Basil (*c.* 330-379) and subsequent Christian writers, and is, in particular, a feature of community (cenobitic) monasticism. St Basil had himself lived as a monk for a time in Egypt about the year 358. There he would have had some experience at first hand of the nascent movement toward community monasticism associated with the figure of St Pachomius, who had died twelve years previously in 346. Pachomius had experienced a profound conversion in 313 and in 320 founded a religious community based on economic self-sufficiency and strict discipline. Its members practised austerities, but lived a communal life and performed manual work in obedience to an established rule. According to David Hugh Farmer, 'internal organization was based on a division into houses, according to the particular craft practised by the monks, such as agriculture, tailoring, baking'.[8] Such an arrangement proved to be extremely successful and at the time of his death St Pachomius had under his leadership ten additional communities formed along similar lines. St Basil, for his part, helped to disseminate further the idea of community monasticism. In Cappadocia Basil founded a religious community of his

own at Caesarea (Kayseri in Turkey). This included artisans as well as physicians and nurses. Basil's code of discipline proved to be extremely effective. Its influence has been succinctly stated by Farmer:

> Basil is . . . the principal monastic legislator of the East: to this day, nearly all monks and nuns of the Greek Church follow his rule. This survives in two redactions: *Regulae fusius tractatae* and *Regulae brevius tractatae*. His emphasis was on community life, liturgical prayer, and manual work rather than on individualist feats of asceticism.[9]

Basil's concern for the spiritual well-being of those engaged in metal-working is especially relevant. He asserts that this trade should by no means be scorned, but should be approached with both humility and discernment:

> As for the arts of building, carpentry, the smith's trade, and farming—these are all in themselves necessary for carrying on life, and they provide much that is useful. They should not, therefore, be repudiated by us for any reason inherent in themselves, but, as soon as they cause us anxiety or sever our union with our brethren, we must turn away from them, choosing in preference the trades which allow us to lead recollected lives in constant attendance on the Lord and do not cause those who follow the practice of the devout life to be absent from psalmody and prayer or draw them away from other disciplinary practices.[10]

In short, Basil asks his followers to discard any prejudice they might feel toward metal-working and the other manual trades, but he also cautions them against allowing such pursuits to distract them from their spiritual duties. For the Christian, spirituality must take precedence of the manual

arts. It was the genius of St Basil to recognize that the latter often did not serve the best interests of the former and as such could pose a grave danger to the human soul. Yet in recognizing the disease Basil also prepared the way for remedial action. He asserted that through discipline the manual arts could be guided to serve the people of God in an exemplary fashion. In consequence, he also associated the craftsman with a pattern of conduct which could favourably influence the reputation, in religious writing, of the manual arts in general and smithcraft in particular.

A similar association between exemplary conduct and the manual arts did indeed influence attitudes to the artisan in the medieval West. The main channel of this influence was undoubtedly the monastic movement, which, in its various forms, sowed the Christian culture of Italy, France, Ireland, Wales, Spain, England and Germany from the fourth to the twelfth century. In many of the Western monastic houses, as in those of the East, the religious were encouraged to do manual work in a humble and disciplined manner. In the Rule initiated by St Benedict (*c.* 480 - *c.* 550) manual work was encouraged, but the primary emphasis was on regular, communal prayer, the *Opus Dei*. Benedict, 'a man who is to Western monasticism what St Pachomius and St Basil were to Eastern',[11] prescribed a cautious approach to the manual arts similar to that of St Basil and warned that a man's manual work must not be permitted to lead him into boastfulness and vanity.[12] The favourable

influence of this approach to work on attitudes to the craftsman has been celebrated from a sociological viewpoint by Arnold Hauser:

> The Benedictine rule had prescribed manual as well as intellectual work and even attached greater importance to manual occupations. The monastic estates, like the manor-houses, aspired to become economically as independent as possible and to produce all the necessities of life on their own land. The activity of the monks included work in the fields and gardens as well as handicrafts generally. It is true that even from the very beginning the heaviest physical toil was performed by the free peasants and by serfs attached to the monasteries and later on, apart from the peasants, by lay brothers, but especially in the early period most of the manual crafts were carried on by the monks themselves; and precisely through its organization of handicraft work, monasticism had the deepest influence on the development of art and culture in the Middle Ages. That the production of art proceeded within the framework of well-ordered, more or less rationally organized workshops with a proper division of labour, and that members of the upper classes could be enlisted for this work, is the merit and achievement of the monastic movement. It is known that aristocrats were in a majority in the early medieval monasteries; certain monasteries were, in fact, almost exclusively reserved for them. Thus people who could otherwise probably never have handled a smeary paint-brush, a chisel, or a trowel came into direct touch with arts and crafts. It is true that the contempt for manual labour still remains widespread even in the Middle Ages, and the idea of power still continues to be associated with that of an idle existence, but it is unmistakably evident that now, in contrast to classical antiquity, alongside the life of the seigneur, which is associated with unlimited leisure, the industrious life acquires a more positive evaluation and this new relationship to work is connected, amongst other things, with the popularity of monastic life.[13]

From the monastic movement men acquired a fresh new vision of the artificer, a vision shaped by piety, humility and discipline. This new perspective on industry had a profound effect on perceptions of life in the workshop, for Hauser is undoubtedly correct to contend that 'Western Europe first learnt to work methodically from the monks; the industry of

the Middle Ages is very largely their creation' (i, 169).

Legendary metal smiths

It was from the monks also that Europe acquired many of its most popular legends of the forge. Nor is it difficult to detect in these legends an expression of Christian ideals. Significantly, the first smith to be regarded as a saint was associated with one of St Pachomius's monasteries in Egypt. The *Vitae Patrum*, a widely-read anthology of early monastic lore, recounts his legend. St Apollo (or, in Latin, Ampelius) was a blacksmith who entered monastic life in the early 5th century. There he apparently led an exemplary life. An early Greek source says that having been 'converted to the way of truth, . . . he laboured afterwards in the service of the brethren, and supplied their needs'. His great virtue and spiritual discipline are exemplified by a supernatural incident in which St Apollo is tempted by Satan in the forge:

> on one occasion Satan came unto him in the form of a woman, who appeared to be anxious to work in the service of the brethren, and the blessed man happened at the time to be working at his trade, and he took up the red-hot iron, and thrust it into the woman's face, and burned it so severely that she shrieked out, and the brethren who were in the chambers heard her cries.[14]

St Apollo's victory over Satan and his reputation for sanctity lend memorable and significant support to monastic precept. The belief that there is nothing implicitly evil in smithcraft as long as the smith avoided

temptation is admirably illustrated by the legend of St Apollo.

This belief gave rise to numerous legends of the forge in the Middle Ages. We may find them scattered about the monastic and hagiographical writings of the epoch and their influence may be detected in popular folk-tales gathered in the nineteenth century. They sometimes now strike us as primitive and strange, for they often deal with spiritual conflict and the supernatural. We shall find also in such legends indignant exposure of the vices of profane smiths as well as joyful celebration of the virtues of smith-saints. Yet although individual legends are rooted in local tradition, it would be unwise to account for them in terms of tribal superstitions or prejudices. We must, in fact, keep in mind the international character of monastic and Christian ideals as they pertain to industry. We shall find that such ideals as piety, humility and discipline inform accounts of legendary smiths in Ireland, on the Continent, and in Anglo-Saxon England.

Ireland

Let us look first at some examples from Ireland. There the early medieval period gave rise to legends of both holy and profane smiths, yet it is evident that on the whole the attitude to the smith was idealistic and favourable. An Irish lyric composed before the year 1400 has the following to say about smithcraft:

Aibind, aibind in goibnecht
don lucht do-ni gan toirmesc;
is maith a tuaith is a cill,
nocha n-é a buaid nach aibind.[15]

(Pleasant, pleasant the craft of the smith,
to the people who pursue it without hindrance;
it is good for both laity and clerics,
it is not it which is not pleasant.)

This favourable view of the smith might serve as an epitome of medieval Irish attitudes to the smith and should caution us against attaching too much importance to Irish legends of profane smiths. Such doubtless enjoyed some currency, however, and it is relevant to cite some better known examples. There is, for example, the ancient tradition that St Patrick (*c.* 390-461?) included smiths among those whose curses he feared: the Patrician prayer known as 'The Deer's Cry' asks for God's protection against the curses of druids, women and smiths.[16] There is, too, the strange legend of an island inhabited by giant smiths somewhere in the ocean. The legend is found in the *Imram Curaig Máele Dúin*, said on linguistic evidence to be a work of the ninth or possibly eighth century A.D., and in the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*, a tenth century work dealing with the legendary exploits of St Brendan the Navigator (*c.* 486 - *c.* 575).[17] In these accounts these giant smiths are unfriendly forgers of iron who try to sink any ship which passes too close to their smithies. Their ferocity towards sailors has reminded scholars of the cyclops' hostility to Odysseus (*Odyssey*, Book ix, lines 480-86 etc.), for the smiths,

like the cyclops, hurl noisome projectiles at ships which try to escape. In the *Imram Curaig Máele Dúin* the heroic sea-captain Máel Dúin and his crew must display all their warriors' prowess when one of these frightful blacksmiths attacks:

> the smith came out of the forge, holding in the tongs a huge mass (of glowing iron), and he cast that mass after the boat into the sea; and all the sea boiled; but he did not reach the boat, for they [i.e. Máel Dúin and his crew] fled with all their warriors' might, swiftly, hurriedly, forth into the great ocean.[18]

This is the stuff of high adventure, but offers no profound insight into the meaning of the forge or the reasons for the smith's unfriendliness. By contrast, a similar incident in the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani* ends on a note, not of heroic effort, but of Christian insight. St Brendan identifies the island of giant smiths as Hell and attributes his escape therefrom to the intercession of Christ (pp. 61-3 in Selmer's edition). This puts this particular incident in a most unfavourable light, but it does not imply a general condemnation of smithcraft.

Such reports as we have of the egregious behaviour of metal smiths are outweighed in significance by more favourable accounts which praise the virtue of particular smiths. Inspired no doubt by the industrial ideals of Sts Pachomius and Basil, the early Irish monks and missionaries imparted a new vision of the smith. In part this was based on the concrete example of dedicated monks at work in the forge supplying the

needs of their communities and manufacturing ecclesiastical ornaments and utensils. One must concede here that we have little concrete evidence of this activity. Yet although the archaeologist Lloyd Laing has stated that 'from the Viking period onwards, most of the ecclesiastical metalwork was produced by lay craftsmen attached to monasteries', it is noteworthy that he prefaces this observation with the warning that 'little information is available for the earlier centuries of the Early Christian period'.[19] Some indication that monks engaged in metal-working before the Viking period is found, moreover, in medieval Irish tradition. The writer Tirechan, a seventh century biographer of St Patrick, tells us of a smith who was also a bishop and 'monachus Patricii'. Tirechan says that this holy man, whose name is given in Latin as Assicus, retired from his religious community to a secret retreat for seven years, after which 'his monks searched for him and found him in the mountain valleys with his metalwork'.[20] It is quite conceivable that the example of such a holy smith inspired other smiths to lead pious lives. Another smith who is celebrated in early legend is Columb Coilrigin. His pious life and glorious death are applauded in the *vita* of St Columba of Iona (*c.* 521-597) written in the late seventh century by Adamnan (627-704), Abbot of Iona. Adamnan tells how the blessedness of Columb the smith was miraculously made known to St Columba as follows:

In the midland part of Ireland dwelt a certain iron-smith, much devoted to works of charity, and full of the other acts of righteousness. When this

man, the above-named Columb, surnamed Coilrigin, came in good old age to the end of his life, in the same hour in which he was taken from the body, Saint Columba living in the island of Io [i.e. Iona] spoke to some few of the elders who were standing beside him, and said: 'Columb Coilrigin the iron-smith has not laboured in vain. He has been fortunate in procuring with the labour of his own hands the eternal rewards that he desired to buy. See now, his soul is being carried by holy angels to the joys of the heavenly country. For whatever he was able to gain by practising his craft he laid out in alms to the needy'.[21]

It is clear from this account that the smith Columb had lived a pious and disciplined life notable for charity. His apotheosis is remarkable evidence of the emphasis which the early monks placed on industrial ideals and of the importance they attached to the example of the holy metal smith.

The Continent

Exemplary virtue likewise informs some notable continental accounts of legendary smiths. As in Ireland, however, the early medieval period gave rise to accounts of both holy and profane smiths in the Christian communities of mainland Europe. The Abbé Texier notwithstanding, unfortunately not all medieval smiths were crowned with the halo of sanctity; the Church clearly saw fit to expose certain vices to which metal smiths typically fell prey. Nevertheless, it is evident that, as in Ireland, the overall attitude to the smith was idealistic and favourable. We shall cite examples of holy metal smiths after we have first dealt with some legends of profane smiths.

In a number of continental legends the profane metal smith is dealt with most harshly and is shown suffering a deplorable fate at the hands of Divine Providence. Such legends, however, probably do not depend on a prejudice against metal-workers, for they clearly indicate that the source of the smith's disfavour in God's eyes is not his trade, but rather unethical behaviour. Such behaviour was especially prejudicial when its victims were those considered to be the just servants of God, such as a bishop, a monastery, or the pious Emperor Charlemagne. Thus Gregory of Tours, writing in the late sixth century, recounts a legend about a goldsmith who conspired to defraud Gregory's uncle, St Nicetius, Bishop of Lyons. The dishonest goldsmith thought he could profit from the bishop's trusting nature and when the chance arose he intercepted a chalice which the Emperor of Rome had dispatched to Nicetius with a servant. In collusion with the servant the goldsmith removed from the chalice a portion of its costly metal and replaced it with counterfeit before sending it on to the bishop, who did not notice anything amiss. The swindle perpetrated by the goldsmith might never have been detected; shortly afterwards, however, as the dishonest goldsmith feasted with his accomplice at home, the earth around them miraculously opened and they were swallowed up without trace.[22] The *Gesta Abbatum Fontanellensium* similarly relates that a dishonest bell-founder who tried to cheat the monks of Fontanelle was also punished in an uncanny fashion. The bell-founder, a respected master of his art, was asked by the monks to manufacture a bell for their

church and was given the necessary metal. The bell-founder unscrupulously used less metal than had been agreed upon and kept the surplus as profit. Thereafter, whenever the bell he had made was rung, the dishonest bell-founder was plagued by incriminating fits of demonic behaviour: at such times he could not refrain from uttering obscenities and barking like a dog.[23] The *Gesta Karoli Magni*, written *c.* 883-887 by a monk of St Gall, meanwhile tells of a famous smith who unwisely tried to cheat the Emperor Charlemagne. The smith, a monk of St Gall named Tancho, was so adept at his craft that 'his skill at moulding bronze and glass was greater than that of anyone else in the world' and he was entrusted by the Emperor to manufacture, as a bequest to the monastery, a costly bell made entirely of silver. No silver went into the bell, however, for Tancho kept the silver (which had been donated by the Emperor) and produced a bell of tin. The time arrived to try out the bell and after it had been carefully mounted in its belfry, all assembled to hear its sweet sound. However, to everyone's astonishment, no one could make it ring. Thereupon, the narrator tells us, the smith Tancho

who had cast the bell and perpetrated this outrageous fraud came over in a rage, seized hold of the rope and tugged at the bell.

What happened next is not left to the reader's imagination:

The mass of metal slipped from the centre of its beam and fell down on

the rogue's head. It passed straight through his dead carcase and crashed to the ground, taking his bowels and testicles with it.[24]

Severely as the smith Tancho is treated in this tale, there is little indication of an unfavourable view of smithcraft on the part of the author. The purpose of the tale is rather to illustrate the theme that 'the Judgement of God kept watch for the devout Emperor Charlemagne, when his own attention was turned elsewhere by the affairs of his kingdom', as its author says in the preceding chapter (p. 126). Indeed, in this tale of Tancho, as in the two previous legends of profane metal smiths, it is not the artificers' social position which has provoked indignation, but their bad characters: a lack of piety, humility and self-discipline is manifest in their desire to cheat the true servants of God and is thus the root cause of their ultimate downfall.

A lack of social prejudice is displayed also in some early medieval accounts of legendary smiths which suggest that egregious behaviour might also be an act of desperate self-preservation in the face of injustice. We may cite two interesting examples which deal respectively with the problems of enslavement and famine. Sympathy for the plight of metal smiths who had suffered capture and slavery is implied in an incident in the life of St Severin (fl. 480) written in Italy about the year 635 by Eugippius. Eugippius tells how the saint interceded with Giso, queen of the Rugians, near Linz on the Danube to secure the release of some barbarian goldsmiths whom the queen had imprisoned for the sole purpose

of forcing them to work for her, for she was exceedingly fond of jewellery. The smiths in their desperation had, before the saint intervened, threatened to kill the queen's son after he had inadvertently strayed into their prison workshop.[25] This latter detail recalls the revenge of the heroic legendary smith Weland, who, faced with a similar imprisonment at the hands of an unscrupulous monarch, took his revenge by killing his captor's two sons and presenting him with drinking goblets made of their skulls.[26] The enslavement of smiths, moreover, was apparently not uncommon among the continental Germanic tribes in the fifth century, for contemporary Burgundian laws make reference to the financial compensation required for the killing of an enslaved smith.[27]

Sympathy for the plight of smiths who suffered during times of hunger and want, meanwhile, is implied in another tale from the *Gesta Karoli Magni.* Although the author of this work, as we saw above, could be most severe in denouncing the unscrupulous smith Tancho for trying to cheat the Emperor, he also gives us a sympathetic account of the plight of a poor smith who conspires with a devil in return for a bit of sustenance. Their pact is arranged, we are told, because the smith's desperate need makes him a defenceless victim of the devil's guile:

a certain devil of the type called hobgoblins, whose particular function it is to foster the petty foibles and deceits of human beings, had the habit of visiting the dwelling of a local blacksmith and of passing the night by playing with the man's hammers and anvils. When this father of a family tried to protect himself and his possessions with the sign of the all-healing Cross, the shaggy devil replied: 'My dear fellow, if you will

agree not to stop me amusing myself in your smithy, put your drinking-pot here and each day you will find it full.' The poor blacksmith was more afraid of dying of hunger and thirst than he was of the eternal damnation of his soul, and he did what the devil asked of him.

It may be suspected from the above that the author attaches little blame to the blacksmith for entering into a bargain with the hobgoblin. Why? In fact the author's real intention was to expose the greed and hypocrisy of a wealthy man who had profited from the sufferings of the poor. The smith's plight is attributed to the machinations of the local bishop who, in anticipation of famine, and 'rejoicing in the ultimate necessity of all the inhabitants', had filled his storehouse with corn in order to sell it at an inflated price as demand rose. Appropriately, it is to the wine-cellar of this bishop that the hobgoblin nightly repairs to fulfill his part of the bargain:

the devil took a huge flask, broke repeatedly into the cellar of the blacksmith's Bacchus or Dis, to wit the bishop, stole what he wanted and left the remainder running all over the floor.

Such pilfering, however, did not long go unnoticed by the bishop, who proved to be much more cunning than the devil:

the bishop finally came to the conclusion that [the wine-barrels] had been wasted by some gigantic fraud perpetrated by devils. He sprinkled his store-room with holy water and protected it with the sign of the invincible Cross. When night fell once more, the hobgoblin came back with his flask. He did not dare to touch the wine-barrels because of the holy

Cross, and he could not find his way out again. He was discovered there in human form and bound by the watchman of the house. He was led before the people as a thief and executed publicly. As he was being dispatched, he exclaimed: 'Woe is me, I have lost my dear friend's drinking-pot!'

What is the moral of this tale? The author gives us this explanation:

I have set this story down, because it ought to be known, provided always that this tale is a true one, that things denied on oath may yet turn out well, and so may things hidden, in the days of necessity; and that, whatever be the worth of the invocation of the Holy Name, it can be used, too, by those who do evil.[28]

The bishop, in other words, is the real culprit, while the poor smith deserves our sympathy. Like many of the legendary smiths of the early Middle Ages, the smith who, in times of hardship, makes a bargain with the devil was to become the subject of a folk-tale. This legend of the ninth century is analogous to the motif of 'The Smith and the Devil' found by modern folklorists to be widespread in nineteenth century Europe. In many versions the smith is able to trick the devil into releasing him from his bargain and at his death gains entry into Heaven.[29]

The currency, on the Continent, of legendary smiths who, excusably or inexcusably, succumbed to temptation, accords with the popularity of legendary smiths who display exemplary Christian virtue. In continental tradition, as in Irish, the profane metalworker is complemented by the holy man who pursues the craft of the smith in accordance with religious

precept. While there were undoubtedly many such men in the Middle Ages, the ideal of the saintly smith is particularly associated with the Merovingian period; it is to the seventh century, then, that we must turn to find the quintessential embodiment of a Christian outlook with regard to the smith. The Abbé Texier's *Dictionnaire d'orfévrerie* catalogues three smith-saints of the seventh century: St Germier, a humble blacksmith of Lyons who entered the Monastery of St Just and was ordained sub-deacon (cols 816-17); St Théau, a freed Saxon slave who became a monk at Solignac (col. 912) and Théau's master, the goldsmith St Eloi (cols 656-57). It is St Eloi who is the supreme indication of the high degree of favour which an early medieval smith might enjoy. A life of this saint, said to be a Carolingian redaction of one written by his disciple St Ouen (*c.* 600-684), describes Eloi's illustrious career in some detail.[30] Born at Chaptelat, near Limoges, Eloi was sent as a young boy by his parents to learn the art of goldsmithing from the local moneyer, a man well known for his honesty. After his apprenticeship, Eloi gained employment at the Merovingian court and the patronage of King Clotair II (d. 629). Under Dagobert I (d. 639), Eloi was a trusted court official: he supervised the royal mint and in 636-7 headed a diplomatic mission to Brittany. His private life, meanwhile, was one of exemplary piety. He was often in prayer. He purchased the freedom of slaves and gave generously to the poor. He also performed wonder-working cures. Such indeed was his piety that under Clovis II (639-657) he was ordained priest and then only

a year later was made Bishop of Noyon. His episcopacy was noted for its vigour: he founded monasteries at Noyon, Paris and Solignac and personally campaigned against residual paganism still influential in the region. Eloi's reputation for holiness went hand in hand with his reputation as a great goldsmith. He manufactured many notable pieces in royal and ecclesiastical collections.[31] He was renowned both for skill and honesty. In legend, Eloi is celebrated as an exemplary metal smith and his great virtue is the theme of a number of marvellous tales. According to one such tale, when King Clotair commissioned Eloi to make him a throne and provided just enough gold for the task, Eloi used his skill and ingenuity to produce two. (According to William H. Forsyth, 'the incident is recounted in the hymn sung at matins on the saint's feast day, December 1' and was a popular iconographical subject in the later Middle Ages.)[32] Other legends depict Eloi performing feats of wonder-working in the forge. Thus in later iconography he is sometimes depicted repulsing the devil with his tongs in the manner of St Apollo in the *Vitae Patrum* (Figure 1).[33] Legend also depicts Eloi performing miraculous cures in the forge and in pious tradition he is considered to be the patron saint not only of smiths and (latterly) garage mechanics, but also of hospitals, ulcers, and enteritis in children.[34]

Anglo-Saxon England

The reputation of the smith Eloi on the Continent is a further indication

Figure 1:

St Eloi grabbing the Devil's nose with his smiths' tongs: detail of a church fresco from Stubbeköbing, Denmark, reproduced from Marstrander, 'Deux contes irlandais', p. 423.

that Christian ideals in early medieval Europe gave rise to legends of the forge. Such legends are typically didactic: they illustrate exemplary virtue in the forge, or conversely pass judgement on unsuitable conduct. In this respect the legends of holy and profane smiths do not contradict, but rather complement one another, for such legends do not depend on tribal or national prejudice, but clearly and boldly advance an idealistic conception of the status of the smith. As we have seen how Christian ideals gave rise to accounts of legendary smiths in Ireland and on the Continent, so shall we find evidence of a similar phenomenon in England. Anglo-Saxon England concurrently gave rise to legends of both holy and profane smiths. These legends depend not on native prejudices, but on Christian, especially monastic, concerns.

It is well-known that the monastic movement played a decisive role in the conversion of England. Among the many legends dealing with the early monks are a number in which the metal smith is dealt with severely. Accounts of such legends from the Conversion period caution the unwary that God protects his servants from impious blacksmiths. The popularity of such legends in Anglo-Saxon England emerges from the writings of Bede, Eddius Stephanus and Thomas of Marlborough, yet it need not suggest that the English monks had little regard for the smith, as the historian H. R. Loyn has suggested.

In making this suggestion Loyn draws our attention to a legend recounted by Bede in Book V, Chapter xiv, of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*

Gentis Anglorum, which we will call by its more familiar title, Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*. Loyn's summary of this tale is correct as far as it goes, for it is true, as Loyn states, that

> Bede tells of an unworthy brother, a man of dark thoughts and deeds, whose drunkenness and devotion to his smithy rather than to church were tolerated only because he was such a skilled smith.[35]

What Loyn fails to point out, however, is that Bede's unfavourable attitude to this particular smith is dictated by monastic ideals which, as we have seen, were not unfavourable to smithcraft in general. A closer examination of Bede's account of this legend reveals that its main concern is with the unfortunate smith's soul and, by extension, with the human soul in general. As a true offspring of the monastery, Bede could only regard this smith's lack of discipline and piety with the utmost concern:

> I myself know a brother—Ah, how I wish I had never known him!—whose name I could mention were it desirable, who lived in a noble monastery but lived an ignoble life. He was often taken to task by the brethren and authorities of the house and warned to adopt a more disciplined life; and although he refused to listen to them, they bore with him patiently because they had need of his manual labour; for he was a skilled worker in metal. But he was much addicted to drunkenness and the other pleasures of a loose life, and used to remain in his workshop day and night rather than enter the church to sing and pray and to listen to the word of life with the brethren. So it happened to him according to the proverb that 'he that will not go through the church door in contrition willingly must needs be thrust through Hell door in damnation unwillingly'.

The fate suffered by the smith for his impiety was a warning to all and

showed, moreover, that monastic ideals as they pertained to the workplace were not to be slighted. For quite literally the wretched smith, unrepentant to the last, was consigned to the flames of Hell. Bede describes a horrifying death-bed scene in which the smith, having suddenly been taken ill, foresees clearly the place prepared for him 'with Caiaphas and others who had slain our Lord condemned like him to the avenging flames'. The community urges him to repent, but the smith dies before there is time. Bede concludes the tale on a solemn note of fearful dread, recording that the smith's fate was thought to have been irrevocably sealed, for

> he died without receiving the saving Viaticum, and his body was buried in the remotest part of the monastery, nor did anyone dare to say masses or sing psalms for him, or even pray for him.[36]

In summary, Bede's tale is a pious exposure of a particular vice, but it would be reading too much into it to regard it as an exposure of the general unworthiness of all smiths. Fortunately, we have already seen a more precise statement of Bede's views on the virtues and vices of smithcraft and know that these were not unfavourable, for Bede urges that the smith be cautioned against the temptation of regarding his handicraft as his highest good, but at the same time argues that when properly disciplined the smith is a most worthy member of the Christian community.[37]

Bede's tale of the smith who was condemned to Hell for his impiety is indicative, not of native public opinion, but of a vigorous monastic influence on legends of the forge in early England. This influence has gone virtually unrecognized, with the result that we are perhaps inclined to misapprehend the significance of the legendary smith in Anglo-Saxon times. Loyn, for example, feels that 'the smith does not bulk as large in Anglo-Saxon legend as in the folk-tales of continental Germans and the Scandinavians'.[38] This statement is unexceptionable only if we confine our attention to legendary smiths like Weland who stem from Germanic heroic lore. If we take Christian material into account, we must concede that the smith bulked larger in Anglo-Saxon legend than we are perhaps able now to appreciate. For Bede's account of the condemned smith is only one example of a phenomenon of which there were doubtless many other instances. Thus, for example, we may point to a legend found in the life of the monastic pioneer St Wilfrid (*c.* 633-709) written by Eddius Stephanus between 710 and 720. The legend we refer to describes how two smiths of doubtful piety were miraculously prevented from binding the saint hand and foot with iron chains. Wilfrid's enemy, King Egfrith of Northumbria, had ordered his imprisonment at Dunbar. The smiths who were assigned the job of putting Wilfrid in irons, however, seemed especially pleased with their commission: 'they diligently set about the inexcusable operation by first taking the measurement of our holy confessor's limbs'. But despite their misdirected zeal, they could not

succeed:

> God was against them. For always the chains were either too tight and narrow to fit around his limbs, or else they were too wide and loose so that they fell free from the feet that had journeyed for the Gospel and from the hands that had baptized.

Eventually the smiths were forced to abandon the project, for they 'became so frightened that they left the man of God unchained'.[39] The import of this entertaining tale is that God protects his servants from their enemies, including impious smiths. In this respect it is similar to continental legends in which smiths with evil intentions toward the servants of God are likewise miraculously foiled.

While it may or may not be possible to find more such examples of legends of profane smiths in Anglo-Saxon sources, there is evidence that some legends were once current which do not occur in any of our extant Anglo-Saxon materials. In the case of the legend of the Anglo-Saxon monastic founder St Egwin (d. 717) and the smiths of Alcester, for example, we have a fine specimen which is possibly of Anglo-Saxon origin, but which was not recorded, so far as we know, until the early thirteenth century. It first occurs in the life of St Egwin composed between 1218 and 1229 by Thomas of Marlborough, Prior of Evesham, a monastic institution founded by Egwin in about 700. In narrating the legend of St Egwin and the smiths of Alcester, Thomas tells us that its source is not to be found in previous lives of the saint and intimates that it was

current among the inhabitants of Alcester.[40] It is quite possible, then, that the legend, like Bede's tale of the monastic smith who was condemned to Hell, originated in the Conversion period, but was preserved orally. It is noteworthy, in this respect, that although Bede's tale is known to us chiefly because it was included in the widely read *Ecclesiastical History*, it may also have been preserved for some time in oral form, for Bede tells us that it was 'talked of far and wide, rousing many people to do penance for their sins without delay' (Book V, Chapter xiv, p. 298). The initial impact of the legend of St Egwin and the smiths of Alcester might similarly have insured its long survival in oral form. The legend itself is characteristic of early medieval legends about profane smiths, especially the Anglo-Saxon examples, for it tells how impious smiths were miraculously punished by God. These smiths were residents of Alcester, which was a thriving centre of iron-working, according to the legend, in St Egwin's time. One day St Egwin set out to convert Alcester: arriving at the town, he attempted to preach to the inhabitants, but was prevented from doing so by the stubborn resistance of the smiths, who, beating their hammers on their anvils, deliberately prevented Egwin from being heard. Thus forced to abandon his mission, Egwin retreated from Alcester and angrily called down God's judgement on those who had treated a missionary so insultingly. God answered Egwin's prayer and immediately Alcester and its stubborn, impious smiths were completely swallowed by the earth. Thereafter no smith was ever allowed to work

there.[41] Though God's behaviour in judging the smiths so severely may strike us today as somewhat harsh, the originator of this legend doubtless thought it appropriate. His stern piety in this regard resembles that of Gregory of Tours, Bede and other early medieval writers who took a lively interest in legends of profane smiths.

Such interest in legends of profane smiths was, we have seen, necessarily complemented by a corresponding interest in legends of holy smiths. The vigour with which Anglo-Saxon England gave rise to the former thus implies that the holy smith must also have been zealously promoted, especially in the monastery. Indeed, there are a number of indications that the holy smith was a much more representative product of Anglo-Saxon views of the forge than has previously been appreciated. The prestige of the holy smith is indicated not only by surviving memorials of a number of Anglo-Saxon smith-saints, but by the intensity with which the Anglo-Saxon monasteries cultivated the art of metal-working.

While our knowledge of the monastic arts in Anglo-Saxon England is far from complete, there is some evidence that monks engaged in craft work. It was fashionable at one time to take a sceptical view of monastic involvement in the arts, but today a more balanced historiography readily acknowledges that the monastic craftsman, even in the later Middle Ages, was not uncommonly a professed religious. The doubt which until recently hung over the monastic craftsman has been dispelled, as Christopher Brooke has explained:

It has come to be increasingly realised, first, that the bulk of precise evidence comes from the thirteenth century or later, and second, that by then lay professionals were producing the majority even of finely written books, the most characteristically monastic of all the crafts before the twelfth century. The pendulum has swung back a fair distance—not perhaps yet quite far enough—but it is safe to say that in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries monastic involvement was common in many crafts, and played a crucial part in some; and in the same period monastic inspiration and patronage played its most vital role even where monks themselves were not engaged in artistic work. Equally, it is clear that there was no period when secular men did not play a large part in every craft. In the tenth century monastic revival in England St Dunstan and St Ethelwold were personally involved in the artistic work characteristic of their age; and of many of the eminent Norman monks of the eleventh century Orderic Vitalis notes that they had special skills, commonly in music and the chant. These are samples, but they can be multiplied sufficiently to show that in that non-specialist world, craftsmanship of various kinds was as normal inside as outside the cloister; that in communities dedicated, in some measure—even in the traditional monasticism of the tenth and eleventh centuries—to work, those whose talents lay in that direction had nothing to hinder them, much to give encouragement.[42]

What is true of the tenth and eleventh centuries is true also of earlier centuries with respect to monastic work. There is every indication also that from its earliest days the Anglo-Saxon church must have fostered a disciplined and pious approach to the arts.

Metal-working in particular early experienced the influence of the Church. Early churchmen were, apparently, informed of England's mineral resources. Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* considers them significant: 'The land has rich veins of many metals, including copper, iron, lead, and silver,' he observes, adding, 'There is also much jet of fine quality' (Book I, Chapter 1, p. 38). Accordingly, the Church sought to make use of

these resources. There is some evidence which suggests that the Church became involved in mining. Monks at Lyminge in Kent are said to have possessed an iron mine in the seventh century, while in the ninth an estate at Wirksworth in Derbyshire had to provide the Archbishop of Canterbury with lead.[43] Metalworking was carried on in the monasteries. In Northumbria, Bede describes the burly Abbot Eosterwine at Wearmouth helping his monks with the hard work of beating iron in the smithy shortly before Eosterwine's death in 686.[44] In the eighth century, the monks of Wearmouth may have been engaged in the manufacture of small knives (*cultelli*), for extant letters to Lull of Mainz (*c.* 710-786) indicate that Wearmouth sent such items to Lull in Germany.[45] In the south of England probably several monastic workshops engaged in metalworking in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The *Liber Vitae* of New Minster, Winchester, includes the names of three smiths, one in holy orders.[46] At Abingdon, St Aethelwold (*c.* 912-84) was said to have been skilful at goldsmithing, while an eleventh century abbot was reputed to have been the goldsmith of King Edward the Confessor.[47] At Evesham in the eleventh century there was a noted goldsmith called Manni (fl. 1044-1058) who supervised the workshop and subsequently became abbot.[48] Beyond the monastic enclosure, meanwhile, the Church had also been encouraging the development of Anglo-Saxon metal-work. To foster the production of ecclesiastical artefacts early Northumbrian bishops are said to have imported craftsman from as far away as Kent and France.[49] By the late

eighth century, in the opinion of David Wilson, English metal smiths had established an international reputation for fine ecclesiastical work; he notes that the Austrian, Duke Tassilo, in *c.* 777 probably commissioned Anglo-Saxon craftsmen to manufacture the admired Tassilo Chalice, which survives to this day as the property of the monks at Kremsmünster.[50] As a result of Anglo-Saxon skill at ecclesiastical metal-working both in and outside the monastery, England was renowned for the splendour of its churches, many of which were treasure-houses adorned with elaborately wrought altars, crucifixes, reliquaries and other sacred objects made of precious gold, silver and gems.[51]

Ecclesiastical interest in metal-working and the other arts is reflected also in vernacular poetry. In Old English religious verse one frequently comes across a traditional medieval topos, or well-established argument, encouraging a pious and disciplined approach to work. Usually called the *Gifts of Men* topos by Anglo-Saxonists, this set-piece occurs in *Christ II* (lines 664-85), *The Gifts of Men* and *The Fortunes of Men* (lines 67-98). In recent years, a concerted effort of *Quellenforschung* by a number of scholars has traced some of the sources and analogues of this topos, clearly indicating that it was a stock item of medieval Christian thought which probably was substantially influenced by meditations on the Scriptural parable of the Talents (Matthew xxv, 14-30) such as occur in the Pauline epistles (Romans xii, 6-8; I Corinthians xii, 8-10; and Ephesians iv, 8) as well as the homilies of Gregory the Great.[52] The

topos speaks of manual skill as a species of wisdom granted to men by God for the purpose of achieving spiritual as well as material ends. It is found in a sermon of Haymo of Auxerre (fl. *c.* 840) in a passage which argues that talents

> exist not only in ecclesiastical occupations, but also among the people, who have various skills by which they support themselves: some are masons, others carpenters, others smiths, others workmen; and for each man the skill by which he earns his living will be considered worth a talent. If he instructs others in what he knows, he will receive a reward in the future.[53]

Old English examples of the Gifts of Men topos give much longer lists of talents and occupations and argue that one should regard with humility the fact that one's own talents are necessarily limited:

> Nis nu ofer eorþan ænig monna
> mode þæs cræftig, ne þæs mægeneacen,
> þæt hi æfre anum ealle weorþen
> gegearwade, þy læs him gilp sceððe . . . .[54]

(There is now no one man on earth so ingenious of mind nor so enhanced with strength that all these things would ever be furnished for him alone, lest vainglory should harm him . . . .)[55]

The purpose of the topos of the *Gifts of Men* was clearly to foster a pious and disciplined spirit in the artisan. Its influence may also be felt in an early twelfth century textbook devoted to the manual arts, particularly goldsmithing, written on the Continent by the monk Theophilus.

Theophilus advises that even the smallest tasks are performed by means of the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit. For example

> through the spirit of godliness, you regulate with pious care the nature, the purpose, the time, measure and method of the work and the amount of the reward lest the vice of avarice or cupidity steal in.

And

> through the spirit of fear of the Lord, you remember that you can do nothing of yourself; you reflect that you have or intend nothing unless accorded by God, but by believing, by acknowledging and rendering thanks, you ascribe to the divine compassion whatever you know, or are, or are able to be.[56]

In tethering the humble skills of the manual arts to the divine will, the topos of the Gifts of Men perennially offered a persuasive argument for pursuing Christian ideals of industry.

In Anglo-Saxon England, as in Ireland and on the Continent, these ideals were embodied in the figure of the pious smith whose craftsmanship and virtue were exemplary. The number of such men in Anglo-Saxon England may have been not inconsiderable. Though most may be long forgotten, among their contemporaries they would have inspired widespread admiration and praise. Faint echoes of a few venerable reputations linger in some ancient memorials whose preservation we often owe mainly to chance. Thus the reputation of an eighth century Frankish smith was

embalmed when the influential scholar Alcuin, whose writings men thought worth saving, briefly alluded to him in a letter: Alcuin expresses his admiration of this smith by referring to him as 'Beselel'.[57] The piety of two goldsmiths named Ælfric and Wulfwine is meanwhile made known to us only because there survives an Anglo-Saxon Gospel book from Thorney which contains an entry to the effect that these smiths donated two ounces of gold to provide the book with a cover of filigree work (the cover has not survived).[58] Had we better documentation of Anglo-Saxon civilization, we would doubtless know of more such men and more of the esteem in which they were held.

A few further survivals meanwhile give us some indication of the prestige which a pious smith might enjoy in Anglo-Saxon times. If Anglo-Saxons contributed to the body of European legends about profane smiths, they also drew from and added to the stock of legends about saintly smiths. The legend of St Dunstan and the Devil is a well-known example. The story of how Dunstan (909-988), who was reputed to have been a skilled metal smith, overcame the Devil while working in the forge has often been told: with his smith's tongs Dunstan grabbed the Fiend by the nose until he begged for quarter (Figure 2.) The incident occurs in later medieval lives of the saint and in ecclesiastical art. More recently it has been vigorously re-told by Hillaire Belloc and it remains one of the best known of medieval English legends.[59] What is not well-known is that this incident predates Dunstan's time and is found, as we have seen, in

Figure 2:

St Dunstan grabbing the Devil's nose with his smiths' tongs (reproduced from British Museum MS 10 E IV, f. 250 v).

the fifth century life of the Egyptian monk St Apollo.[60] Nor is it widely recognized that there were pious legendary smiths celebrated in Anglo-Saxon England long before Dunstan's time. From Northumbria in the eighth and ninth centuries there are survivals of legendary traditions regarding two saintly monastic metal-workers, one a goldsmith, the other a blacksmith.

The blacksmith in question is, historically, an obscure figure, but he is known to us because he is celebrated in an Anglo-Latin poem, *De Abbatibus*, which praises the abbots of a Northumbrian monastery. The poem is dated to *c.* 821, but the identity of the monastery is unknown, nor is anything known about the poem's author except his name, Aethelwulf.[61] Aethelwulf describes the piety and craftsmanship of a saintly blacksmith called Cwicwine. It is an idealised picture which culminates in the smith's apotheosis: if Aethelwulf knew any details about Cwicwine's background, training or personal foibles, he has suppressed them in order to give us a formal portrait of an exemplary monastic blacksmith and to establish the smith's reputation for sanctity. Cwicwine, it emerges, was regarded in ninth century Northumbria as a saint who had most certainly been granted heavenly salvation after death; this was vouchsafed by a wonderful vision granted to a monk called Aethwine. As the smith Cwicwine lay dying, Aethwine beheld that

a troop shining with light came from heaven and sped to enter the cell of the blessed pastor [i.e. Cwicwine], and took his chaste soul from his chaste body. It was resplendent, surpassing indeed the light of the sun, and

flying with the troop it entered the citadel above.

(p. 26)

In Aethelwulf's poem, this vision provides a fitting conclusion to a life of exemplary piety, humility, discipline and charity, for Cwicwine

> burned for the true joys, and what he had before sought in eagerness to acquire with his hands, he gave this in generosity to the miserable poor. He was perpetually performing fasts for whole days, as if the solemn times of the Lord's saints had been occupying him. While the brothers sang the nocturnal hymns in sacred concert, and departed to return to their retirement, the brother we have mentioned kept to the confines of the church, and did not refrain from pressing the floor with his knees, as he earnestly commended himself to God (to journey) to the stars. The brothers, when the light of day came would again wish to commend themselves to God with many prayers. The monk loved to join their holy troops and say the psalms, and he would commend himself and all of them to the Lord. Then when the psalms of matins had been completed, forthwith the hammer rang on the anvil as the metal was struck, and as it flew and smote the empty air, it decked the table of the brothers by beating out vessels.
>
> (pp. 24-26)

Cwicwine was clearly a smith of great spirituality. To portray him, Aethelwulf undoubtedly called to mind other legendary smiths. It is perhaps no coincidence that Cwicwine is the very antithesis of the profane smith (in Bede's legend) who shunned church and went to Hell. This tale was probably known to Aethelwulf, nor is it improbable that he had read Adamnan's account of the apotheosis of the blacksmith Columb Coilrigin. Aethelwulf was a poet of some erudition and he was aware of the portrayal in a fifth century Gallican poem of another legendary smith,

Tubalcain. Aethelwulf's vivid image of Cwicwine at work in the forge (lines 280-1, pp. 24-25),

> diuersisque modis sapiens incude subactum
> malleus in ferrum peditat, stridente camino

(his hammer under wise guidance crashed on to the iron placed under it in different positions on the anvil, while the forge roared),

is derived from Cyprian's portrait of Tubalcain in the *Heptateuchos.*[62] Clearly, Aethelwulf conceived of Cwicwine as no ordinary smith, but as a member of a class of legendary smiths, both holy and profane, whose importance was primarily spiritual.

Cwicwine was not the only Northumbrian smith to acquire a legendary reputation. Indeed it is possible that, had we more information, we would be able to catalogue a number of early Anglo-Saxon legends of holy smiths. Aethelwulf's poem about Cwicwine may be only an indication of what has been lost. It is not a unique instance. By good luck we know of another legendary Northumbrian metal-worker, the goldsmith Billfrith. While Cwicwine is known only from the poetry composed by Aethelwulf in his honour, the saintly Billfrith is chiefly remembered because of his connection with a famous treasure of early Christian art. Tradition associated Billfrith with the Lindisfarne Gospels: a colophon added to this illustrious book in the tenth century numbers him among the pious monastic craftsmen of the eighth century who copied and embellished it.

Billfrith's work is spoken of with admiration:

Billfrið se oncre, he gismioðade ða gihrino ða ðe vtan on sint, 7 hit gihrinade mið golde 7 mið gimmvm, ec mið svlfre ofgylded faconleas feh.

(Billfrith, the anchorite, wrought the ornaments upon the outside and adorned it, this unalloyed metal gilded over, with gold and gems and also with silver(?).)[63]

In addition to his skilful craftsmanship Billfrith was noted also for his holiness. In the North of England he was venerated as a saint. According to David Hugh Farmer, Billfrith's name is included in the *Liber Vitae* of Durham and

the supposed relics of Billfrith were discovered by Alfred Westow in the 11th century and removed to Durham, where the feast of Billfrith and Baldred the hermit were celebrated on 6 March.[64]

Tradition regarded Billfrith as partly responsible for at least one miracle after his death. During the period of the Viking raids the Lindisfarne Gospels codex was removed from Holy Island to the mainland of Northumbria for safe keeping. In transit it was lost overboard, but was subsequently recovered from the sea unharmed. This minor miracle was attributed to the intercession of Billfrith and other early Northumbrian saints.[65]

With the legends of Billfrith and Cwicwine we must conclude this survey of medieval legends of the forge, but we end on a positive note.

Although we must recognize that probably many legends have been lost or forgotten, enough survive to show that the smith could occupy an honourable place in the hearts and minds of Anglo-Saxons. Moreover, it appears that their era was an especially auspicious one for the production of pious and imaginative legends of the forge.

CHAPTER IV: The Master of All Masters

Suche a smyth as thou art one,
I dare say here is none,
And a man shoulde gone
  Throughout thys land.
For I dare say that thou can,
If here wert a dead man,
Make hym on lyve anone,
  With they excelent maystry.

These extraordinary words of praise are addressed to Christ in a Middle English poem called *The Smyth and His Dame.*[1] The subject matter of this poem, it is now known, is a widely distributed folk-motif called 'The Saviour and the Smith'. A salient feature of this motif is its portrayal of Christ performing great feats of wonder-working in the forge (Figure 3). He is able, for example, to restore a deformed elderly woman to perfect health and beauty by heating her in the forge and hammering her on the anvil. He is also depicted bringing the dead wife of another blacksmith back to life again. Another typical feature of this motif is that Christ is shown in competition with an egregiously boastful blacksmith whom Christ has no difficulty in humiliating with his supernatural powers.[2] These, for modern readers, are perhaps less remarkable than the fact that Christ is said to be a metal smith, for he is not normally associated with the forge today. Contemporary Christians are familiar with the tradition that Christ was an artisan, but they picture him not as a blacksmith working with iron, but as a carpenter working with wood. In English-speaking churches,

Figure 3:

Jesus (left, with nimbus) rejuvenating a woman in the forge, woodcut from Copland's early sixteenth century edition of *The Smyth and His Dame* (reproduced here from Hazlitt, *Remains of the Early Popular Poetry of England*, iii, 201).

for example, they may sing of Christ as the 'Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith, / whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe'.[3] The notion of these same hands wielding the smith's hammer and tongs would doubtless strike many Christians as unorthodox.

Nevertheless, the motif of 'The Saviour and the Smith', in which Christ is depicted as a blacksmith, is a venerable one in European tradition. Researches carried out by Carl Marstrander and Carl-Martin Edsman have indicated that it was well-established by the time of the Reformation. Our Middle English version, *The Smyth and His Dame*, is known from a unique copy printed in London by Wyllyam Copland (fl. 1510); in addition, a fragment survives of another early printed edition by Robert Fludd. Its date of composition is, however, somewhat earlier than the fifteenth century and was estimated by Horstmann on philological grounds to be *c.* 1360.[4] Continental versions of 'The Saviour and the Smith' meanwhile go back at least as far as the fifteenth century. Edsman reports a Provençal version in a redaction of the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew* in a fifteenth century Florentine manuscript in the British Museum.[5] Marstrander meanwhile cites an early German version by a fifteenth century Nuremburg barber, Hans Folz, as well as a somewhat later one by Hans Sachs (d. 1576).[6] In addition to these medieval examples, many folkloric versions of the motif were recorded in the nineteenth century. Marstrander cites examples from Ireland (pp. 375-87), Norway (pp. 403-7), Denmark (pp. 408-9), Finland (pp. 412-13), Russia

(p. 464), Austria (pp. 453-4), Germany (pp. 442-6), Flanders and France (pp. 414-6) and Italy (pp. 433-435). However strange we may think the portrayal of Christ as a blacksmith today, it apparently was once much less so. Clearly, it was at one time quite natural to imagine Christ at work in the forge.

Indeed, one cannot exclude Christ from consideration as one of the foremost legendary smiths of the Middle Ages. It is, however, necessary to investigate why Christ was portrayed as a legendary blacksmith and especially to ask if the image of Christ in the forge had any basis in medieval piety. Unfortunately, it has for a long time been assumed that the origins of Christ the Blacksmith lay outside Christian tradition in the remote and inaccessible pagan past. This assumption has led to 'explanations' of Christ's role as a wonder-working smith which are unhelpfully evasive and unedifyingly mysterious. In the nineteenth century, for example, Carew Hazlitt suggested, *à propos The Smyth and His Dame*, that we were dealing with 'a remarkable specimen of the manner in which the miraculous attributes of our Lord were adapted by the framers of medieval tales to current superstitions'.[7] The nature of these 'current superstitions' Hazlitt left to the reader's imagination. Subsequently, unsuccessful attempts were made to divine in the legendary figure of Christ the Blacksmith a lost myth of Odin.[8] More recently, we find Mircea Eliade restating Hazlitt's assumptions in more modern, but no less mysterious, terminology:

in these folkloric creations Jesus in presented as the 'master of fire' *par excellence*, and the blacksmith is endowed with magical qualities. This is an indirect demonstration of beliefs of undeniable antiquity.[9]

Such a bold generalization tends to overwhelm criticism, but it is best not to be intimidated. Are the qualities with which the blacksmith is endowed in legendary depictions of Christ in the forge really magical, or are they not rather akin to the typical signs of Christ's divinity familiar from Scripture? What Eliade and others in their desire to uncover evidence of sorcery have also failed to consider is the possibility that Christ's associations with the forge may have been a matter of special concern for pre-Reformation Christianity. Consequently, in the present chapter we are going to try to approach the curious subject matter of *The Smyth and His Dame* from the vantage point of Christian tradition. We shall consider here three aspects of tradition which ought to be relevant: stories of Jesus; legends of profane and holy smiths; and images of Christ as an artisan. Our purpose in this inquiry is to see whether or not legends of Christ the blacksmith were supported by authoritative medieval Christian beliefs.

Stories of Jesus

Traditional Christian stories of Christ are keenly, even excessively, interested in miracles. The subject matter of *The Smyth and His Dame* is not unusual in this regard: Christ is shown rejuvenating an old woman

and reviving a dead one with his miraculous powers. It is not difficult to find Christian antecedents for such an image of Christ; miracles are a familiar *leitmotif* of the Gospels. One might even note that a cogent similarity exists between the portrayal of Christ as wonder-worker in *The Smyth and His Dame* and the Christ of the New Testament, for the miraculous in each case is coupled with teaching. In Matthew we read that Christ

> went all about Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people.
>
> (iv, 23)

The miracles were seen as a sign of Christ's authority and a fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy that the Messiah would be a healer (Matthew viii, 16-17); and they therefore helped to attract a large following to Christ's teachings. The miracles in *The Smyth and His Dame* are also intended to demonstrate the authority of Christ and lead to the recognition, on the part of the boastful profane smith and his two womenfolk, that Christ is indeed the Lord of Creation. The characterization of Christ in the Middle English legend stems, in this respect, from the example of the Gospels.

It stems also from the example, more sensational and less edifying, of the apocryphal Gospels, in particular stories of Christ's childhood. These apocryphal writings are stories about the lives of Jesus and other prominent New Testament figures. They were composed in imitation of

the Gospels and were produced in Christian communities between the first and sixth centuries. Their role within the Church has been secondary, but as a Catholic authority has written, not without positive influence:

> though the Church, ever careful of guarding the purity of the Gospel message unsullied has not accepted them as the Word of God—for so many fables and idle tales have gained currency under the title of gospel—she does not deny that these are an expression, and often a right and profound one, of her tradition.[10]

The same writer elaborates further on the differences and similarities between the apocryphal writings and the New Testament by emphasizing their common Christianity:

> The apocryphal writings set out to tell us what the Gospels do not say. But the reader cannot realize too strongly that a whole world of beauty, truth and depth separates the Gospel from its imitations. One thing is certain; the apocryphal writings have been added to Revelation. Their doctrinal rôle has been entirely secondary: dogma is not based on them, but on a growing understanding, at once wise and prudent, of Scripture. Yet we do find intuitions of the Faith in the apocryphal writings, since they have been produced by the Christian mind. It would be ungracious to forget that many of these writings represent reflection on Scripture, upon which the Fathers nourished their thought, and are a witness to the origins of Catholic theology. Nor must we overlook their influence on Christian literature and art—especially in the Middle Ages—an influence which has contributed not a little to inform the mind and heart of the faithful.
>
> (pp. 11-12)

One of the subjects about which the apocryphal writings informed the faithful was the hidden early life of Jesus, for the New Testament is

reticent about Jesus's childhood. Accordingly, there are numerous apocryphal stories about the details of the nativity in Bethlehem and the visit of the three Magi, about the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt and their subsequent life at Nazareth in Galilee.

Of particular interest for an appreciation of the marvellous in the characterization of Christ in *The Smyth and His Dame* are the apocryphal writings which portray him as a wonder-working artisan. The New Testament mentions briefly that Christ was known in Nazareth as an artisan (Mark, vi, 3) and as the son of Joseph the artisan (Matthew xiii, 55). The apocryphal writing known as *The Infancy Story of Thomas* elaborates on the bare facts of Scripture by portraying Joseph as a carpenter and Jesus as his wonder-working assistant. In one incident, for example, Jesus miraculously stretches a plank of wood, which Joseph had measured incorrectly, to enable an important project to succeed. In another incident Jesus miraculously heals a workmate's foot after it had been accidentally injured by an axe.[11] Such incidents provide us with obvious analogies for the portrayal of Christ as a wonder-working blacksmith in *The Smyth and His Dame*; moreover, they suggest that this portrayal stems not from magic, but from the idea that Jesus was the son of God. *The Smyth and His Dame* shares with *The Infancy Story of Thomas* a belief that although Jesus's early life was passed among artisans he must have been no ordinary workman, but one who displayed openly his divine powers.

This belief, which may seem logical enough, is in fact problematic, however. While it need not necessarily stem from pre-Christian magical beliefs, it is nonetheless a distortion of the orthodox view of the character of Christ. Monsignor Lucien Cerfaux has observed of *The Infancy Story of Thomas* that 'the miracles attributed to Jesus are very childish' and some even have 'rather shocking features'.[12] We may note also that some disquiet about the portrayal of Christ in *The Smyth and His Dame* was voiced by John Edwin Wells, who thought that

> much of this mixture of rude jest and pious tale is broadly comic and certainly of low appeal. The author saw no impropriety in the colloquy between the smith and the Lord, or in the smith's impudence to Him.[13]

What these distinguished scholars have objected to, quite rightly, is the tendency in these stories to characterize Christ as somewhat playful and shallow. This tendency is a blemish characteristic of the infancy gospels, however, and the extent to which it is present in *The Smyth and His Dame* possibly reflects non-Christian influences, but could equally be due to an uninhibited imagination. Thus it is not really necessary here to adduce the tricks played on and by Odin and Thor in Norse legend to explain the playfulness of Christ, as some have done in the past.[14] This particular presentation of Christ's character is more readily traced to the unfortunate example of apocryphal writings dealing with Christ's infancy in which, as Jacques Hervieux states, there is 'rank confusion of the

supernatural with the wondrous':

> In the apocryphal narratives the miracles of Jesus are at once ostentatious, useless and misplaced. The Child needlessly multiplies his miracles for spectacular purposes. No doubt they were induced by the naive curiosity of a people always moved by superhuman adventures. But how can we forgive the authors for depicting all the mischievous tricks of a street urchin, the spiteful and thoroughly reprehensible actions which they ascribe to him? The degradation of what is holy is here a sign of an utterly erroneous idea of the miraculous. In the inspired Gospel Jesus is certainly not a worker of wonders just to startle the crowds.[15]

The characterization of Christ in the apocryphal writings, according to Hervieux, fails to convey the right atmosphere, for

> there is nothing in common between the exaggerated and fantastic atmosphere of the marvellous which encumbers the legendary infancy of Jesus, and the redemptive work of Jesus 'who went about doing good' in a world suffering from a threefold sickness of sin, suffering and death. Gravity is the hall mark of the supernatural.
> (p. 118)

While gravity may be lacking in *The Smyth and His Dame* also, this is clearly not an untypical blemish in apocryphal stories of Christ. But it is probably due, not to covert paganism, but to an ingenuous and disarmingly unaffected piety.

Profane and holy smiths

In no small measure, moreover, the jesting and 'broadly comic' tone of *The Smyth and His Dame* is generated by satire. This, however, is

directed at Christ's antagonist, the egregiously boastful blacksmith who calls himself the 'Master of All Masters'. Yet this theme too has notable Christian antecedents and we shall now take a brief look at some interesting analogues. These analogues indicate, in fact, that the subject matter of *The Smyth and His Dame* is related in no small part to the materials which we investigated in the previous chapter, and to the ideal which they express.

The ideal metal smith in the religious writing of the early Middle Ages was, as we have seen, a saintly figure characterized by piety, discipline and humility. The smith who measured up to this ideal might expect a heavenly reward, while he who disregarded it could expect divine retribution. This ideal was simple and straightforward, but religious writers recognized that smiths still experienced difficulty in attaining it. According to the wisdom of the Church, one of the chief reasons for this was the smith's excessive pride in his skill; and in this assessment the wisdom of the Church probably derived from experience.

One of the perennial questions which arise when men consider the manual arts is invitingly pragmatic: Which craft is the most useful? This question provided the early medieval school-master with a standard debating topic: examples survive of Latin debates between specific tradesmen, such as the baker and the cook.[16] Aelfric's *Colloquy*, written for school use in Dorset about the year 1000, debates the question by airing the views of several tradesmen, including the smith, who puts forth a significantly

cogent argument for the pre-eminence of metal-working. Before looking at Aelfric's pious rebuttal of this argument, we might first consider another version of the same debate in which the smith triumphs decisively. The origins of this version are obscure: it formed part of the common folk-lore of English smiths in the late nineteenth century and was published in *Folk Lore Journal* in 1884. It is a significant expression of the smiths' pride in their craft and may well have ancient roots. I cite it here in the more concise form given by Frederick Robins in *The Smith: Tradition and Lore of an Ancient Craft*:

A king (one version says King Alfred) wished to build himself a palace, so called together all the master craftsmen for the purpose, and announced that the man doing the best work would be called 'Father of All Craftsmen'. When the castle was finished, the king was so pleased with the way in which they had laboured that he gave a big banquet and commanded all the craftsmen to attend, in their traditional clothes and bearing their tools; at this feast the 'Father of All Craftsmen' would be chosen and set at the head of the table. The choice was difficult; mason, sculptor, smith all had done their work to perfection. Eventually, he got out of the difficulty by appointing his tailor, who, though he had nothing to do with the building of the palace, was essential to the robing of the king himself in gracing the structure.

At the end of the banquet, all the guests went home except the blacksmith, who disappeared into the forest. Then, when the mason wanted new tools, there was no one to make them, no one to make chisels for the carpenter, no one to mend the broken hinges of the palace gates, no one to shoe the king's horses. The tailor's scissors broke and could not be repaired. Even the warriors could not fight without a smith. So the king commanded search to be made for the smith, who was found in a cave. Then the king called another feast, and announced that, since none of the others could work without the smith, he must be 'Father of All Craftsmen' and sit at the head of the table.[17]

As this tale illustrates quite graphically, the smith could claim to be the most useful tradesman because all the rest depended upon him for necessary tools. A similar argument is used by the smith in Aelfric's *Colloquy.* In support of the opinion that the smith is the most useful workman, Aelfric's smith puts his argument in the form of a rhetorical question:

> Where does the ploughman get his ploughshare or coulter or goad, except by my craft? Where the fisherman his hook, or the shoemaker his awl, or the tailor his needle? Isn't it from my work?[18]

While this argument might convince King Alfred in the folk-tale cited above, it did not convince medieval churchmen like Aelfric, however, as we shall see.

Although the smith's argument has a plausible ring to it, for the medieval churchman it sounded hollow. The church's objection to it was that it assumed that men were primarily technologists. The church, however, taught that man was both more and less than *homo faber.* In Aelfric's *Colloquy*, the monastic counsellor points out that while men have a heavenly destiny they are also like animals and need food before they need tools, though he admits to the smith that the argument about tools has a certain validity:

> What you say is in fact true. But we would all prefer to live with you, ploughman, than with you, because the ploughman gives us food and

drink. You, what do you give us in your smithy but iron sparks, and the noise of hammers beating and bellows blowing?
(p. 113)

This rebuttal is a mixture of pragmatic wisdom and scornful caricature. Yet H. R. Loyn has perhaps too hastily presumed that 'the smith was put firmly in his inferior and noisome place'.[19] The place of the smith in medieval thought was not unimportant and the monastic counsellor is merely attempting to pour cold water on the smith's ardent vanity. The smith and his fellow workmen are encouraged to pursue their trades with discipline and humility:

Oh, friends and good workmen, let us bring these arguments to an end quickly, and let there be peace and concord between us, and let each one of us help the others by his craft. And let us always agree with the ploughman, where we find food for ourselves and fodder for our horses. And I give this advice to all workmen, that each one pursue his trade diligently; for he who abandons his craft will be abandoned by his craft. Whoever you are, whether priest or monk or peasant or soldier, exercise yourself in this, and be what you are; because it is a great disgrace and shame for a man not to want to be what he is, and what he has to be.
(pp. 113-14)

It was the smith's worldliness and ambition, in truth, which made him a target of the medieval church. As we indicated in the previous chapter, early medieval churchmen not infrequently attacked self-interest as the typical vice of smiths. The spiritual folly of this vice was typically associated with the smith's fame as a great craftsman. Bede's tale about a doomed, impious smith, for example, notes that the man's skills were so

valuable that his fellows were deterred from disciplining him, though it might have helped his soul escape damnation. Furthermore, the Monk of St Gall's account of Tancho the bellfounder tells us that before his tragic fall from grace Tancho's 'skill at moulding bronze and glass was greater than that of anyone else in the world'. In such legends, as well as in Aelfric's treatment of the smith in the *Colloquy*, we see clear indications that the metal smith's vanity provided medieval churchmen with a familiar target of ridicule.

This target, embodied in the perdurable form of the egregiously boastful blacksmith who calls himself a master of all masters, provides the subject matter of *The Smyth and His Dame* with its centre of gravity—and levity. Our anonymous Middle English author has infused his treatment of this material with mordant merriment; the opening portrait of the smith is a fine piece of ironic characterization which signals quite clearly that it introduces a traditional satire of vanity in the forge:

Some tyme ther dwelled a smyth,
That hath bothe lande and lyth,
Many a plowman hym wyth,
   By nyght and eke by day;
The smyth was a subtyll syer,
For well could he werke wyth the fyer
What men of hym wolde desyer,
   I tel you trouth by my fay.
He coude werke wyth a mall
Many maner of metall,
Hym selfe mayster dyd he call
   Wythouten any pere:
Moche boste gan he blowe,
And sayd he had no felowe

That coud worke worth a strawe
   To hym, ferre nor nere!
He called hym selfe the kynge,
Wythout any leasynge,
Of all manner of cunnynge,
   And of certes clere.
(lines 9-28)

With evident relish, the author of these lines has carefully set up his target, puffing him up with short bursts of significant detail. We see first a simple smith, then a wealthy landowner, then a 'subtyll syer' who calls himself a 'mayster . . . / Wythouten any pere', and finally a boaster who says he's 'the kynge . . . / Of all manner of cunninge'. At the same time we are made to *hear* what this fellow really is: a loud and noisome nuisance. A medieval audience, it is true, would probably have hearkened to this quicker than we and perhaps as early as the line, 'By nyght and eke by day'. Medieval smiths, like Gervais in Chaucer's 'The Miller's Tale', customarily worked at night to repair the tools and shoe the horses required for use the next day.[20] This could seriously impair the rest of honest people, as we know from a short piece of invective verse called 'The Blacksmiths', written *c.* 1400, which bitterly attacks this practice by communicating something of the noise that the smiths made late at night:

Tik, tak! hic hac! tiket, taket! tik, tak!
Lus, bus! lus, das! swich lif they leden,
Alle clothemeres: Christ hem give sorwe!
May no man for such bren-wateres on night han his rest.[21]

The boastful smith described in *The Smyth and His Dame*, who may also have worked at night, would doubtless have struck a similarly discordant note in the ears of a medieval audience. We may be able to sense this discordance as we listen to the smith at work with his 'mall' (which jangles with 'call', and 'metall') and as he 'blowes' his boasts as if he were a loud bellows. What is more to the point, however, is that the smith's behaviour (which another ethic might have praised for its avidity) was especially distressing to the medieval church. This smith, it is plain to see, is the descendant of a long line of profane smiths in medieval Christian legend.

Accordingly, it is only appropriate that he, like his legendary predecessors of Bernicia, Alcester, Dunbar and St Gall, should be punished by God. The subject matter of *The Smyth and His Dame* clearly derives from the pattern of the profane smith legends of the early Middle Ages in which unsanctioned behaviour in the forge met with divine retribution. The agent of this retribution in *The Smyth and His Dame* is the Son of God Himself. Christ's visit unannounced to the boastful smith's forge precipitates the events which lead to the sinner's humiliation. After Christ before the smith's eyes proves his pre-eminence at smithcraft by rejuvenating the smith's mother-in-law by roasting her in the hearth and hammering her body on the anvil until she becomes a beautiful young woman again, the smith, left to his own devices, only meets with disaster when he tries to duplicate Christ's feat by going to work on his ugly,

deformed wife: only too quickly the wretched woman ends up as a dismembered corpse. In a remarkably poignant passage of black humour we see the smith at work as if he were in his own private Hell:

> Then he hent her up on hy,
> And layed her on the stethy,
> And hamered her strongely
> With strokes that were ungayne.
> Fast on her he layed,
> Waxe yong, dame, he sayd.
> Then bothe her legges at a brayd
> Fell sone her fro.
> What, evyll hayle, sayd he,
> Wylt not thou yonge be?
> Speke now, let me se,
> And say ones, bo.
> Then he toke her by the heed,
> And sayd, Dame, art thou deed?
> Speke now in thys steed,
> And say ye or els nay:
> Though both thy legges be awai,
> Yet speke, pardy, thou may;
> Say on, dame, I the pray,
> Felest thou any wo?
> Dame, I have lost on the
> Moche labour truely,
> Now and thou deed be,
> So fayre must me be fall.
> Loud on her he can cry,
> And sayde, Dame, speke on hye,
> Or by my trouth truely,
> Brenne thee up I shall.
> What! canst thou nothyng say?
> I holde thee deed by this day.
> Her arme anone he threw away,
> Even agaynst the wall . . . .
> (lines 396-427)

By the end of this passage the mood has sobered considerably and the

smith has become an image of desolation: thereupon the mood of the poem instantly lightens as the smith sets off in search of Christ:

> And lyghtly his way he went than,
> After Jesu fast he ran,
> As he had ben a madde man,
>   And fyll fast kan hym call,
> And sayd, For saynt charyté,
> Abyde nowe and speake wyth me;
> But thou me helpe truely,
>   My cares are full colde.
>   (lines 428-435)

The Smyth and His Dame, like other legends of the forge inspired by the church, ends in a mood of pious reverence. Christ restores the smith's wife to life and beauty. Like Ælfric's Counsellor, he owns that the smith is a master of masters:

> The mayster shalt thou yet be
> Of all thy craft truely,
>   Wythout any delay;
> What man of craft so ever be,
> And he have no helpe of the,
> Thoughe he be never so sle,
>   Warke not he may.
>   (lines 481-487)

But Christ also warns the smith not to overstep his authority by imitating the feat of rejuvenating people in the forge. The healing powers of Christ are praised and the reader is encouraged to pray for eternal life (lines 491-511).

Christ the artisan

It is fitting now to consider the role of Christ in this legend of the forge in more detail. For although the subject matter of *The Smyth and His Dame* is undoubtedly rooted in piety, it might be thought that we are dealing here with a profane smith legend that has somehow been ornamented with the figure of Christ. One might even go so far as to assert that Christ is unnecessary to this legend; a saint might have done just as well. Indeed, in some versions of this legend Christ is accompanied by one or more saints; furthermore in other examples the place of Christ is taken by St Peter.[22] This being the case, one might well wonder why in *The Smyth and His Dame* and numerous other versions of The Saviour and the Smith preference has been given to the figure of Christ.

Is the affinity of Christ for this legend of the forge merely fortuitous? Or is it the result of some larger design? And if the answer to the second question is 'yes', does the image of Christ in the forge have a Christian significance which would in some way explain why medieval story-tellers and their audiences introduced it into legends of profane and holy smiths? To answer these questions we need to look in more detail at the association between Christ and the forge in Christian tradition. We shall look not only at the association between Christ and forge symbolism, which is relatively well-known, but at the common medieval perception of Christ's industrial background in Nazareth: an aspect

of Christian tradition which has been largely forgotten, but which is of some importance for the study of legendary metal smiths.

It should be no secret that in Christian tradition Christ, as the Son of God, is associated with metallurgical metaphor. Perhaps what is not appreciated very well, however, is the wide application of this metaphor, especially in English literature. It is, indeed, some indication of the power and excitement which this metaphor engenders in the pious soul that it recurs regularly in religious writing; we find examples of it in both modern and ancient texts, from the prophetic books of the Old Testament to a modern Catholic American novel, in early Christian writings and in medieval treatises on the contemplative life, and in the poetry of major English authors from Cynewulf to Hopkins. This venerable tradition is rooted in Scripture. In Ezekiel xxii, 17-22, for example, the prophet compares God's justice to the work of a goldsmith:

> And the word of the Lord came to me: 'Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross to me; all of them, silver and bronze and tin and iron and lead in the furnace, have become dross. Therefore thus says the Lord God: Because you have all become dross, therefore, behold, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As men gather silver and bronze and iron and lead and tin into a furnace, to blow the fire upon it in order to melt it; so I will gather you in my anger and in my wrath, and I will put you in and melt you. I will gather you and blow upon you with the fire of my wrath, and you shall be melted in the midst of it. As silver is melted in a furnace, so you shall be melted in the midst of it; and you shall know that I the Lord have poured out my wrath upon you.'

This forceful allegory of divine judgement and retribution is but the most

detailed of a number of Old Testament passages using a similar metallurgical metaphor. Thus Isaiah i, 22-5 speaks of virtuous men as silver. Jeremiah vi, 27 refers to the prophet of God as the 'assayer and tester' of God's people. Malachi iii, 2-3 meanwhile warns that when the Messiah comes among men 'he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver'.

For pious Christians, moreover, metallurgical metaphor has associations with Christ and the Christian mystery. Christian writers have exploited its power from the time of the primitive church and in addition have expanded and added to its significance. We need only consider some examples from the first five centuries of the Christian era to perceive the influence of metallurgical metaphor on the Christian imagination. In the Gospel of Matthew, to begin with, John the Baptist speaks of Christ as one who 'will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire' (iii, 11), an evident allusion to the metallurgical metaphor in the prophecy of Malachi iii, 2-3 mentioned above. Subsequently, Christian writers were frequently to compare faith in Christ to the testing of metal. Thus St Peter warns of the rigours of discipleship:

> You may have to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold which though perishable is tested by fire, may redound to praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
>
> (I Peter i, 6-7)

Eusebius (A.D. 265-340), bishop of Caesarea in Palestine, tells us that an early Christian martyr 'gave proof of his purity, like gold by furnace and fire'.[23] St Augustine, in a memorable aphorism, observes meanwhile that 'the human tongue is a furnace in which the temper of our souls is daily tried'.[24] Metallurgical metaphor also helped the Christian writer to explain the mysteries of eternal life. The resurrection of the body was explained using the analogy of the foundry:

consider the case of a statue of some soluble metal: if it had been melted by fire, or been pounded to dust, or reduced to a shapeless mass, and an artificer wished to use all of that metal and none other in restoring it, it would make no difference with respect to the wholeness of the statue into what part of it a given particle of material was put, provided the statue as restored should again take up all the material of which it had been originally composed. Just so God, an artificer after a wondrous and unspeakable manner, will, with a speed wondrous and unspeakable, restore our body from all that material of which it was once composed, and it will make no difference with respect to its restoration whether hair goes back into hair and nails into nails, or whether the part of these that had perished should be converted into flesh and assigned to some other parts of the body, for the providence of the Artificer will be taking care that nothing unseemly will result.[25]

The mystery of 'the life of the world to come' could also be compared to the work of a skilful jeweller:

light and darkness with their opposing spirits are at war, and our two-fold being inspires powers at variance with each other, until Christ our God comes to our aid, orders all the jewels of the virtues in a pure setting, and where sin formerly reigned builds the golden courts of his temple, creating for the soul, out of the trial of its conduct, ornaments for rich Wisdom to find delight in as she reigns for ever on her beauteous throne.[26]

By the fifth century metallurgical metaphor had thus provided Christians with several important images of the Faith. The Church, moreover, is regularly reminded in its public worship of the symbolic association between Christ and the forge, for the prophecy of the Messianic goldsmith, Malachi, iii, 2-3, became a traditional reading for the Feast of the Presentation, or Candlemas (2 February).[27]

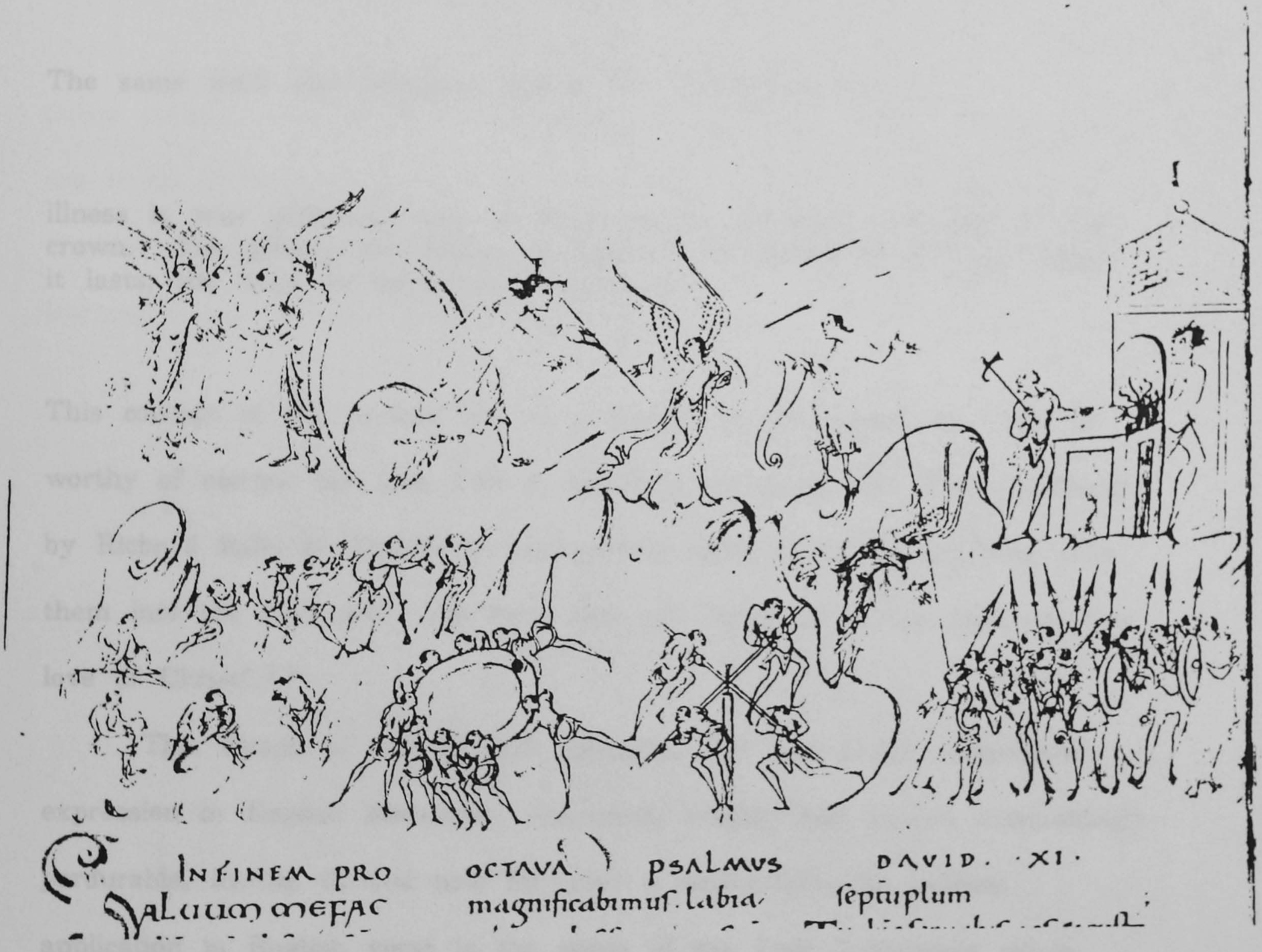
The power and significance of this strand of metallurgical metaphor was not lost on the Christians of medieval Europe (Figure 4). The monastic movement in particular responded to it warmly, as we may illustrate from some texts written in England. The life of a monk or nun was one of penance and purification and the monastery was frequently compared to a smithy. Indeed, the Rule of St Benedict had metaphorically described the monastery as an *officina*, a word which in an Anglo-Saxon copy of the Rule is glossed *smeðe* (smithy).[28] Ailred of Rievaulx (1110-67) writes in the *Informacio ad sororem suam inclusam* that the nun should think of her cell as a furnace of chastity:

He þat is not itempted, he nys not asaid. Now maydenhood is gold, þy celle is a furnays, þe blowere to melte þys gold is þe deuel, fuyr is temptacioun; a maydeneſ flesche is as hit where a veſſel off irþe wherin gold is iput to ben asayd; wherfore, ȝif þis vessel to-berste þorou gret fuyr of temptacioun, þe gold is ischad out, and schal neuere þis vessel of no crafty man be maad aȝeyn as hit was.[29]

Another guide-book for nuns, the *Ancrene Wisse*, written *c.* 1220, advises the religious to look upon the misfortunes of life as a process of spiritual

Figure 4:

Metallurgical metaphor in an early medieval illustration of Psalm 12 (11), here reproduced from British Museum MS Harley 603 (f. 6v), an eleventh century English copy of the Carolingian Utrecht Psalter. The smithy in the upper right hand corner illustrates verse 6: 'The promises of the Lord are promises that are pure, silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times.'



smithcraft:

> the whole of this world is God's smith who is to forge His elect. Would you have God without fire in His smithy, or bellows or hammers? Shame and pain are the fire; those who speak evil of you are your bellows; those who do you injury your hammers.[30]

The same work also compares illness to a goldsmith, for

> illness is your goldsmith who in the happiness of heaven is gilding your crown. The greater the illness, the busier the goldsmith, and the longer it lasts, the more he burnishes the crown.[31]

This concept of the present life as a process of purification to make us worthy of eternal life with God is similarly expressed, but more succinctly, by Richard Rolle of Yorkshire: 'the perfect never carry combustibles with them into the next life! All their sins are burnt up in the heat of their love of Christ'.[32]

This strand of metallurgical metaphor has also found memorable expression in English literature. Its poetic vitality has proved astonishingly perdurable, having thrived now for over a millennium. Its earliest application in English verse is the scene of the Last Judgement which concludes Cynewulf's *Elene.* Cynewulf uses it to describe the purity of the just:

Hie asodene beoð,
asundrod fram synnum, swa smæte gold
þæt in wylme bið womma gehwylces
þurh ofnes fyr eall geclænsod,
amered ond gemylted.[33]

(They will be purified by boiling, severed from sins, as refined gold which in the surging flames is wholly purged of every one of its impurities by the fire of the oven, proved and melted.)

Other notable examples of metallurgical metaphor in English religious verse are found in Robert Southwell's 'The Burning Babe' and Gerard Manley Hopkins's *The Wreck of the Deutschland.* Thus the infant Jesus in 'The Burning Babe' compares himself most wonderfully to a metal smith's forge:

My faultlesse breast the furnace is,
The fuell wounding thornes:
Love is the fire, and sighs the smoake,
The ashes, shame and scornes;

The fewell Justice layeth on,
And Mercie blowes the coales,
The metall in this furnace wrought,
Are mens defiled soules:

For which, as now on fire I am
To worke them to their good,
So will I melt into a bath,
To wash them in my blood.[34]

In *The Wreck of the Deutschland*, meanwhile, Christ is addressed as if he were a blacksmith as Hopkins prays for the salvation of mankind:

With an anvil-ding
And with fire in him forge thy will
Or rather, rather then, stealing as Spring
Through him, melt him but master him still:
Whether at once, as once at a crash Paul,
Or as Austin, a lingering-out sweet skill,
Make mercy in all of us, out of us all
Mastery, but be adored, but be adored King.[35]

The Christian symbolism of the forge and anvil occurs also, to note one further literary example, in a recent popular novel about American Catholicism in the twentieth century, Henry Morton Robinson's *The Cardinal.* Robinson (who was also an authority on the works of James Joyce) uses the forge to symbolize his priest-hero's formative experience as a parish priest in an impoverished French-Canadian town called, significantly, L'Enclume (The Anvil). There Robinson's idealised priest faces and overcomes worldly temptations; and although he eventually must leave L'Enclume for greener pastures in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the author does not allow him to move on until he has made a special reverential gesture. Thus we are told how

for the last time he visited the burned-out forge and laid his hand on the legendary anvil that had given his parish its name. *L'Enclume*! He knelt amid the cobwebbed debris and briefly praised the Maker of symbols so meaningful and lasting on the tongues of men.[36]

With this gesture we are well able to sympathize: as a significant metaphor of Christian life, both in this world and the next, the forge has,

indeed, had a unique influence.

To a certain extent this tradition of metallurgical metaphor, it may be argued, accounts for the depiction of Christ as a blacksmith in *The Smyth and His Dame* and its numerous analogues. Indeed, we begin to discern in this legend, not some misty realm of ancient paganism, but a forceful image of Christian piety. The affinity of Christ for this particular profane smith legend might well lie in traditional forge symbolism; certainly there would appear to be a connection between the rejuvenation of the old woman in the forge and the concepts both of purity and eternal life which the forge symbolised in pious tradition. On the other hand if we account for the affinity of Christ to this legend of the forge purely on a symbolic level, we evade one important point: namely, that in this legend, Christ is not merely a symbolic smith. Rather he is portrayed as a real smith. The literalism of the portrayal is worthy of note. Unlike the examples of metallurgical symbolism we have just looked at, the legendary material of *The Smyth and His Dame* asks us to believe that the historical Christ actually once worked as a smith. Are we to infer from this that the affinity of Christ for this legend was not purely symbolic, but was caused also by some literal association between Christ and the forge? It may come as a surprise to many readers to learn that the answer to this question is almost certainly 'Yes'. In the Middle Ages the Church associated Christ with the forge on more than just the mystical plane.

On the literal plane, it may be recalled, Christians have always associated Christ with the manual arts, for the historical Jesus is believed to have spent his childhood in the home of St Joseph, an artisan, in Nazareth. Our knowledge of St Joseph's trade is, however, less certain than most ordinary Christians realize. Indeed, information about Jesus's early life is so meager that there is no absolute certainty about the precise nature of Joseph's trade, or Jesus's involvement with it. The view of this matter commonly held today, that Jesus and Joseph were carpenters, rests upon an inference formed from a judicious scrutiny of the earliest relevant sources, which are Greek. In the Latin West during the early Middle Ages, these Greek sources were either unknown or carried very little weight, for there emerged an authoritative, if heterodox, tradition that Jesus and Joseph had been, not carpenters, but blacksmiths. So influential did this tradition become that it is worthwhile investigating it in more detail. Let us look then, at how knowledge of St Joseph's trade was conveyed to the Church of medieval Europe. It will be useful here to proceed to Latin and Old and Middle English materials after we have first touched upon the early Greek sources pertaining to this topic, beginning with the New Testament.

The belief that Jesus and St Joseph were artisans is rooted in Scripture. The seminal passages, however, are vague and, as we shall see, leave room for interpolation. Indeed, there seems always to have existed in the Church a desire for more detailed information about Christ's

industrial background than Scripture provides. The matter is dealt with briefly, however, and in only one incident of the synoptic Gospels, namely that know as 'The Rejection at Nazareth'. Furthermore, the trade which Jesus and St Joseph are said to be associated with is conveyed by just one word: τέκτων. As well as denoting specifically a carpenter, τέκτων may be used to denote workers in other trades, such as a mason or a smith, and, less explicitly, an artisan in general.[37] (In citing, below, the relevant passages of Scripture from the Revised Standard Version I have, for the purpose of illustration, substituted 'artisan' for 'carpenter' as a translation of τέκτων in the Greek original.)

Of the three Scriptural versions of 'The Rejection at Nazareth', one, that in Luke iv, 14-30 makes no reference to Christ's industrial background. The other two, however, give τέκτων as one of the tags applied to Jesus by those opposed to his teachings. In St Mark's version we are thus told that

> on the sabbath he [Jesus] began to teach in the synagogue; and many who heard him were astonished, saying 'Where did this man get all this? What is the wisdom given to him? What mighty works are wrought by his hands! Is not this the artisan (τέκτων), the son of Mary . . .?'
> (vi, 2-3)

These remarks seem to be couched in irony. In Matthew's version, meanwhile, the detractors of Jesus refer to him as 'the son of an artisan' (τέκτονος υιός) (xiii, 55). And these two epithets are all that

Scripture has to say on the subject of Christ's industrial background. We are thus told only that Jesus and Joseph were known in Nazareth as mere artisans; we are not told anything more about their trade and our knowledge of it turns on our interpretation of a single word, *τέκτων*. But *τέκτων* is problematic; for as one authority on this matter, the scholar E. F. Sutcliffe, has written

> *τέκτων* may . . . mean either an artisan or craftsman in general, or a carpenter in particular, and the sense is indicated by the context. But the special difficulty of Matt. xiii. 55 and Mk. vi. 3 arises from this that *there is no context.*[38]

In practice, therefore, our understanding of the precise nature of Christ's manual skill and whether he and St Joseph were carpenters and not some other type of craftsman such as smiths, depends on a process of interpolation in which these seminal passages of Matthew and Mark are read in the light of other materials.

It is, moreover, relevant to note that the primitive Church is not known to have possessed any authoritative writings which might have dealt in an objective or documentary manner with the industrial background of Jesus and St Joseph. The earliest writings which touch on the matter show that there was a common belief among Greek-speaking Christians as early as the second century that Joseph had been a carpenter, but whether this belief was rooted in historical truth remains open to doubt. What is not open to doubt, however, is that these early Christians avidly,

even notoriously, concerned themselves, not with the historical aspect of the problem, but with its spiritual interpretation. As in other matters relating to the early part of Christ's life, they were guided by the prophecies of Isaiah. These, it will be recalled, notably anticipate the well-known imagery of the nativity story: the ox and the ass at the manger correspond to Isaiah i, 2; the nativity grotto with xxxiii, 16; and the Magi and their camels with lx, 6. The patristic scholar Jean Daniélou has pointed out that the earliest references (after Matthew and Mark) to Christ's association with a handicraft allude to the imagery of Isaiah ii, 4, which prophesies an era of peace when the instruments of war will be turned into instruments of agriculture. The faithful of the primitive Church attached great significance to this passage from Isaiah and there is evidence that they used the plough in particular as a symbol of their faith, not only because it symbolized peace, but also because it has a cruciform shape when viewed sideways (the beam of the plough corresponds to the vertical pole of the Cross, while the plough's share and tail correspond roughly to the Cross's two arms).[39] In the writings of Justin Martyr (*c.* 100-165) and St Irenaeus (*c.* 130-200) allusions to the industrial background of Christ are couched in this symbolism of the plough and the Cross. In the *Dialogue with Trypho* Justin identifies Christ's trade with the symbolism of the plough, for he tells us that Christ was a τέκτων who made 'ploughs and yokes, teaching the symbols of justice and active life'.[40] Irenaeus, meanwhile, implicitly connects Christ's trade with the

mystery of the Cross:

For it is our Lord himself who has made the plough and provided the sickle: this signifies the first seed-time of man, who was patterned in Adam, and the gathering of the harvest by the Word at the end of time. And consequently, he who joined the beginning with the end, and is the Lord of both, has finally shown forth the plough, wood combined with iron, and so has weeded his land: for the 'materialized' Word, made one with flesh and fixed in the way it has been, has cleared the untilled earth.[41]

That early Christians identified Christ's trade with the symbolism of the Cross is apparent also in another early source. This shows, in fact, that the tendency to link the Cross with the belief that Christ had been a worker in wood was so widespread that non-believers knew of it and used it to ridicule the Faith. An example of such ridicule has been bequeathed to us by Origen, who portrays the pagan philosopher Celsus scornfully dismissing such allegories as fables. Celsus apparently believed that the Christians had invented their religion to harmonize with the 'fact' that Christ had been a carpenter by trade; he reasoned that if Christ had followed a different profession, the Christian religion would have been radically altered. According to Celsus, if Christ

had chanced to have been cast from a precipice, or thrust into a pit, or suffocated by hanging, or had been a leather-cutter, or stone-cutter, or worker in iron, there would have been (invented) a precipice of life beyond the heavens, or a pit of resurrection, or a cord of immortality, or a blessed stone, or an iron of love, or a sacred leather! Now what old woman would not be ashamed to utter such things in a whisper, even when making stories to lull an infant to sleep?[42]

Such ridicule is revealing: even if it doesn't quite hit its mark (the importance to Christianity of Christ's manual occupation is a bit overstated) it is a consequence and hence a demonstration of the atmosphere of mysticism surrounding the nature of Christ's trade in the early Church. Conversely, more factual and documentary writings dealing with Christ's industrial background would appear to have been non-existent.

Because, in fact, there appears to be no primary evidence to support the belief that Jesus and Joseph had been carpenters, it is perhaps not very inappropriate that this belief eventually, in the Latin West, entered into a long period of eclipse. What is not so easy to understand, however, is the fact that it was replaced by a belief with even less of a claim on historical reality, namely, that Christ had been raised in the home of a blacksmith. Yet this belief was to prevail in the Church for nearly a millennium. As E. F. Sutcliffe remarks, 'it is a surprise to find how many writers ranking high in the esteem of the Church speak as though St. Joseph were a blacksmith'.[43] Yet however strange this belief may appear to us today, for those who held it it was not inapposite; rather, in the Latin West, it appeared to be firmly supported by Scripture. In part this was because it lent itself brilliantly to allegorical explanation. But more fundamentally, the Latin church held fast to the idea that Jesus and Joseph were blacksmiths because that was what the seminal passages of Matthew and Mark literally seemed to imply. In Latin the trade of St Joseph was rendered by the word *faber*.

As this word came to be particularly associated with metallurgy, Western exegetes naturally found it congenial to explain Christ's industrial background in terms of the metallurgical symbolism of the Old Testament prophets.

In Gaul, Italy and Britain scholars such as Hilary of Poitiers (*c.* 315 - *c.* 368), Ambrose (399-397) and Bede thus link the portrayal of Jesus as an artisan in the Gospel accounts of 'The Rejection at Nazareth' with images of Christ as a divine smith shaping the world, like metal, with fire. Hilary in his commentary on Matthew xiii, 55 says

Sed plane hic fabri erat filius, ferrum igne vincentis, omnem saeculi virtutem judicio decoquentis, massamque formantis in omne opus utilitatis humanae: informem scilicet corporum nostrorum materiem in diversa membrorum ministeria, et ad omnia aeternae vitae opera fingentis.[44]

(But clearly this was the son of a smith (*fabri erat filius*), of one vanquishing iron with fire, smelting all the worth of a lifetime in judgement, shaping the mass of metal into every work useful to mankind: moulding, that is to say, the unformed material of our bodies into the various services of its members and for the purposes of all works of eternal life.)

Ambrose, meanwhile, similarly implies that Christ was associated with smithcraft. Ambrose's commentary on 'The Rejection at Nazareth' in his exegesis of Luke says that Christ was known as the son of an artisan because he knows how

rigida mentium spiritus igne mollire et in varios usus omne humanum genus diversa ministeriorum qualitate formare.

(to soften in the fire of the Spirit the stiffness of souls and to fashion for varied uses the whole human race by different types of ministry.)

It is noteworthy, however, that Ambrose also associates Christ with carpentry, for in the same sentence he speaks also of wood-working:

pater Christi igni operatur et spiritu et tamquam bonus animae faber vitia nostra circumdolat, cito securem admovens arboribus infecundis, secare doctus exigua, culminibus servare sublimia. . . .[45]

(the father of Christ works with fire and the Spirit, and like a good artisan of the soul, planes our vices, quickly applying the axe to the infertile branches, knowing how to trim what is puny, to preserve the slender tops. . . .)

This passage was known to Bede, for he quotes from it in his own commentary, but most judiciously. For Bede suppresses the allusions to wood-working and expands rather on the associations of Christ with the metal-workers' forge. He identifies Christ's industrial background with the prophecy of the Messianic goldsmith in Malachi, iii, 2-3 (used in the liturgy for the Feast of the Presentation) and links it also with the words of John the Baptist:

Unde et de ipso tamquam de fabri filio praecursor suus ait: Ipse vos baptizabit in spiritu sancto et igni. Qui in domo magna huius mundi diversi generis vasa fabricat immo vasa irae sui spiritus igne molliendo in misericordiae vasa commutat.[46]

(Thus his forerunner speaks of him as the son of a smith (*fabri filio*): 'He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire' (Matthew iii, 11). He who forges in the great house of this world the vessels of different species

indeed transforms vessels of wrath into vessels of mercy by softening with the fire of his spirit.)

Less ambivalently than Ambrose, Bede, like Hilary, implies that St Joseph had been a smith; moreover, he gives no indication that Joseph might also have been associated with carpentry, even though he must have known of this association from Ambrose. Bede must have been quite convinced in his own mind that Christ's industrial background was inherently metallurgical.

It is significant in this regard that the Latin-speaking West associated Christ with the forge while the Greek-speaking East associated him with carpentry. Bede's and Hilary's view that Joseph had been a smith is not unconnected with the vagaries of language. As we saw above, the Greek New Testament refers to Joseph's occupation as that of τέκτων. The corresponding word in the Vulgate is *faber*. In their respective languages these words could mean an artificer in general as well as specific occupations such as carpenter or smith. It is often pointed out, for example, that in the Greek Septuagint τέκτων refers to a craftsman in metal as well as wood.[47] In the Vulgate Old Testament, meanwhile, *faber* can refer to a worker in metal as well as other hard materials: the first smith, Tubalcain, is thus 'faber in cuncta opera aeris et ferri' (Genesis iv. 22), but carpenters also are called *fabri* in IV Regum xii. 11. The correspondence in meaning between τέκτων and *faber* in Scripture is, however, complicated by the fact that in ordinary speech

τέκτων was commonly associated with carpentry;[48] *faber*, meanwhile, came to be associated, especially in the early medieval period, with smithcraft.

The belief that Joseph had been a blacksmith was thus probably rooted in the common understanding of the word *faber* as 'smith'. Even though *faber* could denote an artificer in general, sufficient evidence that it was inherently associated with iron-working is to be found in Isidore's *Etymologies* and in Romance philology. The authoritative *Französisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* compiled by the eminent Romance philologist Walter von Wartburg shows that *faber*'s associations from an early period were primarily with iron-working. In most of the Romance languages, including French, Roumanian and Italian, the word which evolved from *faber* meant 'smith'.[49] The sixth century Spaniard St Isidore also associated *faber* inherently with iron-working, for in the *Etymologies* he, significantly, explains the word in the context of metal-working:

De fabrorum fornace. Faber a faciendo ferro inpositum nomen habet. Hinc derivatum nomen est ad alias artium materias fabros vel fabricas dicere; sed cum adiectione, ut faber lignarius et reliqua, propter operis scilicet firmitatem. In fabrorum autem fornace gentiles Vulcanum auctorem dicunt, figuraliter per Vulcanum ignem significantes, sine quo nullum metalli genus fundi extendique potest.[50]

(Concerning the furnace of *fabri*. The *faber* has a name imposed from producing iron (*faciendo ferro*). From it is derived a name to specify *fabri* and the workshops of *fabri* (*fabricae*) with regard to the other materials of the arts; but with an adjective, such as *faber lignarius* (carpenter), etc., evidently because of the firmness of the work. Pagans, moreover, call the inventor of the furnace of the *fabri*, Vulcan, figuratively signifying fire, without which no type of metal can be poured or expanded.)

Here Isidore implies that without a modifier *faber* ordinarily means 'blacksmith'. Furthermore, Isidore reinforces this impression by listing in a subsequent passage the tools of the *faber.* These we instantly recognize to be smiths' tools: *incus* (anvil), *malleus* (hammer), *marcus* (sledgehammer), *martellus* (medium hammer), *marculus* (small hammer), *forcipes* (forceps), *lima* (file), and *cilium* (chisel) are the ones he lists.[51] For Isidore, as for many of the numerous readers who looked to the *Etymologies* as an authority, the use of *faber* in Matthew and Mark's accounts of 'The Rejection at Nazareth' must have indicated that Joseph and Jesus had been blacksmiths. Indeed, the fact that *faber* was not qualified by any modifier (such as, perhaps, *lignarius*), could be taken as *prima facie* evidence that its intended meaning was 'smith'.

Because this reading could, in the early Middle Ages, be justified on the grounds of what seemed to be common sense, it would be a mistake for us to underestimate its influence on art and vernacular literature. Unfortunately, this is an area of research which modern scholarship has not, to the best of my knowledge, attempted to explore. Sutcliffe's investigation, carried out over seventy years ago and not well known today, dealt almost exclusively with the writings of Church authorities. Thus, for example, he catalogued notable instances of the belief that Joseph had been a smith in the writings of St Peter Chrysologus (d. 450) and Anselm of Laon (d. 1177), in addition to the writings of Ambrose, Bede and Hilary already mentioned.[52] Sutcliffe's work indicates further

that this belief did not begin to lose its authority until the thirteenth century, when Thomas Aquinas asserted that 'Joseph . . . non erat faber ferrarius sed lignarius' (Joseph . . . was not a blacksmith, but a carpenter).[53] Nor did the view that Joseph had been a carpenter itself achieve a consensus until after the Reformation.[54] For Sutcliffe's work we must therefore indeed be thankful; at the same time, however, we should be aware that the belief that Joseph had been a smith was more influential than even Sutcliffe's work has indicated.

Thus, for example, there are two interesting instances of the belief that Joseph had been a smith which Sutcliffe overlooked and which pertain to the monastic movement in Visigothic Spain. There, in the 6th-7th *c.* monks and nuns were instructed to take as a model of dignified labour the example of Joseph 'the blacksmith'. St Basil, in recommending the spiritual benefits of manual work to monks, reminds them that the Apostle Paul had worked hard to support himself and others. But St Leander of Seville (*c.* 550-600) refers, in a treatise for nuns, to the example of St Joseph:

Joseph, cui fuerat desponsata [Maria], cum esset justus, erat tamen et pauper, ita ut victum et vestitum artificio quaereret. Certe faber ferrarius fuisse legitur.[55]

(Joseph, to whom Mary was betrothed, although he was just, was poor also, so that he had to work for his food and clothing. At any rate, it is read that he was a blacksmith.)[56]

This advice was repeated by Leander's younger brother St Isidore in a treatise for monks, where we read that

Joseph justus, cui virgo Maria desponsata exstitit, faber ferrarius fuit.[57]
(Joseph the just, to whom the Virgin Mary was betrothed, was a blacksmith.)

These instances of the belief that Joseph had been a blacksmith are noteworthy not only for their directness and simplicity; they also indicate that the industrial background of Christ was not only of allegorical significance, but had in addition a moral application which, potentially at least, boosted its glamour.

With this in mind we should perhaps be aware of the potential here for some interesting discoveries in the field of art history. At issue is the possible existence of works of art depicting Joseph or Jesus as a smith: hitherto, the existence of such works has apparently gone unsuspected. Yet it is a curiosity of the iconographical history of St Joseph in particular that we do not hear of any depictions of Joseph with the tools of his trade from the better part of the Middle Ages, whereas such depictions were produced before the medieval period and are certainly quite common in post-Reformation Christianity. Sutcliffe himself noted that 'in several representations of the fourth and fifth centuries St. Joseph is figured with a saw and an axe'.[58] A standard modern authority, the *Iconographie de l'art chrétien*, in addition catalogues comparable

representations from the fifteenth century and later, but not before then, in which St Joseph 'a pour attributs les outils de son métier: une *hache*, une *scie*, un *rabot* ou une *équerre*'.[59] That such depictions are not readily found in medieval art might possibly strike us as anomalous; certainly there is an apparent hiatus in the iconographical tradition surrounding the figure of Joseph which deserves further investigation. It may well have been the case that Joseph was not a popular figure in the medieval period; although the references to 'Joseph the just' which we saw just now in the writings of Sts Leander and Isidore do not lend support to this hypothesis. On the other hand, is it not possible that in the Middle Ages Joseph was depicted not as a carpenter, but as a blacksmith and that, moreover, modern investigators have been unaware of this fact, leaving, as a result, a large gap in our knowledge? Students of medieval iconography might do well to be on the lookout for depictions of Joseph with the tools of the smith, such as hammer, tongs and anvil.

Just such a depiction is illustrated in Plate 1. This plate shows a detail of the carved decoration on the medieval font in the parish church of St Mary, Ingleton, North Yorkshire; this font is a notable work of art and is admired by Nikolaus Pevsner in the volume of *The Buildings of England* series devoted to the West Riding (Ingleton has since become part of North Yorkshire). Pevsner calls it 'one of the best Norman fonts in the West Riding'. He goes on to describe it as 'circular with twelve figures under intersected arches' and notes that 'among the figures are

Plate 1

Ingleton Parish Church font (detail): St Joseph with hammer, tongs and anvil accompanying the Virgin and Christ Child. *D. M. Bradley*

the three Magi and the Virgin and Child'.[60] Pevsner does not mention that standing beside the Virgin and Child and immediately to their right, with his body angled toward them, is the standing figure of a smith working at an anvil with hammer and tongs. In Plate 1 we see this figure with the Virgin and Child beside him. The composition suggests, I think, that this smith is intended to accompany them. Was this ensemble intended to be an image of the Holy Family? Given the context, an ineluctable hypothesis is surely that this smith is none other than St Joseph the just, 'faber ferrarius'. If this identification is correct, moreover, it would indicate a definite probability that similar depictions of Joseph the Blacksmith were not uncommon. It would be useful, certainly, to know if there are other such depictions still in existence. Regrettably this is not an issue which we can explore any further in the present work, but one which we must entrust to future research.

Rather, the belief that Joseph had been a smith must now be considered in its relationship to vernacular literature. We have seen by now many instances of this belief in Latin texts, so it should perhaps not seem unremarkable that a number of references in Old and Middle English texts also link the trade of Jesus and Joseph with smithcraft. The earliest such references are Old English glosses, of tenth century date, found in the Lindisfarne and Rushworth Gospels. Further references are to be found in a considerable number of Old and Middle English texts; these include: the translation of the Gospels into Old English made

c. 1000; the Old English *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*; the Middle English *Vices and Virtues* of *c.* 1200; a thirteenth century poem called 'The Passion of Our Lord'; *A Stanzaic Life of Christ Compiled from Higden's Polychronicon* dated 1387; and the Wycliffe translation of the Bible completed in *c.* 1382. In this list *The Smyth and His Dame* must certainly be included also. What all these works have in common is that they refer to Joseph or Jesus as being a *smið* (in Old English), or *smyth* (in Middle English).

It is difficult to see how in the Anglo-Saxon Gospels Old English *smið* could have indicated any craftsman other than a metalworker. Several esteemed modern authorities, it is true, assert that *smið* was also applied to a carpenter. This assertion, however, seems to be connected to their apparent innocence regarding the medieval view that Joseph had been a smith, for their gloss of *smið*, as we argue in more detail in the Appendix, depends on the naive assumption that Anglo-Saxons could only have believed that Joseph had been a carpenter. Yet even if *smið* had meant 'carpenter' as well as 'smith' (a supposition which is at present hypothetical) contemporary Latin sources suggest that Anglo-Saxons were more likely to believe that Joseph had been a smith than to believe that he had been a carpenter. It should therefore be understood that when medieval Englishmen referred to Joseph or Jesus as being a *smið* they meant 'smith' and not 'carpenter'.

The Smyth and His Dame, then, is not the only medieval English text to refer to Christ as a smith. As a result, it seems probable that medieval Englishmen commonly believed that during his time on earth Christ had been linked to the forge. The Rushworth Gospels indicate that Jesus was 'smiðes sunu', while the Lindisfarne Gospels say that he was 'smið vel wyrihte' and 'smiðes vel wyrihta sunu'.[61] So too the Old English Gospels make Christ a 'smið' and 'smiðes sunu';[62] and although the *Old English Gospel of Nicodemus* refers to Jesus as 'wyrhtan sunu',[63] the *Old English Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew* indicates that Joseph was 'smið and mænigteawa wyrhta' (smith and skilful artificer).[64] None of these texts indicate, meanwhile, that Christ had been a carpenter: for although he was occasionally called a *wyrhta*, this was a general term for an artisan (and was often used as a term for God).[65] But the specific craft commonly associated with Joseph and Christ was evidently metalworking. In the treatise called *Vices and Virtues* there is thus a reference to 'Iosepe ðe smiðe'.[66] In 'The Passion of Our Lord', meanwhile, Jesus is called 'smyþes sune';[67] and in *A Stanzaic Life of Christ Compiled from Higden's Polychronicon* Jesus is 'smyth sone'.[68] The Wycliffe Bible also refers to Jesus as 'smyth' and 'the sone of a smyth'. This last work, it is true, glosses 'smyth' in both Gospels with the word 'carpenter', indicating, perhaps, the influence of scholars like Aquinas, who had ruled that Joseph had been not a smith, but a wood-worker; but indicating also, that even more than a century after Aquinas's death, 'smyth' was still

the common English term for Joseph's occupation.[69]

It should not surprise us therefore that a pious legend such as *The Smyth and His Dame* does not hesitate to portray Christ at work in the forge. Although the subject matter of this legend is derived, as we have shown, from the medieval tradition of satirizing profane smiths, especially those who prided themselves on being 'Masters of All Masters', the figure of Christ had a natural affinity for this material because the Middle Ages commonly believed that during his time on earth he himself must have learned something of smithcraft through his association with St Joseph, his mother's husband, who had been a blacksmith. A storyteller would not have been subject to religious qualms about graphically depicting Jesus as a wonder-working smith, nor should we accuse him of 'superstition' on this account. Bede in his commentary on St Luke describes Christ as a physician-smith:

Faber est enim verus quia omnia per ipsum facta sunt medicus est quia per ipsum restaurata sunt in caelis et in terra.[70]

(He is a smith (*faber*) because truly all things are made through him; he is a physician because all things through him are restored in heaven and on earth.)

It was not inappropriate, then, or an affront to pious sensibilities, to show

Christ restoring an old woman to perfect health and beauty by working her body in the forge with hammer and anvil:

> Wyth a hamer he her strake,
> No bone of her he brake,
> She was a byrd bryght:
> Stand up, now lette me se.
> Than at that worde rose she,
> A fayre woman truely,
> And semely unto syght.
> Our Lord sayd to the smyth;
> She is sounde of lymme and lyth,
> Nowe I have made her on the styth
> Wyth hamer and wyth mall.
> (*The Smyth and His Dame*, lines 137-147)

Although this depiction of Christ literally at work in the forge seems strange to us today, for a medieval audience it must have appeared unexceptionable and undoubtedly wholesome.

We should, as a consequence, be better disposed to appreciate the literary merit of *The Smyth and His Dame.* Certainly, the neglect which this work has suffered is somewhat less than fair. In the present instance, however, it is its importance for the study of legendary metal smiths which concerns us. As a result of our examination of this version of a popular legend we have perceived that the pre-eminent legendary smith of the Middle Ages was none other than Christ. His association with the forge combined with his wonder-working powers established him in popular piety as a true 'Master of All Masters' and a new type of smith-god. His role in *The Smyth and His Dame* indicates, furthermore,

the natural affinity of Christ the Smith for legends of the forge involving other legendary smiths from Christian tradition. It is, therefore, not inconceivable that legends once circulated in which this figure of Christ the Smith was depicted in the forge with other smiths, either holy or profane, and performing other miracles. This inference is, indeed, supported by folk-lore. Consider the following tale from nineteenth century France:

Saint Eloi tirait vanité de sa dextérité comme maréchal-ferrant; Jésus-Christ résolut de l'en punir. Il prend la forme d'un compagnon maréchal, se présente chez saint Eloi, lui vante son habilité et est accepté comme apprenti. A peine est-il installé qu'arrive Saint Georges, dont le cheval a perdu un fer. Saint Eloi veut le remettre lui-même, mais le cheval se défend d'une telle façon qu'il est obligé d'y renoncer. Il s'addresse alors à son apprenti en lui disant que le moment est venu de montrer ce qu'il sait faire. Jésus-Christ s'approche du cheval qui se calme aussitôt, lui coupe le sabot déferré, le place sur l'enclume, y ajuste tout à son aise le fer, replace le sabot dans le moignon sans que le cheval ait fait le moindre mouvement de douleur. A ce miracle, saint Eloi reconnaît Jésus-Christ, se prosterne et promet d'être plus modeste à l'avenir.[71]

In this tale Christ is presented, as he is in *The Smyth and His Dame*, working wonders in the forge. In this instance, however, the miraculous deed is not the rejuvenation of an elderly woman, but quite a different feat: the shoeing of a horse by removing the beast's hoof, applying the shoe, and then successfully restoring the hoof to its leg. Furthermore, the tale involves two other legendary figures, St George and St Eloi. This latter figure is a well-known smith-saint, although in this tale he has been given the role of the vain 'Master of All Masters'. Although the tale itself is only a variant of the material in *The Smyth and His Dame*, it

nonetheless provides us with a further indication of an affinity between the legendary figure of Christ the Smith and other legendary metal smiths. It may serve us to bear this affinity in mind when we come to consider the interest shown in other, and reputedly quite different, legendary smiths by whoever it was that composed *WF*.

CHAPTER V: Metal Smiths and Heroes

> Christianity does not make art *easy*. It deprives it of many facile means, it stops its progress in many directions, but in order to raise its level. In the very creation of these salutary difficulties, it elevates art from within, brings to its knowledge a hidden beauty more delightful than light, gives it what the artist needs most, simplicity, the peace of reverent fear and love, such innocence as makes matter docile to men and fraternal.
>
> (Jacques Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism*, viii.4)

The presentation of the metal smith in Old English verse is, at least for the modern reader, unexpectedly enigmatic. The smith's prominence in this literature surpasses expectation, yet falls far short of realism. Nor does it match the early literatures of the Greeks and Scandinavians in mythological richness. The references to smiths and smithcraft liberally scattered throughout the extant corpus of vernacular Anglo-Saxon poetry are a memorial to the material civilisation of an Heroic Age, but a memorial which seems to be peculiarly English. In order to appreciate the inherent difficulties in the portrait of the smith bequeathed to us by Old English verse, it is only necessary to recall that Anglo-Saxon literature improbably yet successfully interfuses Germanic warlikeness with Christian ideals.

To what extent did literary tact contribute to the presentation of the metal smiths in *WF*? It is unfortunate that previous discussions of the smiths of *WF*, proceeding from an impression of pagan magic, minimize

the role which literary convention may have played in the composition of this particular charm at the same time as they belittle possible Christian influences. There has been a marked tendency to erect a barrier between charms and both Christianity and literature. In his book *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, Dr Godfrid Storms, for example, asserts that the value of Anglo-Saxon charms is that they offer us 'more than a tantalising hint of a strange world' (paganism), but 'the literary value of the charms is very small'.[1] Yet Storms may have underestimated the links between charms and other types of literary creation. Why shouldn't charms be more amenable to literary analysis and appreciation? No less a reader than Northrop Frye has demonstrated that English charms may be enjoyed for their textures and rhetorical strategies by those who are not connoisseurs of pagan magic.[2] There are, too, distinguished critics who have enjoyed *WF* mainly for its language and imagery. *WF*, they tell us, is 'a masterpiece of its kind'.[3] Indeed, it is not unlikely that whoever composed *WF* was influenced in the presentation of the smiths to some extent by literary models. The evidence is conspicuous: while *WF* is the only Anglo-Saxon charm to refer to metal smiths, these artificers are frequently encountered in other kinds of literature. There are references to metal smiths in each of the four principal collections of Old English verse, in poems both secular and religious: in *Elene* in the *Vercelli Book*; in *Beowulf*; in *Genesis A* in the *Junius Manuscript*; and in several poems of the *Exeter Book*, including *Maxims I*, *Christ*, *Riddles*, *The Gifts of Men*, *The Fates of*

Men, *Deor* and *The Phoenix*. The inference which may be drawn from this is that whoever composed *WF* was to some extent influenced by the climate of opinion surrounding the metal smith in Old English verse. We would be well advised, as a result, to bear in mind Professor Shippey's observation that this verse 'depends very heavily on a learnt technique amounting almost to a separate poetic language, something which . . . quite overrides the individual personality of the author' and to heed his advice that 'Old English poetry gains from being read in large blocks; the most valuable commentary on one poem may well be another poem'.[4]

Indeed, previous discussions of the smiths of *WF* could not, in practice, ignore completely the role of smithcraft in other Old English poems. The outcome, however, has been an overly selective concentration on those few passages which mention the legendary Germanic smith Weland, to the neglect of other pertinent matter. Much smoke has been generated, but little light. It has been readily assumed that the composers of Old English verse held opinions about the smith identical to those held by, or assumed to have been held by, ancient Germans and pagan Scandinavians, not to mention primitive Finns and other animists. It thus became fashionable to lump together magical beliefs, mythology, Weland and the smiths of *WF* in one potent, and rather unstable, mixture. Scholars tried to find plausible explanations for the smiths of *WF* in analogies drawn from far-flung customs and beliefs. Such explanations skated miraculously over the gulfs of history and culture only to lose

themselves in contradiction and confusion. Thus, for example, if one began from classical mythology, one might see in Weland

> the Germanic Vulcanus (Hephaistos)—symbolizing at first the marvels of metal working as they impressed the people of the stone age. . . .[5]

It seemed quite natural then to conclude that in *WF* we had an allusion to a beneficent Germanic smith-god called Weland, even though there is no known legend of Weland which readily explains the smithing scene in *WF*. But if one began from anthropological studies of various peoples holding animistic beliefs about the smith (as reported in Eliade's *The Forge and the Crucible*), one might see in Weland a more sinister figure and deduce that the smith as 'a type of wizard' was 'a figure still prominent in Anglo-Saxon times'.[6] Then one would naturally conclude that the smiths of *WF* had nothing to do with a beneficent smith-god, but were terrible wizards whom Anglo-Saxons held in superstitious fear and awe. Neither conclusion is, of course, anything more than vague speculation based on analogies of doubtful relevance. One may well suspect that they both misapprehend and misrepresent the nature of Anglo-Saxon views of Weland and metal smiths as reflected in Old English verse and *WF*.

As fascinating as analogies with Vulcan or wizard-smiths may be, they are, in the end, not very useful for the study of Anglo-Saxon literature. It is not necessary to invoke magic and myth to understand the role of the smith in Old English verse. On the other hand, it seems

unreasonable to expect to be able to make any progress in this matter without some consideration of the native Anglo-Saxon scene and of the important contribution which smithcraft made to Dark Age heroic society. According to R. I. Page, the metal smith was then 'one of the most important of workmen, providing many of the tools and utensils, as well as the weapons, coins and jewellery of Anglo-Saxon England'.[7] There is more to the role of smithcraft in Old English verse than the legendary figure of Weland. Nor was Weland the only legendary smith to interest the Anglo-Saxon *scop*. The smith in Old English verse would appear to be, not a dim reflection of magic and superstition, but an aspect of poetic composition bearing on the practical realities of life in an heroic age. It is this latter aspect of the metal smith's literary associations which students of *WF* have overlooked.

The common ground shared by the smiths of *WF*, Old English verse and the Anglo-Saxon context is in need of a fresh perspective. It would be useful to be able to see *WF* as an essentially Anglo-Saxon product of literary art. The purpose of the present chapter, then, will be to discuss, from both a social and dramatic point of view, the treatment of the metal smith, especially the legendary smith, in Old English verse.

Craftsmanship and heroic atmosphere

The cornerstone of literary opinion with regard to the smith in Anglo-Saxon England must surely have been his craftsmanship. A high

regard for skilfully wrought metalwork, not superstition, inspired men to compose verses about smiths. The excellence of native smithcraft was, moreover, a brilliant reality. The Anglo-Saxon nobility maintained a Germanic tradition of connoisseurship, encouraging excellent craftsmanship and rejoicing in the treasures it produced. The gift-giving in Hroðgar's hall described in *Beowulf*, though ostensibly set in Denmark, undoubtedly reflects Anglo-Saxon custom:

> Him wæs ful boren ond freondlaþu
> wordum bewægned, ond wunden gold
> estum geeawed, earmreade twa,
> hrægl ond hringas, healsbeaga mæst
> þara þe ic on foldan gefrægen hæbbe.
>
> (A flagon was brought him, and friendship passed
> aloud in words, and wire-wrought gold
> given with a will: two rich arm-bands,
> a mail-shirt, and rings, and the largest gold collar
> ever heard of on earth, so it is told.)[8]

Whoever composed this passage could doubtless have witnessed similar ceremonies in England. The appreciation of fine metal-work had been inherited from the Continental Germans. Tacitus tells us that the Germanic leaders took 'particular pleasure in gifts received from neighbouring states', gifts such as 'splendid arms, metal discs, and collars'.[9] Later Germanic kings are known to have taken a special interest in their smiths, for obvious reasons. Thus the renowned Lombard King Alboin (d. 572), one of the heroes celebrated in *Widsith*, was at one time

famous for the distinguished weapons 'fabricata sub eo'.[10] Thus too the English hero, King Alfred the Great, his biographer tells us, personally supervised his goldsmiths.[11] Alfred's successors are known to have rewarded their smiths with not inconsiderable grants of land.[12] Christianity does not appear to have diminished the Anglo-Saxon love of fine metal-work. The Church for its part directed the smiths' talents into new and splendid regions. The church at Hexham, furbished in the seventh century by St Wilfrid and Bishop Acca, was said to have been adorned with 'magnificent ornamentation in gold and silver and precious stones'.[13] But churchmen seem to have encouraged secular metal-work also. A Mercian charter of the ninth century relates that the monks of Breedon presented the king with a silver dish at Christmas: it is said to have been 'valde bene operatum' (exceedingly well made).[14] Judging by the Anglo-Saxon treasures which archaeology has brought to light, we would be unwise to dismiss such praise as mere hyperbole. The exquisite jewellery of the period was more than worthy of such praise. Items like the Kingston Brooch from sixth or seventh century Kent, now in the Walker Museum, Liverpool; the pectoral cross of St Cuthbert made between c. 640 and 670, now displayed in Durham Cathedral crypt; and the Alfred Jewel, of ninth century date, found at Newton Park, Somerset and now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford: these provide mute but eloquent testimony to the unparalleled achievements of the metalworker's art in Anglo-Saxon England both before and after the conversion of King Ethelbert of Kent in

597.

But about magical associations of smithcraft in Anglo-Saxon England, or any ancient superstitions stemming from pagan beliefs, the record is silent. Contemporary laws, charters, chronicles, biographies and histories, even the penitentials and homilies say nothing about them. It is, in short, quite feasible to assume that they were virtually unknown. The Anglo-Saxon situation in this regard is not comparable to that in northern Europe and Iceland where non-Christian beliefs about smiths are well-attested. It is most probable that Anglo-Saxons never shared these beliefs, which cannot be clearly traced to ancient Germanic roots, but were perhaps acquired by the Scandinavians from the shamans of Finland and Asia after the Anglo-Saxons had settled Britain. Consider, in this regard, the curious beliefs which adhere to the smith in Norse saga. In *Egil's Saga*, a work of the thirteenth century set in the late ninth and early tenth centuries, the hero's father is a notable blacksmith called Skallagrim. Skallagrim's neighbours in the Fjord district of Norway believe him to be a werewolf and there is a legendary account of his superhuman strength.[15] At his death, moreover, Skallagrim is buried in pagan fashion with 'his horse, weapons and blacksmith's tools' (Chapter 58, p. 150). This last detail is an authentic relic of pre-Christian Scandinavia. Archaeology has shown that the custom of burying a smith with his tools was a common one in Scandinavia and North Germany, but of no great antiquity, dating only to the period of the early Roman Empire. It was

a custom, moreover, which was virtually unknown in Anglo-Saxon England. Whereas hundreds of well-furnished smiths' graves have been excavated on the Continent, only two or three Anglo-Saxon graves have been found which were at all comparable and these contained but one or two implements in contrast to the sizeable array of hammers, tongs and files from a typical continental example.[16] The most likely reason for this disparity is that such customs were virtually unknown among the early English, probably because the beliefs that underpinned them and which probably associated the smith with magical powers had no native authority. In England, not the metal smith's spells, but rather his skills commanded respect and became the focus of literary attention.

Accordingly, when Old English verse speaks of metal smiths, even legendary ones, the imagination focuses on skilled craftsmanship. Not infrequently, however, the result is an increase in dramatic tension, for it is the mood of the forge that interests the poet, especially when he is preparing us for scenes of battle. The effective, dramatic use of forge imagery is not of course confined to Old English verse. Consider the following Shakespearian passage in which we are well primed for the Battle of Agincourt with imagery which culminates in a taut vignette of armourers:

> Now entertain conjecture of a time
> When creeping murmur and the poring dark
> Fills the wide vessel of the universe.
> From camp to camp, through the foul womb of night,

> The hum of either army stilly sounds,
> That the fix'd sentinels almost receive
> The secret whispers of each other's watch:
> Fire answers fire, and through their paly flames
> Each battle sees the other's umber'd face;
> Steed threatens steed, in high and boastful neighs
> Piercing the night's dull ear; and from the tents
> The armourers, accomplishing the knights,
> With busy hammers closing rivets up,
> Give dreadful note of preparation.[17]

Shakespeare goes so far as to tell us quite explicitly the mood he intends the forge to convey: it is one of 'dreadful preparation'. Old English verse is never so explicit, nor does it convey an effect so sinister. References to smiths in Old English verse seem to strike a more positive chord, even in the most desperate circumstances. Often they call to mind the positive qualities of the dedicated craftsman, such as his determination to achieve something lasting and beautiful, or the imperishability of talent, or the honourable place which an accomplished smith could expect to hold in Anglo-Saxon society. References to legendary metal smiths—Weland, Tubalcain, antediluvian giants—also convey a positive mood and typically present a favourable picture of craftsmanship.

It is noteworthy in this respect that Old English verse does not describe the forge in great detail. Indeed, there is little here to interest an historian of technology and it is inappropriate to dismiss the presentation of the forge as 'realistic background'. Not only was Old English verse interested in 'unreal', legendary metal smiths, but it deliberately avoids the unpleasantness of work in the forge, the danger and

physical discomfort. Such details would have created a negative mood of satire or protest. Recall the grotesque realism of Vulcan's forge in the *Aeneid*, Book VIII, lines 416-53, or even the sweaty detail of the portrait of the hard-working smith in Sirach xxxviii, 28: verisimilitude can be the enemy of dignity. Consider, too, a passage from a realistic poem about the forge written by a seventeenth century Polish iron-master, in which a blacksmith complains bitterly about his miserable working conditions:

> Look how my body is broiling! Is it little pain that we have in this fire? The flame and sparks fly into the eyes like ashes. I am constantly roasting in the fire on every side!
>
> If your shirt catches fire, part of your body is burned, and sometimes it won't heal for half a year. I am half-deafened by the crash of the hammers! I must perpetually toil under such wretched conditions.
>
> Our life is miserable. When forging, we must beware of injury at all times. We must take heed, for the hammer has no pity; he who forges carelessly will soon get a bruise!
>
> Even Vulcan himself, though a skilled master in his craft, was nevertheless lamed in one leg. Some say it was his mother Juno herself who crippled him in his childhood, but I do not believe Juno to have been the cause of his injury. It is more likely he was lamed by a blow of the hammer when he was busy with the craft of ironwork on the isle of Lemnos.
>
> This is why so many of us are deaf and lame, and I doubt if there is one of us who has a whole body. Look how my skin has stuck to the bones from the great heat of the fire![18]

In this passage, specific unpleasant details accumulate to present an unfavourable and distressing picture of the metal smith's forge. The emphasis is on harsh physical conditions in which the dignity of

craftsmanship is overthrown.

If an Anglo-Saxon poet had seen fit, he doubtless could have presented the forge in realistic detail, but the effect would not have been uplifting. Archaeological evidence suggests that contemporary working conditions were far from ideal. The early medieval smithy was a small and uncomfortable place to work. Unlike the handsome stone smithies which today dot the English country-side and are often converted into tea-rooms, the early medieval smithy was usually a sunken hut measuring only 2.5 by 4 metres with a thatched roof and walls of wattle and daub. Often all that remains of these smithies is iron slag and debris.[19] It was a type that was common to northern Europe, however: a particularly well-preserved example at Belaja Veža in Russia dated from the tenth century and contained a smelting furnace, bellows, anvil, smelted iron and slag.[20] In such cramped surroundings fire and injury must have been a frequent occurrence. To glimpse the discomfort experienced by the goldsmith, meanwhile, we need only turn to the twelfth century textbook *De Diversis Artibus* by Theophilus. This work describes a goldsmith's work-table: a plank, laid over a hole three feet deep, conveniently situated beside a window.[21] But the most physically demanding branch of smithcraft was the work of digging iron ore and smelting it into metal. An iron producing site from the period 850-1150 at West Runton in Norfolk has provided archaeologists with some quantitative insights into the amount of work required. R. I. Page has tersely summarised their

conclusions:

The workers dug iron-stone pebbles from pits cut in the sand, and smelted them in furnaces built on the site. The yield was small for the effort expended; it is calculated that some 270 cubic feet of sand had to be dug away to give 600 lb of iron-bearing pebbles, and these might produce 150 lb of iron.[22]

Such work must have consumed long hours of toil requiring great strength and stamina; probably too it produced the inevitable grumbling and discontent. *Egil's Saga* comments that the smith Skallagrim 'was a hard worker in the smithy but his servants complained about having to get up so early' (Chapter 30, p. 78).

About such conditions Old English Poetry is reticent. The closest we come to them in Old English verse is in a couple of the *Riddles* of the *Exeter Book.* The *Riddles* as a genre allowed some degree of realism, for they draw their material from the humble facts of everyday life. Nevertheless there were limits: a Riddle seeks to entertain; it is essentially a piece of light verse designed to produce mental dexterity, not uncomfortable feelings about the human condition. A Riddle could refer to the harsher aspects of metalwork, but only discretly. The 'Coat of Mail' in *Riddle 35* in speaking of its origins makes an oblique reference to the cold and damp of the ore-pit:

Mec se wæta wong, wundrum freorig,
of his innaþe ærist cende.

(First the damp field, terribly cold, brought me forth from its interior.)

Riddles 37 and *87*, meanwhile, give brief descriptions of workers, probably bellows operators, which indicate that they are strong men: the epithets thought appropriate were *mægenrof* (of great power), *mægenstrong* (strong in power) and *mundrof* (strong with the hands).[23] Such strength, in reality, was probably taxed to extremes of endurance.

Of fundamental significance for understanding the smiths of *WF* is the favourable attitude to the forge which characterises Old English verse. In our reading we should be conscious of the fact that in Anglo-Saxon England the metal smith was associated with reassuring ideals which transcended harsh realities, with positive moods which recalled heroic conduct, and with inspiring accounts of legendary craftsmen.

Before we proceed to the presentation of the legendary smith in Old English verse, let us first take note of the idealised manner in which the typical smith is presented. Basically, the typical smith is depicted with the dignity appropriate to an esteemed craftsman. Consider, for example, the vignettes of the smith found in those poems dedicated to the Christian topic of spiritual gifts and talents, in which the smith is shown as an honoured member of heroic society. *The Fortunes of Men* includes among its catalogue of useful occupations this admiring portrait of a typical goldsmith:

Sumum wundorgiefe
þurh goldsmiþe gearwad weorþað;
ful oft he gehyrdeð ond gehyrsteð wel,
brytencyninges beorn, ond he him brad syleð,
lond to leane. He hit on lust þigeð.[24]

(To one amazing talents are furnished as a craftsman in gold; he will be regularly tempering and finely ornamenting the mail-coat of a mighty king and he will bestow broad lands upon him in reward, which he will willingly accept.)[25]

This is realism, but of a positive kind. An interesting commentary on this passage is that of the historian Dorothy Whitelock:

the poet's statement is supported by charters and Domesday Book, where several of King Edward's goldsmiths are mentioned as holders of lands, one of them, Theodric, with estates in three counties, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, and Surrey.[26]

The smith was neither the despised outcast nor the object of superstitious awe that some readers of *WF* have imagined. He was a respectable craftsman whose talents were a source of wonder and inspiration. Even in pious verse these talents were favourably presented, even when they were associated with war. The *Gifts of Men* gives us this portrait of the typical weapon-smith:

Sum mæg wæpenþræce, wige to nytte
modcræftig smið monige gefremman,
þonne he gewyrceð to wera hilde
helm oþþe hupseax oþþe heaþubyrnan,
scirne mece oððe scyldes rond.

fæste gefeged wið flyge gares.[27]

(One, an ingenious smith, can make many weapons for use in war when he forges helmet or hip-sword for human combat, or battle-corselet, shining blade or shield's disc, and can weld them firm against the spear's flight.)[28]

The weapon-smith possesses *modcræft* (mental skill), an admirable and exemplary character trait. Such talent made the smith a model to be copied. In an Old English maxim happily discovered recently by N. R. Ker, the smith exemplifies the virtue of discipline:

A scæl gelæred smið swa he gelicost mæg
be bisne wyrcan butan he bet cunne.[29]

(A learned smith must work to a pattern as closely as he can, unless he knows better.)

This pithy observation was intended to apply not just to smiths, but to everyman. Someone, presumably a struggling student, scribbled it into the margin of a Latin treatise on grammar, perhaps because he felt that it would encourage zealous and disciplined scholarship.

Composers of Old English verse and their audiences liked to contemplate the inspiring side of smithcraft. Rather than dwell on the distasteful surroundings in which the smith laboured, they preferred to cast a fond eye on the beautiful objects he produced. Allusions to smiths are notably concise. Almost always they focus exclusively on the product and the processes or tools that shaped it. Smiths were admired for the

wonderfully wrought treasures they created. Their association with beauty was proverbial. The lovely eye of the fabulous phoenix found a suitable analogy in their work:

Is seo eaggebyrd
stearc ond hiwe stane gelicast,
gladum gimme, þonne in goldfate
smiþa orþoncum biseted weorþeð.[30]

(The mien of his eye is unflinching, in aspect most like a stone, a brilliant gem, when by the ingenuity of the smiths it is set in a foil of gold.)[31]

Smiths worthily ornamented ecclesiastical treasures. 'Bible Codex' in *Riddle 26* pays tribute to the smiths who embellished its cover:

Mec siþþan wrah
hæleð hleobordum, hyde beþenede,
gierede mec mid golde; forþon me gliwedon
wrætlic weorc smiþa, wire bifongen.[32]

(Then a man clad me in protective boards and covered me with hide and decked me with gold. Forthwith the smiths' exquisite artefacts enhanced me, encased in filigree.)[33]

Weaponsmiths fashioned beautiful military gear, such as the helmet sported by Beowulf in underwater combat:

ac se hwita helm hafelan werede,
se þe meregrundas mengan scolde,
secan sundgebland since geweorðad,
befongen freawrasnum swa hine fyrndagum

worhte wæpna smið, wundrum teode,
besette swinlicum, þæt hine syððan no
brond ne beadomecas bitan ne meahton.[34]

(and the silver-white helmet, which would have to disturb the depths of the tarn and quest into the troubled swirl of the waters, protected his head, embellished with precious ornament, braced about with sturdy bands, just as the weapon-smith had fashioned it in days far past and marvellously furbished it and set it about with impressions of boars, so that hereafter neither broadsword nor battle-blade could bite into it.)[35]

These allusions to the deft artistry of the metal smith are themselves the product of art. The success of these passages consists in their ability to impart a sense of dignity and elegance to the smiths' labours. To achieve this the poets have used a common technique which involves the use of a complex sentence with multiple verbs carefully chosen from the Old English poetic hoard of dignified words linked to creative processes. In the above passages we encountered *wreon* (clothe), *beþenian* (to cover), *gearwian* (adorn), *gliwian* (adorn), *befon* (encase), *geweorðian* (adorn), *wyrcan* (prepare), *teon* (furnish), and *besettan* (adorn). This is not technical jargon. It may be observed that these verbs all mean approximately the same thing. Used in sequence, however, they create an impression of intricate processes, beauty and skill. Similar language was employed in religious verse, for example *Caedmon's Hymn*, to describe God as he created heaven and earth.[36]

A slightly different approach was adopted in the case of weapons. Anglo-Saxons detected in the clamour of the weapon-smiths' forge a note of fierce and determined struggle. The weapon-smiths' mood as they

pounded and sharpened iron could exemplify the mood of a courageous warrior who single-mindedly went about the task of trimming the foe. *The Battle of Brunanburh* in its concluding lines speaks of the great Anglo-Saxon warriors of the Invasion period as 'battle-smiths':

> wlance wigsmiðas   Wealas ofercomon,
> eorlas arhwæte   eard begeaton.[37]

(proud battle-smiths overcame the Britons and heroes eager for glory conquered the land.)

Clearly, the image of the weapon-smith must have been a valorous one if the founders of England could be so proudly associated with a compound like *wigsmiðas*. Composers of Old English verse and their audiences appreciated the similarity of mood between the forge and the battle-field. Weapons were admired for the fierce processes that had shaped them. A sword is described as

> homera lafe,
> heardecg heoroscearp,   hondweorc smiþa[38]

(the products of hammers, the hard-edged blade, bloodily sharp, the handiwork of the smiths)[39]

and

> wraþra laf,
> fyres ond feole,   fæste genearwad,

wire geweorþad.[40]

(what the angry file and fire have left, confined fast and ornamented with wire.)[41]

Similarly spears are said to be 'feol-hearde speru / grimme gegrundne'[42] (the file-hard spears fiercely ground). In such passages the effective use of hammer and file imagery conveys a mood of courageous expectancy and fierce determination.

It is in the context of struggle, furthermore, that Old English verse frequently alludes to legendary metal smiths. Such allusions are generally brief and appear to be a technique for reinforcing heroic atmosphere. From the point of view of recent scholarship, however, the legendary metal smiths of Old English verse are controversial characters. We shall, therefore, need to examine them in some detail, beginning with the well-known figure of Weland and then proceeding to Tubalcain and the antediluvian giants before we return once again to the smiths of *WF*.

Weland

The material associated with the legendary gold- and weapon-smith Weland has fascinated medievalists since the beginning of the nineteenth century. George Borrow, who was evidently familiar with the Norse treatment of this theme, expressed a typically romantic enthusiasm for subject matter so colourful and picturesque:

> Certainly the strangest and most entertaining life ever written is that of a blacksmith of the olden north, a certain Volundr, or Velint, who lived in woods and thickets, made keen swords—so keen, indeed, that if placed in a running stream, they would fairly divide an object, however slight, which was borne against them by the water—and who eventually married a king's daughter, by whom he had a son, who was as bold a knight as his father was a cunning blacksmith.[43]

Borrow's Velint was a noble craftsman. Others began to associate this theme with Germanic paganism and Rudyard Kipling portrayed Weland as a fairy smith in his popular children's classic, *Puck of Pook's Hill.*[44] What was lost in this wave of interest, however, was a clear picture of how Anglo-Saxon authors perceived this highly interesting figure. Whereas medieval Norsemen and modern romantics tended to link him with the old gods and spirits, Anglo-Saxons found a place for him in poetry written under Christian influence, in religious carvings, and even in a translation of Boethius. We can only make some educated guesses as to why they did so. Nevertheless, although many have imagined the Anglo-Saxon opinion of Weland to have been heavily influenced by primitive superstition, there are sound reasons for viewing this matter in quite a different light.

The key to understanding the Christian Anglo-Saxon view of Weland is surely Weland's reputation for craftsmanship in metal. The status of Weland in Old English verse, as in much medieval verse generally, would seem to stem from the Germanic admiration of good weapons and fine jewellery. The essence of this figure is not the mythological apparatus associated with him, but his name. It is now generally agreed that, as

George T. Gillespie explains in a useful guide to Germanic heroic literature, Old English *Weland* and its Middle High German cognate *Wielant* derive from the present participle of an (unrecorded) proto-Germanic verb **welan* which probably meant 'to work dexterously, with craft' and which in Old Norse gave rise to such words as *véla* 'create, construct with art', *vél* 'cunning, deceit', and *smíð-véla* 'art of metal-work'. (The Old Norse form of *Weland*, *Völundr*, is explained as a modification of the West Germanic form, from which it derived. The form *Völundr* itself gave rise to an Old French form *Galant* by way of a Norman form *Galander.*) Thus one may reasonably conclude with Gillespie that the name *Weland* is connected with craftsmanship: 'this particular name is, indeed, used appellatively, having the meaning "cunning craftsman"'.[45] Moreover it is as a personification of Germanic craftsmanship in metal that the figure of Weland features in Anglo-Saxon and continental tradition. Many famous pieces of armour are attributed to his workmanship. In Old English verse Widia's sword Mimming and Beowulf's impressive byrnie both are described as *Welandes geweorc*, 'the work of Weland'. In the continental Latin poem *Waltharius*, meanwhile, the hero's armour is also said to be the work of Weland. The Norse *Thithrek's Saga* says of Weland that he 'is renowned in all the northern part of the world (i.e. Europe) for his craftsmanship and for all skills' and

all men think they can most highly praise one's craftsmanship in any piece of smithing which is better made than another piece (by saying) that

he is a Völund of craftsmanship who has made it.[46]

Weland is referred to as a famous sword-smith, furthermore, in the Middle English romances of *Horn* (fourteenth century) and *Torrent of Portugal* (fifteenth century), while a twelfth century Latin poem by Geoffrey of Monmouth alleges that King Rhydderich of Cumberland presented Merlin with a goblet made by Weland in Siegen (a town thirty miles east of Cologne).[47] Historically, there is evidence that many continental smiths of the Middle Ages were named after this famous craftsman of epic and romance.[48]

In addition to great craftsmanship, marvellous swords and magnificent treasures, Weland was also, but less frequently, associated, as in Borrow, with a particular legend. The origins of this legend are a matter of some speculation, but Gillespie and others have persuasively argued that it is not a native Germanic myth, but the result of literary borrowing from classical Greek legend. The core of the Weland legend strongly suggests the influence of the Daedalus story, and indeed Weland is from time to time referred to as 'the Northern Daedalus'.[49] Daedalus, like Weland, personified excellent craftsmanship and his name meant 'cunning worker'.[50] The Weland legend imitates the story of Daedalus's imprisonment in, and escape from, the labyrinth of King Minos of Crete. Although there is no labyrinth in the Weland legend, the similarity between the two stories has apparently given rise to the Icelandic word

for labyrinth, which is *vǒlundarhús* (literally 'Weland's house').[51] Weland's seduction of his captor's daughter (in Old English she is Beaduhild and her father's name is Niðhad) was perhaps suggested by Daedalus's friendship with Minos's daughter Pasiphaë and one of Minos's maids, Naucrate, by whom Daedalus had a son, Icarus. Weland likewise had a son by Beauduhild: he became the great warrior known in Old English as Widia. Like Daedalus, Weland eventually escaped from captivity by flying through the air.

The similarities between these two figures indicate that the Weland legend probably originated among Germanic tribesmen in close contact with the Graeco-Roman world. This possibly happened, it is thought, in the region of the Danube frontier, in what is now Austria, as early as the fifth century A.D. To the motifs suggested by the Daedalus story was added a new element, the story of the smith's revenge on his captor's sons. This may have been suggested, furthermore, by an incident which is alleged to have occurred near Linz in c. 480 and which is recounted in the *vita* of St Severin written by Eugippius in the early seventh century. Eugippius tells us that Queen Giso of the Rugians was fond of jewellery and so imprisoned some barbarian goldsmiths in order to force their labour. The goldsmiths managed to take as hostage the queen's son, however, and were intending to kill him when St Severin interceded with the queen and secured their release. In the Weland legend the captured smith kills the two sons of Niðhad when they visit his smithy and later presents his

captor with drinking vessels fashioned from their skulls (see above pp. 61-62).

From the Danube region the Weland legend evidently spread north to the Rhineland and Anglo-Saxon England. The oldest surviving witness to the legend is the Franks Casket, a whale-bone box decorated with religious and legendary scenes. One of these (which is now kept on permanent display in the British Museum), shows a smith (Weland) greeting a woman (Beaduhild) and her maid (?) in the smithy. A headless body (Beaduhild's brother) lies on the ground while outside a man appears to be killing birds, doubtless to supply Weland with feathers for the wings he will construct for his escape (Plate 2). The carvings of the Franks Casket are generally considered to be Northumbrian work of c. 700.[52]

The Weland legend also spread to Scandinavia. There, probably due to Finnish influence, the figure of Weland became more of a magician than a smith. At any rate, in Scandinavian versions of the legend we can detect magical elements which are not present in Anglo-Saxon sources. The earliest Scandinavian witness to the legend is the carving on Ardre Stone VIII, found in Gotland, of c. 800. This depicts the smith in the guise of a bird. In Norse tradition, Weland, in addition to associating with elves, was also able magically to change shape. In the *Vǫlundarkviða*, a metrical version of the Weland legend preserved in a later medieval Icelandic manuscript and dateable on philological grounds to

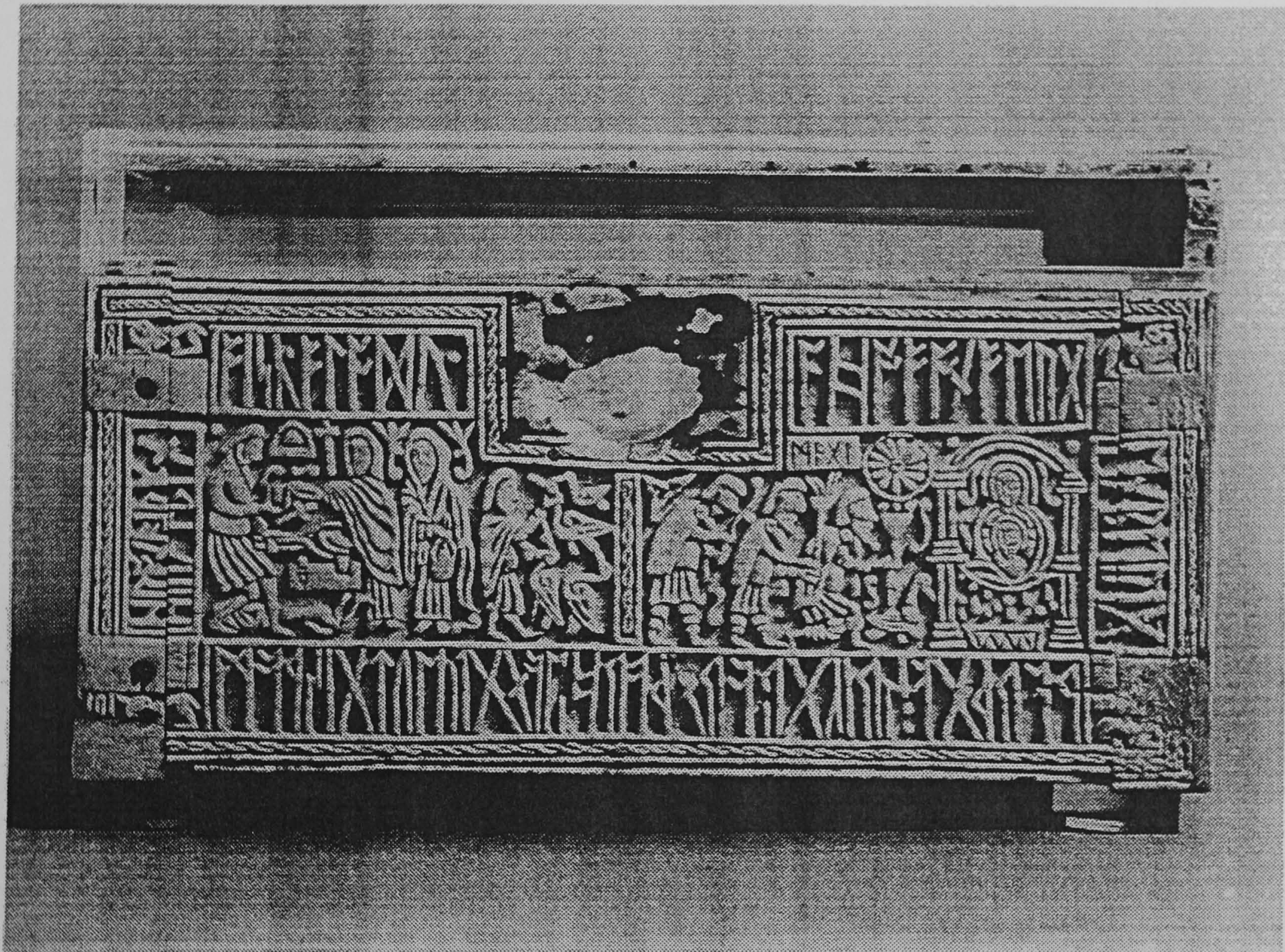


Plate 2

Franks Casket: Weland's forge (left)
and the Adoration of the Magi (right).
British Museum

the ninth century, the smith has the ability to fly seemingly at will.[53] He has no such ability in Anglo-Saxon tradition: the carving on the Franks Casket indicates that Weland's ability to fly was the result of his cleverness at making wings from the feathers of birds. Likewise in a later Norse version of the Weland legend in the thirteenth century *Þiðrekssaga*, the smith escapes by making wings, rather than by shape-changing.[54] There are other aspects of the treatment of the Weland legend in the *Völundarkviða* which have no parallel in Anglo-Saxon sources. These include his marriage to a swan-maiden, the assertion that he was the son of the king of Finland, and his association with elves.[55] Elves and dwarfs have recurrent associations with the forge in Continental folk-lore,[56] but the Anglo-Saxon elf appears to have had no known dealings with smiths or Weland.[57]

It is unwise, therefore, to read magical and other Norse elements into the treatment of the Weland legend in Anglo-Saxon England. Furthermore, it is quite likely that in England the legend was perceived in a Christian as well as an heroic context. Christian Anglo-Saxon sculpture and carving show a surprising interest in Weland. The Franks Casket is comparable in this respect to carvings on the tenth century cross shaft in Leeds Parish Church and on the cross of similar date at Halton in Lancashire. On the Franks Casket the picture of Weland is juxtaposed with one representing the Adoration of the Magi (Plate 2). At Leeds, the Weland panel (Plate 3) is accompanied by others depicting men in clerical

garb (Plate 4). At Halton, meanwhile, there is a carved panel (Figure 5) depicting a smith and a headless body; this is juxtaposed with a scene from the Sigurd legend in which Sigurd eats the heart of a dragon (slain with the aid of the smith Regin) to obtain wisdom.[58] It is natural to wonder what possible Christian meaning these carvings of smiths could have had for Anglo-Saxons.

This problem has been discussed recently by Richard N. Bailey in his book, *Viking Age Sculpture.* In his discussion of the Leeds carvings, Professor Bailey indicates that the Weland legend quite possibly had a Christian meaning for Anglo-Saxons:

> It is now impossible to tell how this Wayland story was received and interpreted by its audience in Yorkshire. . . . On the large shaft at Leeds, however, Wayland is accompanied by a series of evangelists and ecclesiastics. . . . When we recall that the Anglo-Saxon poem *Deor* used the tale to make a point about Christian consolation, and that the Franks Casket carver seems to have seen a parallel between the miraculous conception of Christ and the curious conception of a great hero who was the result of Wayland's rape, then we should not dismiss too lightly the possibility that there were Christian implications to the scene at Leeds.[59]

While Bailey may be on the right track here, one feels the need for a better connection between Weland and Anglo-Saxon Christianity than he has suggested. To this end I would like to offer a suggestion: perhaps the significant feature of the Weland carvings is not the idea of 'curious conception', but rather the image of a captive goldsmith.

Plate 3

Leeds Cross (detail): Weland's forge.
Leeds University

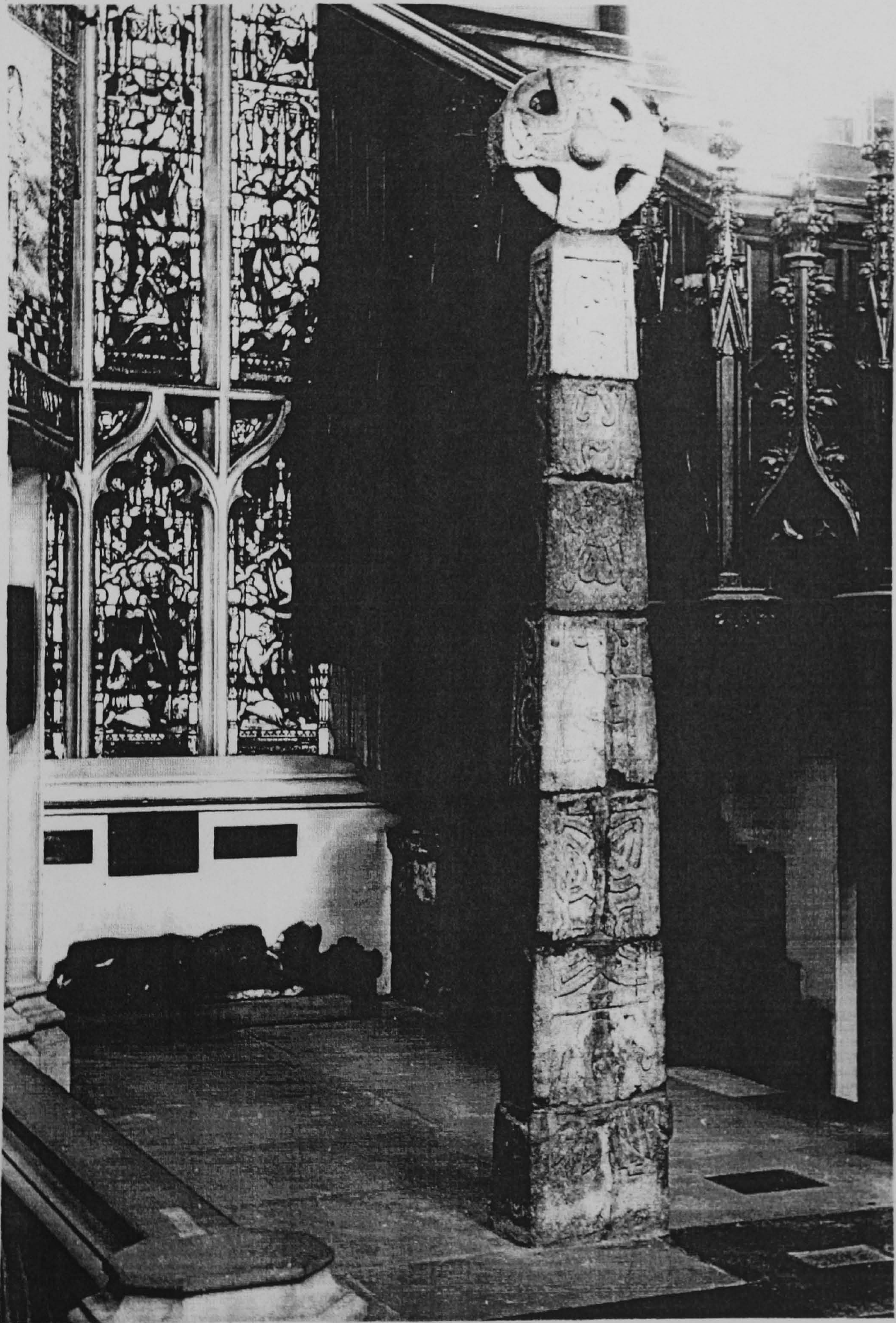


Plate 4

Leeds Cross: the human figures are believed to represent evangelists or ecclesiastistical figures.
Leeds University

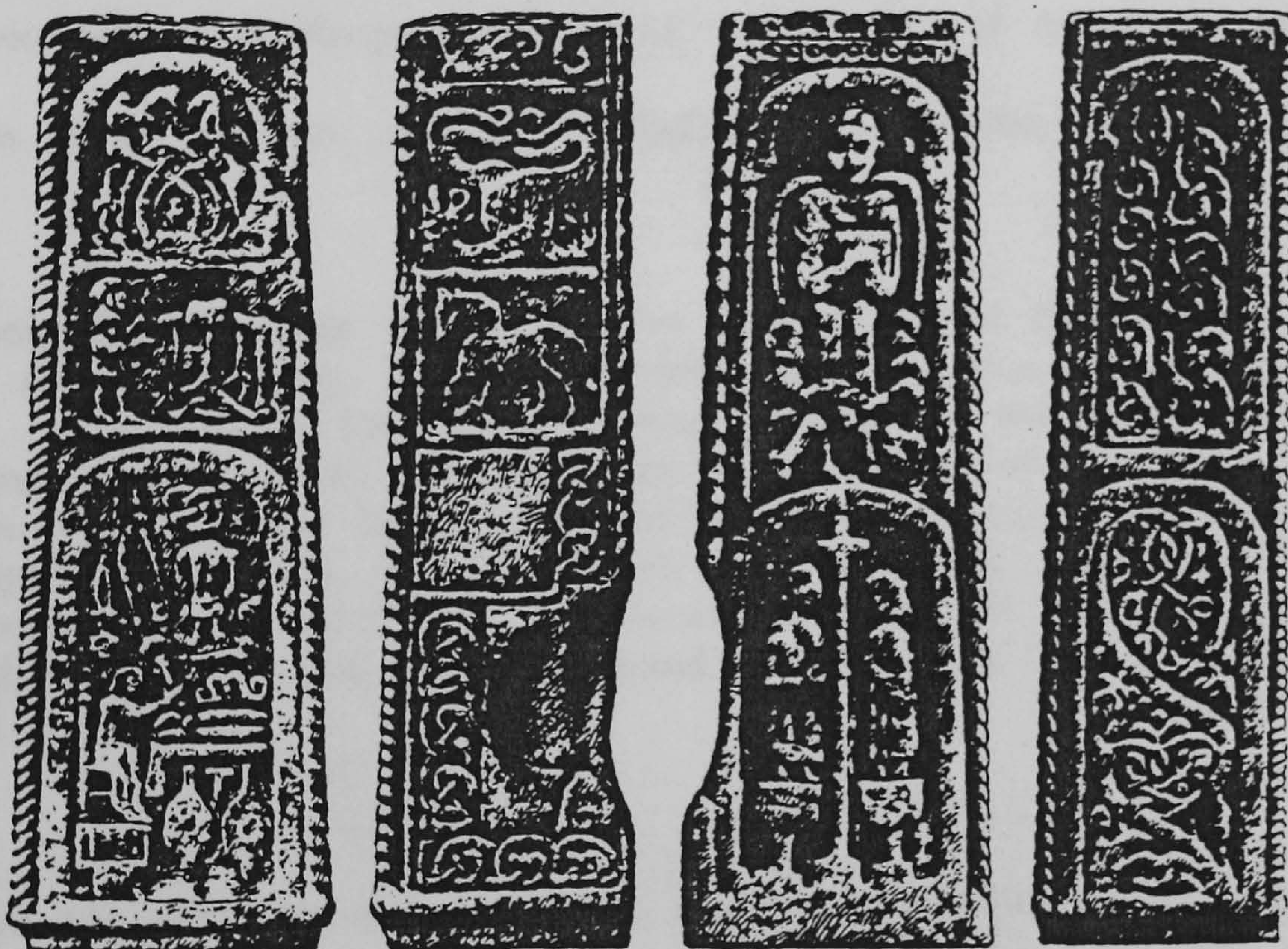


Figure 5

W. G. Collingwood's study of the Halton Cross, here reproduced from Bailey, *Viking Age Sculpture*, p. 102. A forge, possibly Weland's, is shown in the panel at the lower left. In the panel above it Regin roasts the heart of a dragon to obtain wisdom.

While Weland was highly regarded in the heroic world as a maker of jewels and weapons, the image of the captive gold- and weapon-smith was highly regarded in the Anglo-Saxon Church. To understand why the image of Weland in captivity might have found its way repeatedly onto Christian carvings, we could do much worse than to consider the Venerable Bede's exegesis of 2 Kings xxiv, 12-14. This text of Scripture describes the Jews being led into captivity, including their smiths:

and Jehoiachin the King of Judah gave himself up to the king of Babylon, himself, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his palace officials. The king of Babylon took him prisoner in the eighth year of his reign, and carried off all the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold in the temple of the Lord, which Solomon king of Israel made, as the Lord had foretold. He carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths.

For Bede the captivity of the smiths was a particularly meaningful detail. While the Babylonians represented Satan and the Jews symbolized the Church, the smiths, according to Bede, stood for those who, like the Anglo-Saxon monks, studied and spread the Word of God. Such men provided the Church with weapons, for as Bede puts it,

Arma vero quibus contra diabolum repugnantes libertatem a Deo nobis donatam defendamus quae sunt alia nisi eloquia scripturarum in quibus et ipsius domini et sanctorum eius exemplis quo ordine bella vitiorum superari debeant luce clarius discimus?

(The arms with which we defend the freedom which God has given us,

with which we fight the Devil—are they anything but the pure words of Scripture in which we learn more clearly than daylight from the examples of the Lord himself and his saints how wars against vices ought properly to be surmounted?)

The men who make these spiritual weapons are the Church's teachers, men whose task it is to encourage others, especially those who are illiterate, to follow the example set by Christ and the saints. The captive goldsmiths are also equated with the Church's teachers:

Quod si clusorem hoc loco non ostiorum sive murorum sed auri potius gemmarumque intellegere voluerimus, ad unum profecto eundemque spiritalis expositio finem respicit. Dictum quippe est de sapientia quia 'aurum est et multitudo gemmarum', atque ideo clusores horum non alios aptius quam doctores intellegere valemus qui quamdiu recte vivunt ac docent in ornatum sanctae civitatis industriam suae artis impendunt. . . .[60]

(Therefore if we should wish to understand at this point the meaning of the artificers, not of doors and walls, but rather of gold and gems, the spiritual exposition points surely to one and the same end. It is truly said about wisdom that it is 'gold and a multitude of gems', and thus we are right to interpret the smiths of these things as no others more fitting than the teachers who as long as they instruct and live righteously, expend the industry of their art in the embellishment of the Holy City. . . .)

This analogy between teachers and smiths had inspirational qualities. Bede returns to it in his peroration as he exhorts his readers to diligence in studying and preaching:

. . . communique labore satagamus ut nos negotiatores dominicae pecuniae fideles nos artifices et clusores spiritualium gemmarum sive moeniorum nos propugnatores sanctae civitatis nos caelestium inveniamur fabri

armorum. . . .[61]

(. . . and let us hurry about our common purpose so that we show ourselves the faithful treasurers of the Lord's wealth, the artificers and smiths of spiritual jewels and ramparts, the defenders of the Holy City, and the smiths of celestial weapons . . . .)

It seems unlikely that such stirring words could have been lost on the preachers of Northumbria. Nor is it unlikely that they in their turn would have sought an analogue for their role as spiritual goldsmiths by turning to the story of Weland. The depictions of Weland on the Leeds Cross and the Franks Casket and the similar scene on the Halton Cross are thus probably the result of a considered programme of Christian education. While King Jehoiachin and the Babylonian Captivity may have been difficult subjects to present to a Northumbrian audience, Weland's captivity had an immediate appeal. From the contemplation of the popular heroic tale about a captive goldsmith a skilful preacher could take his listeners into an eloquent explanation of his own role as a spiritual gold- and weapon-smith, thereby bringing them to a deeper understanding of the Christian faith through the use of imagery that was at once exciting and inspirational.

The ability of the Weland legend to yield an inspirational message would also seem to have been well appreciated by King Alfred the Great. For evidence of this we must turn to his surprising reference to Weland in his translation of Book ii, Chapter 7 of Boethius's *De consolatione philosophiae*. There we find that Alfred has rendered the name of

Fabricius, a once famous Roman general, with that of Weland, the famous Germanic smith. 'Fabricius' must have readily suggested to Alfred the name of the legendary *faber*, or metal smith, Weland. Closer examination reveals, however, that there is more to this curious bit of translation than mere word-play. What is significant is that Alfred departs further from the original text in order to comment on the meaning of Weland's craftsmanship. Thus, having translated the rhetorical question (intended to evoke the transitory nature of fame) 'Where are now the bones of staunch Fabricius?' with

Hwæt synt nu þæs foremeran γ ðæs wisan goldsmiðes ban Welondes?
(What now are Weland, the famous and wise goldsmith's bones?),

Alfred does not proceed directly to the next line of Boethius's text ('Where lies unbending Cato, Brutus where?'), but instead gives us a reassuring gloss of Weland's characteristic wisdom:

Forþi ic cwæð þæs wisan forþy þa cræftegan ne mæg næfre his cræft losigan, ne hine mon ne mæg þon eð on him geniman ðe mon mæg þa sunnan awendan of hiere stede.[62]

(I say the wise, because the skilful man can never lose his skill, nor may one take it away from him more easily than one may turn the sun from its course.)

Weland, as the personification of craftsmanship, is a consoling image of

something which is eternal amid the flux and decay of earthly existence; he is associated by Alfred with no less a favourable symbol than the sun. Although no one has been able to pinpoint an immediate source for Alfred's remark, it may have been based on Romans xi, 29, which similarly voices the thought that 'the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable'. Such a source contrasts with a previous suggestion, put forward by H. R. Ellis Davidson, that Alfred was influenced by a more funebrial concept.

Dr Ellis Davidson's suggestion is based on the idea that Weland had been a giant smith of the 'Otherworld'—'the world of the unquiet dead and of fierce struggles against hostile magic, where ordinary moral judgements are suspended'.[63] This is an interesting hypothesis and Dr Ellis Davidson brings to the fore a wealth of Scandinavian literature and folk-lore. If the relevance to the Anglo-Saxon scene of this material is difficult to judge, the centrepiece of the argument is nonetheless an English folk-custom which requires some consideration. As evidence for early traditions about Weland Dr Ellis Davidson presents a letter written in 1738 by the wife of a Berkshire clergyman. Its subject is a neolithic dolmen situated near the Ridgeway in the Vale of the White Horse and which since Anglo-Saxon times has been known as Wayland's Smithy.[64] The letter alleges that local people left offerings of money at the dolmen because they believed that

> at this place lived formerly an invisible Smith, and if a traveller's Horse had lost a Shoe upon the road, he had no more to do than to bring the Horse to this place with a piece of money, and leaving both there for some little time, he might come again and find the money gone, but the Horse new shod.[65]

It is possible that, as Dr Ellis Davidson points out, such disbursements betokened the survival of an ancient cult in which Anglo-Saxons had left offerings at Wayland's Smithy.

One should note, however, that tangible proof is unexpectedly lacking. In a pertinent footnote to his *Gazateer of Germanic Heroic Literature* George T. Gillespie reports some negative archeological findings:

> Professor R. J. C. Atkinson assures me in a letter that no coin earlier than 1850 was found during excavation of the site in 1962-3, a total of only five coins being found.[66]

This information would not sit ill with the conclusion that some at least of the folk-lore connected with Wayland's Smithy is possibly somewhat whimsical and not entirely representative of Anglo-Saxon customs. King Alfred, it is true, links Weland with mortality; Wayland's Smithy, it is pleasant to think, was probably well-known to him; yet it is also useful to note that the king seems at the same time to have responded wholeheartedly to Weland's positive literary associations with imperishable craftmanship.

It scarcely need be pointed out, in this respect, that the mood of consolation which is associated with Weland in King Alfred's translation of Boethius also characterises the presentation of Weland in *Deor.* This short reflection on the ups and downs of fortune begins with a brief meditation on the Weland legend:

> Welund him be wurman wræces cunnade,
> anhydig eorl earfoþa dreag,
> hæfde him to gesiþþe sorge ond longaþ,
> wintercealde wræce; wean oft onfond,
> siþþan hine Niðhad on nede legde,
> swoncre seonobende on syllan monn.[67]

(Weland, by way of the trammels upon him, knew persecution. Single-minded man, he suffered miseries. He had as his companion sorrow and yearning, wintry-cold suffering; often he met with misfortune once Nithhad had laid constraints upon him, pliant sinew-fetters upon a worthier man.)[68]

The point of Weland's suffering, however, is that the smith eventually surmounted it. *Deor*'s refrain sees in this grounds for cheerfulness in face of present sorrow: 'þæs ofereode, þisses swa mæg!' (That passed away: so may this!). For Anglo-Saxons the image of Weland was a positive one and a source of reassurance.

Treatment of biblical legends

The positive response to Weland in Anglo-Saxon England exemplifies the general tendency to think favourably of the skilled metal-worker. Other legendary smiths were treated favourably in Old English verse also.

Indeed, one could ask for no more cogent illustration of the fact that the conventional attitude to smiths in Old English verse was favourable than the description of Tubalcain in *Genesis A*. Often dated to the 8th c., *Genesis A* is a metrical version of the events narrated in the first twenty-two chapters of the biblical book of Genesis. The poem shows an awareness of Jewish and patristic commentary; its portrait of Tubalcain, however, differs remarkably from the traditional concept of Tubalcain as a rapacious weapon-smith and amplifies the pertinent scriptural text, Genesis iv, 22, with fresh details. As a result, the *Genesis A* Tubalcain is not the warlike brigand described by Josephus in the *Antiquities of the Jews*. On the contrary, he is a peaceable benefactor of agriculture:

> Swylce on ðære mægðe maga wæs haten
> on þa ilcan tid Tubal Cain,
> se þurh snytro sped smiðcræftega wæs,
> and þurh modes gemynd monna ærest,
> sunu Lemehes, sulhgeweorces
> fruma wæs ofer foldan, siððan folca bearn
> æres cuðon and isernes,
> burhsittende, brucan wide.[69]

(Also in that tribe [of Cain] there was at that time a young man called Tubalcain, who through an abundance of wisdom was skilled in smithcraft, and who through intelligence of mind was the first of men the originator of plough-making, son of Lamech, when the children of the nations, dwellers in towns, learned widely to exploit brass and iron.)

In this passage Tubalcain's qualities are positive ones: not the violence and greed which Josephus speaks of. nor the sinful traits suggested by Bede's *filius maledictionis*, but rather the skill and craftsmanship of the typical

smith of Old English verse.

It may be that the *Genesis A* poet knew of an authority unknown to us and which presented Tubalcain in a favourable light as a benevolent maker of ploughshares rather than swords. In this respect it may be noted that there is a curious analogue in popular Victorian literature to the *Genesis A* Tubalcain. 'Tubal Cain', a ballad by Charles MacKay (1814-1889), is dear to the hearts of some engineers. It presents the first metallurgist as a well-intentioned weapon-smith who for a time ceased to work when he saw the harm that his weapons did to men:

> And for many a day old Tubal Cain
> Sat brooding o'er his woe;
> And his hand forebore to smite the ore
> And his furnace smouldered low.
> But he rose at last with a cheerful face,
> And a bright courageous eye,
> And he bared his strong right arm for work,
> While the quick flames mounted high.
> And he sang—'Hurra for my handicraft!'
> And the red sparks lit the air;
> 'Not alone for the blade was the bright steel made;'
> And he fashioned the first ploughshare.[70]

The presentation of Tubalcain here as a maker of ploughshares is curious. Possibly MacKay knew of *Genesis A*, though it is also possible that a common source lies behind both poems. On the other hand, it may well be that they are both original products of a conventional attitude to technology. MacKay's view is probably typical of his era. The fact that whoever composed *Genesis A* chose to evade the sinister details of

Josephus and portray Tubalcain favourably, meanwhile, is in harmony with what we know of Old English verse. Moreover, Professor Shippey has observed that the 'learnt technique' of Old English verse 'seems to override at times the qualities of the subject-matter it is applied to'.[71] In a similar fashion the conventionally favourable attitude to the smith in Old English verse appears to have transformed Tubalcain from a bad man into a good one.

Indeed, composers of Old English verse appear to have been interested in the legendary smiths associated with the antediluvian race of Cain and seem even to have been prepared to admire their skill. Such, at any rate, is the most likely interpretation of the frequent allusions in *Beowulf* to the race of giants (variously referred to as *gigantas*, *entas* and *eotenas*) who manufactured prized jewels and weapons, including the fabulous sword with which Beowulf heroically slays the monster Grendel's monstrous mother. Admittedly, there has been some uncertainty about the role of the giant smiths in *Beowulf* and rival interpretations have emerged. There are, to begin with, those who would associate these smiths with occult superstitions. Horst Ohlhaver, for example, wrote that 'im Beowulflied der Shmied schwarz und braunäugig erscheint'.[72] Not everyone has agreed. These smiths are, indeed, not as mysterious as Ohlhaver suggests, for other writers have pointed to analogues in Judaeo-Christian tradition and other Old English poems.

Thus C. L. Wrenn gives us a plausible explanation of the giant smiths of *Beowulf* by linking them to the conventions of Old English verse. Wrenn tells us that

> any weapon of an excellence no longer to be equalled, inherited from an earlier and more skilled age, is apt to be described in OE heroic poetry as 'giganta geweorc' . . . or 'eald-sweord eotenisc'. . . .[73]

He caps this statement with the view that

> things belonging to a more skilled age or an older civilization no longer comprehended, were often so thought of in OE poetry, as in other ancient literature.[74]

One might reply to Wrenn perhaps that this explanation is somewhat too condescending toward the achievements of Anglo-Saxon metal-working. It seems to imply that Anglo-Saxon smiths were lacking in skill, a view which is perhaps too harsh. More seriously, however, Wrenn exaggerates a little when he implies that giant weapon-smiths are alluded to in other Old English poems. They are not. Giant masons, it is true, are conventionally alluded to in descriptions of ancient monuments as, for example, in *The Ruin* (line 2), *The Wanderer* (line 87) and *Beowulf* (line 2717). Giant smiths, however, are unique to *Beowulf.* In this respect, it is salutary to recall also that Jacob Grimm long ago observed that giant smiths were not found among the legendary metal smiths of continental

Germanic lore:

> it is not as smiths, like the Cyclops, that giants are described in German legend, and the forging of weapons is reserved for dwarfs.[75]

These considerations suggest that perhaps the *Beowulf*-poet was influenced by more than just primitive native tradition.

Accordingly, we may turn to another school of thought which has argued that the giant smiths of *Beowulf* stem from apocryphal legends about the race of Cain. As long ago as 1906, Oliver Emerson argued that there was a link between the giants of *Beowulf* and legends of Cain and indicated that the pseudepigraphical Book of Enoch was especially relevant. Enoch vii and viii, it will be recalled, attribute the invention of weapons and jewellery to a fallen angel in the antediluvian period of history when the race of Cain flourished and warlike giants roamed the earth. Emerson pointed out that the *Beowulf*-poet explicitly links the giant race with the period before the Flood, as the inscription on the sword-hilt which Beowulf retrieves from Grendel's lair quite clearly indicates:

> on ðæm wæs or writen
> fyrngewinnes, syðþan flod ofsloh,
> gifen geotende giganta cyn,
> frecne geferdon; þæt wæs fremde þeod
> ecean Dryhtne; him þæs endelean
> þurh wæteres wylm Waldend sealde.
> Swa wæs on ðæm scennum sciran goldes
> þurh runstafas rihte gemearcod,
> geseted ond gesæd, hwam þæt sweord geworht,

irena cyst ærest wære,
wreoþenhilt ond wyrmfah.[76]

(on it was engraved the beginning of the age-old war; subsequently, the Flood, an overwhelming deluge, killed the race of giants—they had behaved wickedly. It was a people alienated from the eternal Lord; because of this the Ruler gave them final payment in the rising of the water. Also on those shining plates of bright gold it was duly recorded in runic letters, set down and declared, for whom that sword, a most select iron weapon, with twist-formed hilt, dragon-decorated, was first forged.)[77]

Emerson's work has stimulated others to examine more closely the influence of legends of Cain in Anglo-Saxon England. Recently, for example, Ruth Mellinkoff has discussed the possibility that *Beowulf* was influenced by a lost Noachic tradition, i.e. a legend about the Flood similar to the material presented in Enoch.[78] Although such efforts of *Quellenforschung* have not turned out to be conclusive, they are nonetheless praiseworthy and helpful.

Thus, for example, Mellinkoff's study has quite usefully directed our attention to the role of antediluvian smithcraft in another Old English poem.[79] *Maxims I*, an example of Anglo-Saxon wisdom literature, makes significant allusion to the role of smithcraft in antediluvian history. This shows that whoever composed *Beowulf* was not the only poet to be interested in the associations between the first smiths and the violent events which preceded the Flood:

Wearð fæhþo fyra cynne, siþþan furþum swealg
eorðe Abeles blode. Næs þæt andæge nið,
of þam wrohtdropan wide gesprungon,

micel mon ældum, monegum þeodum
bealoblonden niþ. Slog his broðor swæsne
Cain, þone cwealm nerede; cuþ wæs wide siþþan
þæt ece nið ældum scod, swa aþolwarum.
Drugon wæpna gewin wide geond eorþan,
ahogodan ond ahyrdon heoro sliþendne.

(Feuding has existed among mankind ever since earth swallowed the blood of Abel. That was no one-day strife; from it the drops of enmity splashed abroad, great wickedness among men and malice-mingled strife among many nations. His brother killed his own; but Cain kept no prerogative over murder. After that it became widely manifest that chronic strife was causing harm among men so that far abroad through the earth its inhabitants suffered a contest of arms, and devised and tempered the destructive sword.)

This account of the origins of strife and weapon-smithing leads immediately into four lines which glorify arms and the man who is courageous enough to bear them:

Gearo sceal guðbord, gar on sceafte,
ecg on sweorde ond ord spere,
hyge heardum men. Helm sceal cenum,
ond a þæs heanan hyge hord unginnost.[80]

(The battle-board must be at the ready, the javelin on its shaft, an edge on the sword and a point on the spear. To the hardy man belongs determination, to the bold a helmet, and always to the coward's mind the most meagre store.)[81]

The implication of these passages is that weapon-smithing is intimately related to courage. Whoever composed *Maxims I* has given us an account of the antediluvian origins of this craft which some might describe as indulgent, others as prudently sage.

The *Beowulf*-poet too was prepared to think highly of antediluvian smiths. In battle poetry, magnificent weapons, whatever their origins, are for the prudent warrior a source of strength and an indication of his stature. It is fitting that Beowulf should wield a sword of excellent craftsmanship. The sword made before the Flood by giants (*enta ærgeweorc*) is praised as *irena cyst* and *wundorsmiþa geweorc*, 'the best of weapons' and 'the work of wondrous smiths'.[82] Regardless of its origins amongst a race at war with God, Beowulf uses it to slay the mother of Grendel with the help of God, as he himself tells us:

> . . . me geuðe ylda Waldend,
> þæt ic on wage geseah wlitig hangian
> ealdsweord eacen —oftost wisode
> winigea leasum—, þæt ic ðy wæpne gebræd.[83]

(the Ruler of men granted me that I should catch sight of a handsome, huge antique sword—time after time he has guided the friendless—so I unsheathed that weapon.)[84]

Such a sword, despite its history, can be beneficial and a credit to the smiths who made it. In conformity with the general outlook of Old English verse with respect to smithcraft, *Beowulf* presents the craftsmanship of these smiths in a favourable light.

By analogy we might well expect that whoever composed *WF* was also prepared to think favourably of smiths. Nor is it unlikely that his knowledge of legendary smiths transcended the bailiwick of primitive

Germanic lore.

It has been many years now since F. P. Magoun warned us against reading pagan Scandinavian material into the problems of the smiths.[85] During that time the older approaches to *WF* have been substantially modified. The Anglo-Saxon context has thrown new light on the charm's religious background, with the result that it must no longer be read as a relic of paganism. Anthropology, meanwhile, has been enlightened by literary criticism, resulting in a higher estimation of *WF* as a product of the poetic imagination. Yet still Magoun's advice has gone unheeded, with unfortunate results. The identity of the smiths has been debated from a Scandinavian point of view for nearly a century and has in the process become ensnared in a fruitless rivalry between contending theories which studiously avoid primary Anglo-Saxon sources. It is therefore time that the full implications of *WF*'s status as an Anglo-Saxon poem be acknowledged. There is no valid reason why *WF* should not be read in the light of the material examined earlier in this study, nor anything to be gained by continuing to study the problem of the smiths exclusively from the point of view of Scandinavian sources, many of which are later than *WF* itself. We would do better to search further in the literature of the medieval period for more examples of legendary smiths relevant to the Christian culture of Anglo-Saxon England.

For *WF* is, after all, a vivid portrayal of heroic resistance to the demonic—screaming witches, pagan gods, and elves, all armed with fiendish

weapons. The smiths too are making weapons, but smiths were conventionally a positive image in Old English verse. While the typical smith was associated with heroic qualities such as cunning and determination, legendary smiths were especially esteemed. In distress the thought of Weland could bring consolation, as could a great sword made by legendary smiths who lived before the Flood. Similarly, the legendary smiths of *WF* would appear to be a source of hope and inspiration for the afflicted in the face of harsh odds. In contrast to the storm and stress, the chaos and indiscipline of the demonic host, the smiths are presented as disciplined craftsmen, pursuing in a purposeful and exemplary manner the manufacture of fierce weapons of resistance:

> Sæt smið, sloh seax lytel,
> * * * iserna, wundrum swiðe.
> Ut, lytel spere, gif her inne sy!
> Syx smiðas sætan, wælspera worhtan.
> Ut, spere, næs in, spere!
> (lines 13-17)

This image of seated smiths is homely and human, yet at the same time tenaciously stubborn. They are most unlike the mounted host riding from the grave mound, and the threat posed by the riders and their savage allies is somehow nullified by these legendary smiths and their steady craftsmanship.

CHAPTER VI: Smithcraft and Wonder-Working

> I love to light upon . . . [a blacksmith's forge], especially after nightfall. . . . On such occasions I draw in my horse's rein, and, seated in the saddle, endeavour to associate with the picture before me—in itself a picture of romance—whatever of the wild and wonderful I have read of in books, or have seen with my own eyes in connection with forges.
> (George Borrow, *Lavengro*, Chapter 83)

Though we might lack Borrow's romantic subjectivity, we also should now be well situated to contemplate the blacksmith's forge (were we fortunate enough to find one still in operation) in the light of literature. If we were to approach one, especially in a picturesque setting, we might endeavour to associate with it colourful legends and call to mind such notable figures as Tubalcain, St Apollo, the Master of All Masters, Cwicwine and even St Joseph and Christ, among many others. 'Wonderful' is certainly a good epithet for such material; whether or not the adjective 'wild' is just as applicable is open to discussion, for we have seen that in the Middle Ages legends of the forge, though they frequently appear somewhat unsophisticated, were in fact used to promote certain ideas of Christian civilization. But the dignity of this literature is not at issue for us at the present time. Our original mission was to identify the mysterious blacksmiths of the Old English charm *Wið Færstice* and the issue at hand is thus whether such legendary materials as we have so far investigated throw significant light on this special problem, which, within

the framework of an Anglo-Saxon *Weltanschauung*, involves metal smiths, the supernatural, and help for a 'sudden stitch'.

We have not, it is true, encountered any legend which looks like an immediate source for the smiths of *WF* and we are therefore not in a position to make any positive identifications. On the other hand, the materials which we have investigated so far are not without interest, for they have told us something about the climate of opinion surrounding the legendary metal smith in the Middle Ages. In particular, we have, in the course of looking at this material, perhaps begun to feel that it has been unjustly neglected by previous research regarding the legendary metal smith's special appeal for Anglo-Saxons. Hitherto, investigators adhered to the assumption that the glamour of the smith lay in presumed Iron Age beliefs in forge-magic: such beliefs were thought to account for the role of the uncanny in legends of the forge. Yet we have seen to the contrary that many Christian legends of the forge have recourse to the supernatural in order to illustrate ethics and doctrine. Not without relevance also are those legends which involve miraculous cures, for these especially bring us closer to the particular interests of the composer of charms. As a result, it seems quite likely that a Christian legend of the forge has some relevance to *WF*. In the present chapter, then, we shall try to apply our newly won knowledge to some of the intricacies of this Old English charm. We shall find it useful, I think, to look at the charm from three separate angles: its vision of healing; the probability that the smiths play a

beneficent role in this vision; and the problematic relationship of the smiths to English folk-medicine.

Disease and healing

We turn first to the issue of the charm's vision of disease and healing. The vital question here is whether *WF* presupposes a pagan or a Christian framework of belief, for a Christian legend of the forge would scarcely be appropriate in a pagan charm. Indeed, possibly one of the reasons why previous research has failed to attend to Christian legends of the forge is that *WF*'s opening lines contain an all too obvious streak of Northern pagan colour. Scholars assumed that this depiction of a host of riders and the incantations of mighty women depended on pre-Christian beliefs. This is not unlikely, but all too often the significance of this material and the charm's later references to the shot of witch, elves and gods have been misunderstood. Thus although it has repeatedly been assumed that *WF* is 'thoroughly pagan', an informed reader might well conclude that it is definitely Christian. E. V. Gordon and A. R. Taylor's textbook of Old Norse notes that the depiction of *ese* and *ylfe*, gods and elves, in *WF* does not correspond to the depiction of the gods and elves in Norse mythology: there 'the Aesir and elves were coupled as neighbours in heaven, and as beings friendly to men'.[1] Decidedly this Norse view of elves was not the view of whoever composed the Anglo-Saxon charm, for in *WF* the elves and gods cause harm to men. To what then does the vision of *WF*

correspond?

This question may be answered more astutely with reference to Christian sources. Recall once again those opening verses of *WF*:

> Hlude wæran hy, la hlude, ða hy ofer þone hlæw ridan,
> wæran anmode, ða hy ofer land ridan,
> Scyld ðu ðe nu, þu ðysne nið genesan mote.
>
> (Loud were they, lo, loud, when they rode over the mound,
> Were resolute (of one fierce mind) when they rode over the ground.
> Shield yourself now, that you may escape this evil.)

Now compare this image of a maleficent, noxious host with an incident in Adamnan's *Life of St Columba* wherein the saint is attacked by a similar host intent upon killing him and his fellow monks with plague. This demonic host attacks Columba without warning. For he had

> sought in wild places a spot more remote from mankind, and suitable for prayer. And when he had begun to pray there, suddenly, as he afterwards informed a few brothers, he saw a foul and very black array of demons making war against him with iron spits [*veribus*, which could also be translated 'javelins']. They, as was revealed by the Spirit to the holy man, wished to assail his monastery, and with these same spikes [*sudibus*, 'piles'] to slaughter many of the brothers.

The visions of disease in the *Life of Columba* and *WF* are not dissimilar: in each case we find a fierce host armed with projectiles. There is a hint, moreoever, that both works likewise share a similar vision of healing. In *WF* the listener is instructed to 'shield' himself. Some indication of

what this may involve is given by Adamnan when he tells us how Columba coped with the black host that memorable day on Iona: 'he, one man against these innumerable enemies, fought a strong fight, taking to himself the armour of the apostle Paul'. Columba turned to God. After a hard day's spiritual combat, St Michael the archangel and a heavenly host appeared, drove away the demons and thus saved Columba and his colleagues from almost certain death: for the same host of demons later devastated a monastery in Ireland.[2]

By analogy, one might reasonably suspect that *WF* also relies on heavenly allies of some sort to ward off the noxious host and the shot of witch, elves and gods. This hypothesis, moreover, gains in probability when we consider that some sicknesses were in the early Middle Ages widely thought of in terms of a spiritual combat involving supernatural powers which dwarfed the individual sufferer in significance. A clear explanation of this view is found in the writings of St Basil:

> sickness afflicts us at the request of the Evil One—our benevolent Master, condescending to enter into combat with him as if he were a mighty adversary and confounding his boasts by the heroic patience of His servants.[3]

The sick person's role was to suffer patiently while Christ fought Satan for the health of soul and body. In this respect, it is probably significant that *WF* itself ends with the short benediction, 'helpe ðin drihten!' (God be your help!).

The role of the knife

Such a Christian perspective introduces the possibility that whoever composed *WF* intended the allusions to metal smiths in lines 13-16 to signal a source of divine succour for the afflicted. When we take a closer look at the charm, we notice that the metal smith of line 13 is manufacturing a knife (*seax*). A knife, furthermore, plays an important role in the ritual gestures which accompany *WF*; at the end of the spoken part of the charm, there is an instruction to take 'the knife' (*þæt seax*) and plunge it into liquid (*wætan*). It is not unreasonable to equate these two knives and to conclude that the speaker of the charm is claiming for his ritual knife some sort of legendary significance, namely that it was manufactured by a legendary smith who endowed it with supernatural power against the shot of witch, elves or gods. This is, indeed, the orthodox interpretation of the charm instituted by Felix Grendon, who suggested that the legendary smith in question might be Weland.[4] But what power would Weland have had against witch, elves or pagan gods? It seems unlikely that a charm which relied on a Christian vision of disease and healing would have recourse to the magical powers of a particular smith. Rather, it would be more in keeping with medieval Christian healing practices if the smith of line 13 had the power to invest the speaker's ritual knife as a source of God's saving grace.

The grace manifested in images, shrines and relics was, for the medieval believer, one of the most compelling features of the Christian

Church. The belief that such objects had wonder-working potential was not only wide-spread, but also grounded in orthodoxy: a recent Catholic authority says that

> an image, shrine, or relic is said to be wonder-working when God uses it as an instrument by means of which he performs a miracle . . . , or as an occasion for wonders. . . . To do so had been God's pleasure from biblical times, e.g. as recorded in Num. xxi, 8, 9; 4 (2) Kings xiii, 21; Acts xix, 12; John v, 2-4. No virtue, efficacy or power inheres in these objects themselves.[5]

That is, they are not magical objects, but rather signs of God's grace, or sacramentals. For the unsophisticated, however, it was their power to ward off evil which counted most. An official Catholic history readily concedes that,

> unfortunately, devotion to the saints and veneration of their relics did not always remain within proper bounds. This was due at first to popular ignorance, but even during the later Middle Ages when people were much better instructed, there were often excesses in the matter. Some ascribed inherent powers to the relic itself, others trafficked in relics, circulated ungenuine, falsified or impossible relics and in their eagerness to obtain them some did not even hesitate to resort to theft and violence.[6]

The need for such objects was evidently profound. Though it resulted in what to the modern mind is one of the most distressing aspects of medieval religion, it expressed nevertheless a genuine need for consolation in the face of pain and suffering. R. W. Southern has observed of the Middle Ages that

> as human beings men were powerless. They could only survive through their dependence on the supernatural, and they sought to clothe themselves in the power of the unseen world. Relics were the main channel through which supernatural power was available for the needs of ordinary life.[7]

The excesses surrounding the devotion to images, shrines and relics are pardonable to the extent that the devotion itself was an authentic attempt to revive the human spirit in the face of sorrow and despair. The fearfulness of disease is vividly expressed in *WF*; we may well suspect, moreoever, that whoever composed this charm would also have sought out a suitable image of holiness to revive the spirits of the afflicted.

The use of such means is a typical feature of the Anglo-Saxon charm. In order to strengthen the afflicted in the struggle against the supernatural causes of illness the composer of charms often had recourse not only to such common sacramentals as the host, holy water and sign of the cross, but also to unusual relics and esoteric allusions to legendary Christian lore. Undoubtedly there was a vast amount of material from which to choose. Thus a Carolingian monastery is said to have possessed 'wood of the cross, our Lord's vestment, sandals, crib, and sponge, water of the Jordan, part of a stone on which Christ sat . . . and the Virgin's milk, hair, and garment'.[8] Relics of saints were even more numerous, for the faithful venerated not only the bones of saints, but also objects they had touched, including 'vestments, clothes, water in which the body was washed, dust from their tombs, oil from lamps in their shrines'.[9] The

wonder-working power of such objects could be transmitted via things which had touched them. St Wulfstan of Worcester (c. 1008-1095) is said to have 'carried as a talisman a golden bezant which, he believed, had been perforated by the head of the lance which had pierced Christ's side'.[10]

Composers of Anglo-Saxon charms could thus call upon a rich supply of Christian wonder-working lore. A charm against toothache relates an apocryphal anecdote about Christ and St Peter, for example. This anecdote apparently survived in oral form into modern times, for a version was collected at Blackpool:

> Peter sat weeping on a marble stone.
> Jesus came near and said: 'What aileth thee, O Peter?'
> He answered and said: 'My Lord and my God!'

It was believed that simply reciting this incident would have beneficial results.[11] Another example of legendary wonder-working lore in Anglo-Saxon charms is the story, popularised by Gregory of Tours, of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus. By alluding to this legend, which told of seven Christians who escaped persecution by falling asleep in a cave for two centuries, one could ward off a number of evils, particularly the dwarf which caused nightmare.[12] A charm against snake-bite, meanwhile, not inappropriately calls for bark which comes from Paradise; it was in Paradise, after all, that God had ordained the perpetual enmity between man and serpent. (Genesis iii, 14-15).[13] Legendary material of this sort,

accompanied, in some cases, by an associated wonder-working object, was an important part of the charm-composer's stock-in-trade.

Whoever composed *WF*, working, as we have surmised, within the framework of a Christian vision of disease and healing, to save the afflicted from the malice of the demonic host most likely had recourse to the benign supernatural power manifest in legendary material of this sort and an associated wonder-working object. Of special significance in this regard are two Anglo-Saxon charms which, like *WF*, offer protection against the shot of elves and involve the ritual use of a knife. It is probable that the operating principle in all three charms is the same. Whereas, in *WF*, the knife is associated with legendary metal smiths, in the other two charms it is associated with Christian sacramentals. Thus in the charm to cure an elf-shot horse, the knife is to be inscribed with 'Benedicite omnia opera domini dominum' and is to be used to inscribe the sign of the cross in six places on the horse's hide. The knife to be used in the charm against elf-sickness, meanwhile, must be placed under the altar of a church at a specified time.[14] In other words, to be effective against elves (or any other demonic agency) the knife had to be given a sacramental character through contact with signs of Christian holiness. By analogy, we may infer that the knife of *WF* similarly required an association with Christian holiness to be effective. The obvious source of this holiness is the smith in line 13 who is shown in the act of making a knife. Whoever composed *WF* was thus probably asserting that the knife's

supernatural powers originated in a legendary deed of smithcraft involving one holy smith (line 13) and six other smiths (line 16).

The healing character of the knife in Christian charms would seem, at any rate, to indicate that the allusion in *WF* to seven metal smiths was intended to have beneficial consequences. Indeed, it is perhaps unsurprising in this regard that those who have attempted to argue the contrary view that the smiths were maleficent have come to grief as a result of the knife's beneficial role in the charm. Why should whoever composed *WF* wish to link a beneficial knife with a maleficent smith? Skemp, the first to propose that the smiths be identified with evil elves, could not find a way out of this dilemma: he had to concede that indeed it was likely that the knife's manufacturer was beneficent, even if the other smiths were evil. Such a compromise led only to further difficulties, however, for as Skemp immediately realised, it clearly upset the obvious flow of the charm from evil to good. Skemp's thoroughly unsatisfactory solution to this latter difficulty was wholesale rearrangement of the text.[15] Such a tactic must be dismissed as too desperate a measure to warrant serious consideration; certainly, it has never been upheld by the charm's numerous editors. One might also question whether dividing the smiths into two opposed factions would not also distort the spirit of the text. A sensitive reader might well feel that the repeated 's' sounds in the lines 'sæt smið' and 'syx smiðas sætan' hint at some unity of purpose and indicate the rhythmic hum of a single forge in which the smiths are

co-operating to achieve a common objective. Given the healing character of the knife in Anglo-Saxon charms, it is unlikely, however, that their objective is evil. Only one critic has attempted to argue that the knife and therefore *all* the smiths are evil. Significantly, this attempt is unable to support its thesis with evidence of the use of evil knives in other Anglo-Saxon charms; rather, its author, Minna Doskow, is forced into the bold assertion that the beneficial use of knives in other charms is of no consequence for *WF*. Doskow's attempt to evade the positive Christian associations of the knife in Anglo-Saxon charms is all the more surprising since she recognizes that *WF* was composed from a Christian point of view.[16] Doskow, it seems, has not appreciated the full implications of a Christian vision of disease and healing for our understanding of the role of the metal smiths in *WF*. Such a vision would surely call for beneficent, not maleficent, metal smiths to invest the knife as a source of supernatural grace and give it the power to ward off the demonic host and 'melt' the shot of witch, elves and gods.

Miracles and folk-lore

In the past, unfortunately, researchers have, like Doskow, failed to consider the favourable reputation which the metal smith enjoyed in the medieval Church. Their oversight is all the more serious because the smiths' forge was sometimes the setting for popular stories of wonder-working cures. Such stories might arise from the holy reputation of a particular saintly

smith; additionally they might also adhere to a particular relic, as we shall see. A consideration of this material, however cursory, is long overdue; it is high time we took into account the sort of legend involving metal smiths and wonder-working which would have been available to whoever composed *WF*.

The sort of legend which students of *WF* ought to be aware of, but have, in fact, overlooked, is, surely, that which illustrates the wonder-working power of a particular relic by recounting an incident which took place in the smiths' forge as the relic was being worked on. In many instances miracles were believed to have occurred in a particular forge as a result of the sanctity of the smith; but miracles could even occur as ordinary smiths prepared a shrine or reliquary. Consider, for example, the following miracle which occurred in the smiths' workshop at Evesham and which Frank Barlow has recounted, most helpfully, in its appropriate historical context:

Among the artistic centres was Evesham, where the master of the workshop was a monk Manni who was elected abbot in 1044 and became paralysed in 1058. Like Dunstan he was not only well read in the classical and sacred authors, but also a master of all the other arts, singing, calligraphy, painting, and smithery. His work was to be found at Canterbury, Coventry, and many other places. At Evesham he rebuilt the church and furnished it splendidly. He provided a shrine for St Egwin made out of gold, silver, and precious stones (in it were three 'stones' which illuminated most of the church at night), and shrines of St Odulf and St Credan, and with his own hand wrote and illuminated a Missal and a Psalter. His main assistant was a goldsmith named Godric, who, when fitting the small figures on to St Egwin's shrine, pierced his left hand with a sharp tool, but the saint cured the wound. Godric's son, Clement, later became prior of Evesham, and Godric himself took the cowl

under Abbot Walter (after 1077).[17]

Godric's miraculous cure undoubtedly served to enhance the reputation of St Egwin's shrine at Evesham, for we may suppose that his story became well-known in the vicinity. There is every reason to suspect, furthermore, that its subject matter was by no means unique. Shrines and reliquaries were a staple of medieval religion: their glamour must have made the metal smith's life especially prone to supernatural wonder-working incursions. It is perhaps not inappropriate, in this regard, that a smith was one of the instigators of the famous wonder-working shrine of St Swithun (d. 862) at Winchester, for Swithun informed the smith in a vision c. 970 that he wished his relics translated from the church-yard to the cathedral. This was accomplished on 15 July 971 and produced many miraculous cures.[18] (Two other legends of the forge which tell of wonder-working in connection with an important object will be discussed later: one involves the forging of the nails of the Crucifixion, the other the casting of a bronze statue commissioned by the Pope.)[19]

There is every indication, moreover, that legends of the forge involving relics were more numerous in the Middle Ages than the small number of surviving examples we have located. We are dealing here with an aspect of popular religion about which our knowledge can be only fragmentary. 'The common folk . . . have not left us much first-hand evidence about their thoughts and emotions,' one student of popular religion

has complained, 'not least because most of them were illiterate.'[20] There is, however, much secondary evidence which shows that the climate of opinion favoured legends of the forge involving relics and that material for such legends was not lacking. One need only consider here the relics and wonder-working reputations of holy smiths. Examples of these may be cited from many regions of Christendom. The fifth century historian Sozomen, among several other writers, indicates that the fourth century blacksmith St Apollo (or Ampelius) of Egypt performed numerous miracles.[21] According to tradition, this saint later worked as a smith in the region of Genoa: there, tools and products said to be from his forge were reputed to heal the sick on contact.[22] In France, St Eloi (or Eligius) was said to have performed many miracles in his own lifetime and many places claimed to possess objects which he had made. Thus, for example, the Abbé Texier refers to an inventory of the cathedral at Limoges in 1365 which mentions 'duo candelabra sancti Eligii'; and an inventory of the church of Sainte-Croix at Poitiers in 1420 mentions 'tabulae sancti Eligii'.[23] At Noyon, a chalice attributed to this seventh century goldsmith was carried among the infirm and was reputed to heal them on contact.[24] In Ireland in the seventh century some churches claimed to have objects made in the fifth century by the saintly metal smith Assicus, a disciple of St Patrick. Patrick's biographer Tirechan, writing c. 700, tells us that Assicus

made altar-plates and square casks for the patens of our saint in honour of bishop Patrick, and three of these square patens I have seen, that is, a paten in Patrick's church at Armagh and another in the church of Ail Find and a third in the great church of Séol on the altar of the holy bishop Felartus.[25]

In England, as we have seen, the jewelled cover of the Lindisfarne Gospels was said to be the work of St Billfrith.[26] Another Anglo-Saxon saint to whom many pieces of ecclesiastical metal-work were attributed was Aethelwold (c. 912-84). According to a thirteenth century chronicle, Aethelwold made many treasures which belonged to the monastery at Abingdon:

he made the organ with his own hands. He himself made the wheel called golden, and which he covered with plates of gold, and twelve lamps round the wheel, and numberless little bells around the wheel. . . . And St. Aethelwold made a table over the altar, in which St. Mary and the 12 apostles were represented in carving. It was of pure gold and silver and was of the value of three hundred pounds. . . . He also made three crosses of gold and silver the length of four feet. . . . Moreover, he made two bells and he added brass mortars, and church vases. . . .[27]

The chronicler states that, alas, all these valuable objects had been stolen by Normans, who were evidently interested only in their monetary value. For the pious, however, it was the association with sanctity which made such objects especially precious. To this day, humble smiths' tools said to be those of Aethelwold's contemporary, St Dunstan, are preserved at Mayfield Convent, East Sussex.[28] A pilgrim might readily associate these

tools with the entertaining legend of St Dunstan's encounter with the Devil in the smithy, but it is possible that such tools had at one time wonder-working significance, for St Dunstan before the Reformation was a popular saint whose shrines at Canterbury and Glastonbury attracted pilgrims seeking miraculous cures.[29] Relics of Dunstan's forge might possibly have been considered an effective means of driving away the demons of illness.

The large amount of wonder-working lore connected with the smiths' forge in Christian tradition is obviously of relevance to our understanding of the smiths' role in *WF*. It indicates that in the Middle Ages there was a positive link between legendary smiths and wonder-working objects. Such a favourable association between metal smiths and healing thus confirms the orthodox scholarly opinion that the smiths of *WF* are beneficial and is at the same time consistent with the charm's Christian vision of disease and healing. The obvious conclusion to be drawn from this material is that the smiths of *WF* derive from a Christian source.

This conclusion is further substantiated by more recent sources. These testify to the continuing appeal of Christian traditions of wonder-working in the forge after the Reformation. Instances of such traditions may be detected, moreover, not only in Catholic Europe, but also in Protestant England. In Europe, we find that the association between the forge and healing has found expression in opera and festival; in England it must be detected shrouded in the relative obscurity of isolated

folk-customs: customs which have escaped the attention of English and American students of *WF* and yet are surprisingly relevant, as we shall presently see.

One of the most dramatic accounts of a miraculous cure in the metal smiths' forge is that written by the goldsmith Benvenuto Cellini (1500-71). Cellini's pious tale of wonder-working in the forge was, indeed, to have a notable influence on the nineteenth century composer Hector Berlioz: it is the material on which Berlioz based the memorable final scene of his opera *Benvenuto Cellini*, first performed in 1838. It is a tale, to be sure, which lays romantic stress on the sufferings of the great artist, but it is infused all the same with a feeling of traditional and genuine piety. The story is of the type introduced previously: a miracle occurs in the forge of a worthy smith working on an important object with ecclesiastical associations. In this case the smith is Cellini himself and the object is a bronze of Perseus commissioned by the Pope. Cellini portrays himself as a pious master-craftsman suffering from both a fatal illness and the incompetence of his workers as he struggles against the odds to complete a great masterpiece. Cellini's piety is most traditionally Catholic, so that he believes firmly in the healing benefits which result from the intercession of the saints. After an industrial accident has nearly caused him to go blind in one eye, Cellini attributes the recovery of his sight not just to the surgeon's skill, but also to the intercession of St Lucia. He thus repays the saint's kindness in a suitable fashion:

> The feast of St. Lucia approaching, I made a golden eye of a French crown, and got it offered to that saint by one of the daughters of my sister Liperata, a girl about ten years of age: in this manner did I testify my gratitude to God and St. Lucia.[30]

God rewards Cellini's piety during the final, critical hours of work on the Perseus. Two miracles occur: the statue, which everyone thought would turn out badly, is an unqualified triumph; and Cellini, who had appeared to be dying, completely recovers his health. As Cellini tells the tale, he was summoned from his death-bed to the foundry at a moment when all seemed lost. When he got there, however, the unexpected occurred:

> Finding that, contrary to the opinion of my ignorant assistants, I had effected what seemed as difficult as to raise the dead, I recovered my vigour to such a degree that I no longer perceived whether I had any fever, nor had I the least apprehension of death.

Shortly thereafter

> suddenly a loud noise was heard, and a glittering of fire flashed before our eyes, as if it had been the darting of a thunderbolt. Upon the appearance of this extraordinary phenomenon, terror seized on all present, and on none more than myself.

Cellini quickly realised that the cover of the furnace had burst open, a sign that the metal was beginning to fill the mould successfully. He attributed this dramatic turn of events to God's grace, offering up in front

of his workers the following prayer:

O God, I address myself to Thee, who, of Thy Divine power, didst rise from the dead, and ascend in glory to heaven. I acknowledge in gratitude this mercy that my mould has been filled: I fall prostrate before Thee, and with my whole heart return thanks to Thy Divine Majesty.

When the casting was completed, Cellini celebrated with his assistants and 'went joyful and in good health to bed' where he says he 'rested as if [he] had been troubled with no manner of disorder'. The next day he inspected the Perseus and judged it to be 'a miracle immediately wrought by the Almighty'.[31]

The vigour of this account of wonders in the forge, not to mention its subsequent elevation to operatic prominence, bespeaks the continuing prestige, in Catholic Europe, of medieval traditions linking the smith with miracles and piety. Where the Church remained influential, such traditions had a good chance of survival. The veneration of certain smith-saints continued with ecclesiastical support. The cult of St Eloi remained particularly popular, especially in northwest France and Flanders. It is reported that his feast day (1 December) was still celebrated in this century by country folk, who would process with their horses to the parish church or a nearby chapel. On such occasions the clergy would bless the horses with 'le marteau de saint Eloi'.[32] Understandably, such customs relating to the forge enjoyed a greater degree of stability in Catholic regions than they would have in Protestant nations such as England.

After the Reformation the veneration of saints declined in England and many ancient cults were either neglected or suppressed. This did not mean, however, that they disappeared entirely. David Hugh Farmer writes that in some regions of the British Isles 'the "old religion" survived many generations, and in some remote places devotion to the saints was mixed with folklore and various superstitions and it survived, as at Holywell, in pilgrimages to shrines of ancient saints'.[33] Of particular interest for our own inquiry are survivals in English folk-lore of medieval beliefs pertaining to wonder-working in the forge. It will be useful, here, to look at two customs from the North of England noted down in the nineteenth century. Of these, one may be associated with a legend involving a highly esteemed relic, the other may be related in some way to the smiths of *WF*.

The first is a custom connected with Good Friday. A brief passage in *Notes on the Folk-Lore of the Northern Counties and the Borders* by William Henderson, published in the nineteenth century, recalls that

> a friend, who passed his boyhood in the north of Durham, informs me that no blacksmiths throughout that district would then drive a nail on that day. . . .

Henderson did not know the origin of this custom, but suggested it was rooted in piety:

> a remembrance of the awful purpose for which hammer and nails were used on the first Good Friday doubtless held them back.[34]

This is, in fact, a very sensible suggestion, 'the awful purpose' referred to being the Crucifixion. Yet we might well wonder why the smiths in particular were singled out, for carpenters and shoemakers also work with hammer and nails: why didn't they refrain from driving nails on Good Friday also? The answer probably lies in a popular medieval legend which had penetrated northern England by the early fourteenth century, but which had apparently faded from public memory after the Reformation and was unknown to William Henderson or his friend from Durham a century ago. The legend in question told of an edifying miracle which had allegedly occurred in the forge where the nails for the Crucifixion were made. After Jesus's trial before the Sanhedrin, the Jewish authorities went to the forge of a certain blacksmith and commanded him to make these nails. The smith, however, was unwilling to do so because he felt that Jesus was innocent and he therefore pretended to the authorities that one of his hands, which he hid in his cloak, was injured. The authorities, however, were suspicious: they ordered him to show them his injured hand and cruelly threatened to kill him if he were deceiving them. By a miracle, however, when the smith showed them his hand it actually appeared unfit for work. The good smith escaped the wrath of the Jews and avoided taking any part in the Crucifixion of Christ. After the authorities had gone, furthermore, his hand miraculously healed. (Meanwhile, his shrewish wife, anxious to earn some money, herself made the nails which crucified Christ.) The Durham folk-custom whereby smiths

refrained from work on Good Friday would appear to be modelled on the behaviour of the good smith of the legend. It may be recalled here that the nails of the Crucifixion were prominent relics in the Middle Ages and inspired a good deal of lore and custom. They were said to have come to light as a result of St Helen's discovery of the True Cross in the early fourth century. Their supernatural powers were highly regarded. MacCulloch's *Medieval Faith and Fable* tells us that St Helen

had two nails of the cross set in the bridle and stirrups of Constantine for his protection. Another nail, thrown into the Adriatic, where many shipwrecks occurred, made it a calm sea. Hence sailors fasted and prayed there, because it was thus sanctified. A fourth was put in the head of a statue of Constantine to protect Constantinople.[35]

In 1931 an official Catholic publication reported that the nails were still highly regarded in some areas:

There are numerous alleged relics of them, principally in the Iron Crown of Lombardy, at Monza, and at Santa Croce in Rome, but the authenticity of none of them is established. A feast of the Holy Lance and Nails is kept in some places on the second Friday in Lent.[36]

The nails had been known in England since Anglo-Saxon times and are mentioned by Cynewulf and Aelfric.[37] The origin of the legend about the miracle that accompanied their manufacture is, however, obscure. It survives in Old French, Cornish and Middle English versions, including one in *The Northern Passion*, a metrical version of the Passion narrative

composed in the North of England in the fourteenth century.[38] Clearly, it was a popular tale and its ghost seems to have lingered on among the smiths of Durham into the nineteenth century.

The second English folk-custom we wish to consider was observed by Henderson at Stamfordham in Northumberland. There a curious ritual performed in a smithy was believed to heal a sick child:

> When a child pines or wastes away, the cause is commonly looked for in witchcraft or the 'evil-eye'. At Stamfordham a sickly puny child is set down as 'heart-grown' or bewitched, and is treated as follows: Before sunrise it is brought to a blacksmith of the seventh generation, and laid naked on the anvil. The smith raises his hammer as if he were to strike hot iron, but brings it down gently on the child's body. This is done three times, and the child is sure to thrive from that day.[39]

This custom is similar to one practised in Scotland in which a child suffering from rickets was taken to a forge to be ritually cured in a brief ceremony conducted by three blacksmiths. Analogous folk-cures involving blacksmiths were also observed in nineteenth century Germany.[40] The Stamfordham ritual was thus but one instance of a custom, found in areas where the Reformation was particularly energetic, in which blacksmiths were observed performing healing ceremonies in the forge.

There are, of course, certain obvious similarities between the Stamfordham ritual and *WF*. Perhaps the most striking is that both the charm and the folk-cure employ blacksmiths in an attempt to battle a disease caused by supernatural forces and witchcraft. Also quite striking

is the fact that the number of smiths mentioned in both instances is seven and that furthermore the smiths are divided in both cases into two groups: in the Stamfordham ritual we have a smith and six smith ancestors while in *WF* we have a smith making a knife and six smiths making battle-spears. How significant, we must ask, are these similarities? What can the Stamfordham ritual contribute to our understanding of the role of the smiths in *WF*?

It is wise to approach this question with caution. Certainly one must not forget that although there are broad similarities between *WF* and the Stamfordham ritual there are also distinct differences. Thus, for example, there is nothing in the charm to suggest that its narrator had to be a smith of the seventh generation or that the smiths are all blood relatives, even though in the folk ritual it is a smith of the seventh generation who must perform the 'cure'. Surely one needs to swallow hard in order to conclude, as one recent study has done, that the first smith in *WF* is the narrator and that the six smiths are his ancestors![41] It seems doubtful that both charm and folk ritual could be that closely related, especially when one considers that the analogous Scottish custom makes no reference to blood relationship and requires three smiths, not seven. Then again, *WF* makes no reference to the ceremony involving the hammer and anvil, but rather has recourse to plunging a knife into a liquid concoction of three herbs. These important differences in detail indicate that the charm and the folk-custom are not directly related. On

the other hand, they are, quite conceivably, indirectly related. both charm and folk-custom being, perhaps, different shoots from a common root.

The root itself is hidden from view. We may speculate, however, that it is a pious legend of wonder-working in the forge. We have seen that the cult of St Eloi, a seventh century goldsmith, persisted in Catholic regions up to the present day. In *WF* and the Stamfordham ritual we may have traces of another such cult involving not one but several holy smiths and perhaps even the image of Christ in the forge.[42] Perhaps too the cult may have centred on a monastic workshop in Northumbria in the early medieval period; it is interesting to note in this regard that Northumbrian monks were famous for the manufacture of little knives.[43] It is not inconceivable that legends could have arisen concerning such a workshop, particularly legends involving wonder-working, and that such legends could well have influenced whoever composed *WF*. The same legends could also have given rise to healing rituals and blessings like the one noted in connection with the cult of St Eloi, in which a priest wielded a smiths' hammer. In England after the Reformation popular religious customs which lost the sanction of the authorities sometimes survived in distorted form. The Stamfordham ritual may be such a survival.

This reconstruction is of course somewhat conjectural. It is, however, based on pertinent analogues (including the legend of the Nails at Durham) and suits the textual and historical context of *WF*. It accords too with what we have learned of the prestige and influence of the

legendary metal smiths of medieval Christendom. The lore of the forge noted and collected in the European countryside in recent times had clearly been subject to ecclesiastical influence. The common folk-tale theme of The Smith and the Devil, for example, is to be found in a ninth century biography of Charlemagne written by a monk of St Gall. The nineteenth century smiths' story about the Master of All Masters, moreover, is not very dissimilar to one known to Abbot Aelfric at Cerne Abbas in Dorset in *c.* 1000. Likewise, the widespread folk-tale of 'The Saviour and the Smith' is found in a fourteenth century English poem and illustrates the heterodox view of early medieval authorities about the nature of Christ's manual skill. The Church's interest in the forge has had a fertile influence on the role which the metal smith played in the popular, as well as the literary, imagination of Europe. Subsequent researchers into the role of metal smiths in *WF* and its analogues would be well advised not to underestimate this fact. The smiths of *WF* may well be a leaf from the venerable grove of stories, nourished and pruned by the Church, from which succeeding generations have gathered accounts of the immortal deeds of legendary smiths to revive and fortify body and soul.

CHAPTER VII: The Power of Legendary Metal Smiths: Conclusion

> Some may or may not think the Middle Ages a nice civilization, but we all know that it was a civilization.
> (G. K. Chesterton, 'John Ruskin')

The quotation from Chesterton is intended as a rallying cry on behalf of the legendary metal smiths of Anglo-Saxon England, in particular those presented to us in *Wið Færstice.* It may or not be an exhilarating one, but one is certainly needed; not simply because the metal smiths of *WF* have of late with increasing frequency been made to appear dark and sinister, but because attempts to place them in a favourable light have increasingly appeared uncertain and perplexed. In large part this is attributable to the fact that the blacksmith's forge has all but passed over into history, with the result that modern readers have less occasion to recall its legendary traditions than their forefathers did. Even as late as the nineteenth century the literary public of England and North America could be expected to have some acquaintance with the rich lode of lore surrounding the forge. Yet whereas men like Borrow, Dickens, or Longfellow, for example, could expatiate on the poetry of the forge and its legendary denizens, a poet of the 1970's, Seamus Heaney, in a timely elegy entitled simply 'The Forge', perceptively confesses that he is deprived of all but the most humble associations:

> All I know is a door into the dark,
> Outside, old axles and iron hoops rusting;
> Inside, the hammered anvil's short-pitched ring.[1]

If it is easy for contemporary readers to share Heaney's sense of unfamiliarity before an everyday working forge, it is not to be expected that they should be anything other than bemused by the legendary metal smiths depicted in *WF*. Modern readers are inevitably limited in their appreciation of a poem like *WF* by their inability to summon forth from a wide range of wonderful tales and images linked to the forge the one which an Anglo-Saxon would have recalled immediately; but when the same readers attribute what they cannot comprehend to primitive superstition on the part of the Anglo-Saxon who composed *WF*, we do well to wonder whether this is nought but the triumph of modern vulgarity over medieval culture. Doubtless there is much in our own world-view which is unsympathetic to the prominence given by *WF* to supernatural forces; nevertheless, a reconsideration of this charm in the light of the previous chapters should reveal that even in this somewhat exceptional instance the influence of legendary metal smiths was not utterly vain.

Our survey of legendary metal smiths has met with some surprising discoveries and has revealed a scope and variety of subject matter, a breadth of vision, even, which had hitherto been quite unsuspected. A further result of our investigation is more sympathy for the aims and principles of whoever composed *WF*. Certainly it is no longer quite so

easy to dismiss these out of hand, or even to plead with Howell D. Chickering, Jr. that 'as modern readers we bring only an aesthetic appreciation . . . not a real belief' to *WF*.[2] Such aloofness could be expected of modern readers, of course, as long as the metal smiths at the heart of *WF* were presumed to be wizards wielding magical powers. We have come to realise however that this view is all too myopic and that it is much more likely that these metal smiths have been invoked for the inspirational and wonder-working qualities associated with the forge in Old English verse and medieval piety; and while such associations may not be to everyone's taste, they would still in many quarters be considered respectable enough. Thus whereas magical blacksmiths implied in *WF* childish misapprehensions about the extent of technological power, wonder-working and inspirational smiths suggest that whoever composed this charm was more discerning. This in turn holds out the prospect of a more sympathetic reading of *WF* as a poem of healing.

There are, of course, one or two obstacles which need to be cleared away. An initial difficulty concerns the charm's objective. Since the days of Jacob Grimm *WF* has been admired for its picturesque, romantic qualities; no one, however, has been able to show how these might have justified whatever medical reputation at one time adhered to this particular charm. It is noticeable, in this regard, that previous readings of the charm demonstrate some latitude in explaining the phrase 'wið færstice'. What exactly was this charm supposed to treat? Some readers (Morton

W. Bloomfield is one example) have presumed that this particular charm advertises itself as a cure for rheumatism.[3] Others (such as Stanley R. Hauer) maintain that the charm promises only to relieve pain.[4] By modern medical standards (perhaps even by medieval ones too) neither claim inspires much confidence; as an analgesic or valerian *WF* must have been most unreliable. On the other hand, it is worth pointing out that *WF* itself does not explicitly say that it will cure any particular ailment, or even relieve pain, only that it is to be used 'against' (*wið*) a 'sudden pain' (*færstice*). Indeed, from the content of *WF* it becomes clear, I feel, that this charm's brief is a relatively modest one: its intention is to offer spirited encouragement in case of a sharp pain of unknown origin. In offering a sense of heroic dignity and the hope of divine succour to the afflicted, *WF* appears to treat neither the disease nor the pain. It is, however, with their emotional and spiritual side-effects, particularly fear and discouragement, that *WF* seems to be most concerned.

A further obstacle to a more sympathetic reading of *WF* disappears when we recognize that the antidote it offers is not inherently pharmacological, but rather protreptic. The first dozen lines of the charm present to the sufferer the terrors of pain in a manageable form, reducing the experience of 'the sudden stitch' to precise images, fearful in themselves, but carrying also, as we must know, positive implications. As it turns out, our first glimpse of 'the sudden stitch' is the herbal concoction of the three herbs, 'feferfuige and seo reade netele, ðe þurh

ærn inwyxð, and wegbrade' (feverfew and the red nettle that grows into the house and waybroad) which the charm says one must 'wyll in buteran' (boil in butter) (lines 1-2). Admittedly, this looks at first glance as though it might be a salve; but if this is the case, it is strange that we are given no instructions for its application. Chickering has noted that these lines have 'a general focus' and that their function is more than just pharmacological:

> the conclusion to be drawn is that these three herbs were used for all their properties at once: their sharp shapes, medicinal value and traditional associations with elves and venoms.[5]

Chickering labels the concoction 'herbal magic', but it is probably more accurate to think of it merely as herbal symbolism. The concoction presents us with a preliminary image of 'the sudden stitch' and is suggestive of some of its characteristics: on a physical level it is comprised of substances piercing and sharp, while on the metaphysical level it may be significant that these weedy substances suggest an intrusion by a wild and unpleasant force into the order and tranquillity of the human realm. Rich in suggestion, the concoction thus serves as an effective curtain-raiser, capturing the listener's attention and compelling him to participate in the drama of human suffering.

The spectacle with which we are then presented is doubtless one of the most riveting openings in English verse. A sublime clamour of evil

supernatural forces at the height of their fury prompts the urgent appeal to the listener to seek protection:

> Hlude wæran hy, la, hlude, ða hy ofer þone hlæw ridan,
> Wæran anmode, ða hy ofer land ridan.
> Scyld ðu ðe nu,þu ðysne nið genesan mote.
> (lines 3-5)
>
> (Loud were they, lo, loud, when they rode over the mound,
> Were resolute (of one fierce mind) when they rode over the ground.
> Shield yourself now, that you may escape this evil.)

The evil in question has, of course, been repeatedly but somewhat remotely identified by scholars with what, borrowing an apt phrase from Magoun, one could call 'the omnipresent legions of hostile spirits ever ready to assail primitive man'.[6] We ourselves, meanwhile, have, in the previous chapter, come across a more immediate analogue, namely the aerial host armed with iron pikes which threatened St Columba and the brethren of Iona with plague—until St Michael with a company of angels intervened on Columba's behalf. From a Christian perspective, the demonic provenance of disease was a cause for hope as well as dread, for it suggested that the suffering involved would not be in vain for anyone who firmly believed in God. A pious fearlessness in the face of life's frequent hazards was considered suitable enough; as the Old English *Christ* affirms

> Ne þearf him ondrædan deofla strælas
> ænig on eorðan ælda cynnes,

gromra garfare, gif hine god scildeþ,
duguða dryhten.[7]

(None of mortal kind on earth need fear the devil's darts, the spear-assault of fierce foes, if God is shielding him, the Lord of the heavenly hosts.)[8]

It is most probably God's protection that is referred to in line 5 of *WF*. The listener is urged to 'shield' himself; under the circumstances it is difficult to imagine what protection he could seek other than divine help to remain steadfast in the face of immediate danger from evil spirits.

It is remarkable that, in view of the enormity of the threat, the charm immediately addresses it with bold disdain. Indignation is particularly directed at the painfulness of the stitch, pictured, not inappropriately, as a 'little spear':

Ut, lytel spere, gif her inne sie!
Stod under linde, under leohtum scylde,
þær ða mihtigan wif hyra mægen beræddon
and hy gyllende garas sændan;
ic him oðerne eft wille sændan,
fleogende flane forane togeanes.
Ut, lytel spere, gif hit her inne sy!
(lines 6-12)

(Out, little spear, if you be in here!
It stood under linden-wood, under a light shield,
Where the mighty women talked up their strength
And sent their screaming spears.
I want to send them back another,
A flying arrow, from the forefront, against them.
Out, little spear, if it be in here!)

By addressing the sufferer's pain as 'a little spear' the charm tactfully displays a keen understanding of the discomfort involved without, however, providing any grounds for self-pity. The feeling of resentment which accompanies pain is here channelled into a warlike mood and directed back towards the evil spirits which the charm had warned us about. (Identified as chanting women, these perhaps have begun to look less awesome than they first seemed, but their insidious malice is doubly infuriating.) The spear, an image of hostility as well as pain, is, indeed, the unifying image of this passage, effectively linking together the disparate characters of this marvellously concentrated drama: the 'wounded' victim, the 'armed' spirits and the courageous narrator of *WF*, who boldly announces that he will retaliate with a weapon of his own. It used to be thought that this passage was an allusion to a lost myth; as a result the subject (understood) of *stod* (line 7) has until now been uncertainly rendered as either the narrator ('I') or a mysterious third person ('he').[9] However, it seems most unnecessary to bring a lost myth into the proceedings at this point, and it would make good sense just to render the subject of *stod* as 'it', i.e. the '*lytel spere*' of line 6. This spear is, after all, the main focus of the passage and the overriding symbol, or counter, signifying pain, of the charm.

In retaliation for the 'little spear', with what kind of weapon does the charm mean to strike back? The 'flying arrow' promised by the narrator must be no ordinary weapon if it is to suppress an onslaught by

evil spirits. As we demonstrated in the previous chapter, the most likely foil to the diabolical spear turns out to be a sacramental knife made by a legendary smith of pious reputation. If so, we are in a better position than previous readers of *WF* to appreciate the significance of the familiar lines

> Sæt smið, sloh seax lytel,
> * * * iserna, wundrum swiðe.
> Ut, lytel spere, gif her inne sy!
> Syx smiðas sætan, wælspera worhtan.
> Ut, spere, næs in, spere!
>
> (lines 13-17)
>
> (A smith sat, struck a little knife,
> * * * of irons, exceptionally strong.
> Out, little spear, if you be in here!
> Six smiths sat, worked war-spears (slaughter spears).
> Out, spear, not in spear!)

It is salutary to recognize that something of the humble dignity of a well-disciplined monastic forge is expressed in the stability and stolidity of these remarkable lines. The vivid realism of the alliteration in lines 13 and 16 conveys a welcome mood of determined concentration in addition to the physical sound of a working forge; it is perhaps no coincidence that a similar use of alliteration to indicate the work of the forge occurs in Aethelwulf's description of the saintly monk Cwicwine in the Latin poem *De Abbatibus.*[10] Aethelwulf, we recall, associated the smith Cwicwine's life with signs of divine favour; whoever composed *WF*, we may surmise, most likely associated the smith referred to in line 13 with divine healing

powers. While the smith's identity remains mysterious, it is not impossible that he is, in fact, Christ the Blacksmith as portrayed in an apocryphal tale, now lost, which may have been recognizable to an Anglo-Saxon audience by the details mentioned in lines 14 and 16. While line 14 is indecipherable, having, as J. H. G. Grattan pointed out, evaded the genius of Jacob Grimm and 'completely baffled his distant followers, great and small',[11] line 16 has proved to be somewhat more revealing. Its reference to six additional smiths (bringing the total number to seven) has suggested a connection with the healing powers ascribed to seven (or sometimes three) blacksmiths in nineteenth century folk-medicine, powers which could well have stemmed from the same pious legend of wonder-working in the forge which we have postulated for *WF*. But while we cannot yet specify with certainty the saintly smiths who were the subject of this legend, we can at least enjoy the sense of order and sanity which these legendary figures bring to the charm and the dramatic contrast which they provide to the manic fury of the evil spirits and their spells. As an antidote to the tribulations of sudden pain, *WF* would apparently offer virtue and grace.

In the miraculous forge of seven legendary metal smiths the drama of WF has reached its climax. In the remaining lines of the charm we experience a sense of welcome relief from danger: armed with his sacramental knife made by a wonder-working smith, the narrator confronts the sufferer's pain (the little spear) with quiet confidence:

Gif her inne sy isernes dæl,
hægtessan geweorc, hit sceal gemyltan.
Gif ðu wære on fell scoten oððe wære on flæsc scoten
oððe wære on blod scoten
oððe wære on lið scoten, næfre ne sy ðin lif atæsed;
gif hit wære esa gescot oððe hit wære ylfa gescot
oððe hit wære hægtessan gescot, nu ic wille ðin helpan.
Þis ðe to bote esa gescotes, ðis ðe to bote ylfa gescotes,
ðis ðe to bote hægtessan gescotes; ic ðin wille helpan.
Fleoh þær * * * on fyrgenheafde.
Hal westu, helpe ðin drihten!
Nim þonne þæt seax, ado on wætan.[3]

(lines 18-29)

(If a piece of iron be here within,
Work of witch, it must melt away (*or* heat must melt it).
If you were shot in the skin, or were shot in the flesh,
Or were shot in the blood,
Or were shot in the body, never may your life be injured.
If it were the shot of gods, or it were the shot of elves,
Or it were the shot of witch, now I will be your help.
This be thy remedy for the shot of gods, this thy
remedy for the shot of elves,
This thy remedy for the shot of witch; I will be your help.
Fly away there * * * to the mountaintop!
Be well! God be your help!
Take then the knife, plunge it in the liquid.)

After administering a sort of verbal massage to the sufferer by proclaiming at some length (in lines 18-26) his confidence in the power of his knife to overcome the power of the little spear, the narrator brings down the curtain on the evil spirits with a final decisive gesture. By plunging his knife into the mixture of butter and the three herbs, he indicates symbolically the power of the knife to subdue the three types of 'shot' he has just itemized, namely of gods, of elves and of witch. At the same moment he commends the sufferer to God's care and banishes the evil to

the inhospitable remoteness of the mountain wilderness (lines 27-28).

As the threat of lasting evil from pain subsides, the spirit of the forge abides. Structurally, emotionally and metaphysically, legendary metal smiths play a key role in *WF*. The centrepiece of the charm, structurally they link the natural world to the supernatural. On the metaphysical level they are a vehicle of healing grace, while emotionally they serve to modulate the mood of the charm from one of apprehensive urgency to confident reassurance. The metal smiths also provide an example of patient self-discipline which is not unedifying. Doubtless the effectiveness of their example would be greater if we knew more about the traditions it inspired; yet even in our present state of relative ignorance it should not be difficult to detect kinship with other traditions of considerable imaginative stature. If we pass once more hastily in review medieval legends of the forge we recognize that what interested their progenitors was not magic or mere gimmickry, but ideas of universal human significance. Figures like Eloi and Tancho, Cwicwine and the blacksmiths of Alcester, even Christ the Blacksmith and The Master of All Masters, ought not to deflect our gaze back to primitive superstitions, but rather attune our sensibility to the existence of a distinguished posterity. Whereas we are all aware of an influential *pastoral* literature of shepherds and country life, most of us would have but a meagre awareness of a *fabril* literature of artificers and industrial life.[12] Yet such a literary concept is doubtless but waiting to be explored; and one fascinating

discovery to be made is that the legendary metal smiths of the early Middle Ages have produced some fairly recent offspring. René Cardillac on the Continent, 'The Village Blacksmith' in America, in England Joe Gargery are worth mentioning in this context: it is chastening but salutary, after all that has been written about the smiths of *WF*'s pagan roots, to consider that spiritually they are much closer to the world of *Great Expectations* than many people have thought possible.[13]

Doubtless there may be some readers who will feel that the prominence given to legendary metal smiths in *WF* stems from a distorted and unhealthy view of industrial life. The same readers might also feel that the emphasis of this study would have been more profitably placed elsewhere, for example on the social and political realities of early medieval industry, and that it should have concerned itself more with data drawn from archaeology and historical documents rather than 'Dark Age' ideals as discerned in mere legends and religious texts. By way of reply I would recall the famous distinction made by Thomas de Quincey between 'literature of knowledge' and 'literature of power':

> In that great social organ, which, collectively, we call literature, there may be distinguished two separate offices that may blend and often *do* so, but capable, severally, of a severe insulation, and naturally fitted for reciprocal repulsion. There is, first, the literature of *knowledge*; and, secondly, the literature of *power*. The function of the first is—to *teach*; the function of the second is—to *move*: the first is a rudder; the second, an oar or a sail. The first speaks to the *mere* discursive understanding; the second speaks ultimately, it may happen, to the higher understanding or reason, but always *through* affections of pleasure and sympathy. . . . It is in relation to [the] great *moral* capacities of man that the literature of power,

> as contradistinguished from that of knowledge, lives and has its field of action. . . . Tragedy, romance, fairy tale, or epopee, all alike restore to man's mind the ideals of justice, of hope, of truth, of mercy, of retribution, which else (left to the support of daily life in its realities) would languish for want of sufficient illustration. . . . It is certain that, were it not for the literature of power, these ideals would often remain amongst us mere arid notional forms; whereas, by the creative forces of man put forward in literature, they gain a vernal life of restoration, and germinate into vital activities.[14]

Not that we should link literary subject matter and public morality quite so confidently as De Quincey (though some of the more lasting achievements of medieval civilization—a belief in the dignity of labour and a profound sense of the manliness of technology—do seem to be the major themes of medieval legends of the forge). The point is rather that in this very early period one senses (though this is perhaps to anticipate somewhat the fruits of collateral research) a new beginning in the treatment of industrial themes ushering in a 'fabril' literature more attuned to and expressive of human fears and aspirations than had been known previously. If nothing else, the imaginative originality of this literature should remind us of what a brilliant and energetic impulse that must have been which gave rise to the great legends of the forge—a comparatively large number of them, none easily forgotten! In the proliferation of this material one is grateful for a spectrum of motifs beyond the creative powers of any single literary craftsman. And if, in reading *WF*, it is our privilege to recognize and sustain a venerable tradition, it is also a pleasure to be savoured and enjoyed.

APPENDIX: Old English *Smið*

Old English *smið* has the same meaning as Modern English 'smith' and its German cognate *Schmied*, i.e. 'a worker in iron or other metals'. The non-metallurgical meanings ascribed to *smið* in our standard dictionaries are problematic and should be regarded with extreme caution. The wisdom of ascribing non-metallurgical meanings to *smið* was called into question by Wilhelm Klump as long ago as 1908 in his detailed study, published by Hoops in *Anglistische Forschungen*, of Old English terms for artisans.[1] Despite Klump's solid philology, however, the view that *smið* might also mean 'a worker in wood', which was taken up by Joseph Bosworth in 1838 and upheld by Bosworth-Toller in 1898, was left unmodified in the Bosworth-Toller supplements of 1921 and 1972.[2] The longevity of this view has perhaps given it a spurious authority. On the other hand its weaknesses are quite serious and deserve to be better known.

An initial puzzle about the dictionaries' tenet that *smið* might mean 'a worker in wood' is that the evidence supplied by Bosworth-Toller from purely Old English texts (as opposed to Latin-Old English glosses and translations) does not support the 'worker in wood' interpretation. The eight examples given by Bosworth-Toller (six from verse and two from law codes) seem to indicate quite clearly that a *smið* was inherently a worker in metal. These are the examples referred to by Bosworth-Toller:

1. *Gifts of Men*, in *The Exeter Book*, p. 139 (lines 61-66):

   Sum mæg wæpenþræce, wige to nytte,
   modcræftig *smið* monige gefremman,
   þonne he gewyrceð to wera hilde
   helm oþþe hupseax oððe heaþubyrnan,
   scirne mece oððe scyldes rond,
   fæste gefeged wið flyge gares.

2. *Beowulf*, edited by Klaeber, p. 16 (lines 405-6):

   Beowulf maðelode —on him byrne scan,
   searonet seowed *smiþes* orþancum. . . .

3. *Beowulf*, edited by Klaeber, p. 55 (lines 1448, 1450-4):

   ac se hwita helm hafelan werede,
   . . .
   since geweorðad,
   befongen freawrasnum, swa hine fyrndagum
   worhte wæpna *smið*, wundrum teode,
   besette swinlicum, þæt hine syðþan no
   brond ne beadomecas bitan ne meahton.

4. *Riddle 26*, in *The Exeter Book*, p. 193 (lines 13-14):

   forþon me gliwedon
   wrætlic weorc *smiþa*, wire bifongen.

5. *Riddle 5*, in *The Exeter Book*, p. 184 (lines 7-8):

   ac mec hnossiað homera lafe,
   heardecg heoroscearp, hondweorc *smiþa*. . . .

6. *Riddle 20*, in *The Exeter Book*, p. 190 (lines 6-8):

   þonne ic since wege
   þurh hlutterne dæg, hondweorc *smiþa*,
   gold ofer geardas.

7. *The Laws of Alfred*, number 19, article 3:

   Gif sweordhwita oðres monnes wæpn to feormunge onfo, oððe *smið* monnes andweorc, hie hit gesund begen agifan, swa hit hwæðer hiora ær onfenge. . . .[3]

8. *The Laws of Ine of Wessex*, number 63:

> Gif gesiðcund mon fare, þonne mot
> he habban his gerefan mid him ⁊ his
> *smið* ⁊ his cildfestran.[4]

Taken altogether, these examples tell us that a *smið* was a worker in metal. In 1. the *smið* is spoken of as one who typically makes metallic weapons, such as hip-sword and helmet, and in 2. and 3. the products of his craft are similarly the coat of mail and costly metal helmet. Example 5. likewise equates the *hondweorc smiþa* with weaponry, in this case the hammered sword, while 4. and 6. equate it with the gold ornament on the cover of a Bible codex and the gold decoration on a sword. One inference which may be drawn from these examples is that *smið* was applicable only to workers in metal. Examples 7. and 8. meanwhile refer to the *smið* in a social rather than a technological context; nevertheless it is generally accepted that they indicate a worker in metal and not a worker in wood. It is thought that example 7., for example, pertains to the smith's legal responsibility for weapons entrusted to his care for refurbishing.[5] Example 8., meanwhile, is perhaps an indication of the important contribution of the smith to aristocratic life. It is not difficult to imagine why a noble should consider it appropriate to travel with his metalsmith, who could repair and make ready his weapons for hunting and fighting. On the other hand, there is no indication that in this, or any of the other examples referred to, any craftsman other than a worker in metal is

indicated. As a result, these examples, taken as a whole, tend to cast doubt on the validity of Bosworth-Toller's contention that *smið* meant a 'worker in wood'.

The doubtful nature of the 'worker in wood' theory becomes even more apparent when we turn to examine the ten remaining examples for *smið* provided by Bosworth-Toller. These are all drawn from Old English glosses or translations of Latin texts. In each case *smið* has been equated with one of three Latin words with strong metallurgical associations: *cudo*, the Latin substantive for 'metal-worker' derived from *cudere*, 'to beat, to prepare by beating, to forge'; *ferrarius*, which meant 'blacksmith'; and *faber*, which according to the *Etymologies* of Isidore had the primary meaning of 'blacksmith'.[6] These are the examples given in Bosworth-Toller:

9. *Aelfric's Grammar*, in *Aelfrics Grammatik und Glossar*, edited by J. Zupitza, p. 216:

   . . .*Cudo* ic smiðige; eft gyf ðu cweðst
   hic cudo, ðonne byþ hit nama, *smið*.

10. *Aelfric's Colloquy*, edited by G. N. Garmonsway, pp. 39-40 (lines 220 and 229):

   . . .Se *smið ferrarius* . . . se treowwyrhta
   lignarius

11. *Anglo-Saxon and Old English Vocabularies*, edited by T. Wright and P. Wülcker, i, 73:

. . .*Smiþ faber vel cudo*

12. *ibid.*, i, 286:

. . .*Smiþ faber*

13. *ibid.*, ii, 95:

. . .fyres god, helle *smiþ Vulcanus*

14. *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, edited by T. Miller, EETS 95, 96, 110 and 111, i, 442-444 (Book V, Chapter 14):

> . . .Wæs sum broðor syndrilice on smiþcræfte well gelæred; þeowode he swyðe druncennesse and monigum oðrum unalyfednessum ðæs sleacran lifes, and he ma gewunode on his smiþþan dæges and nihtes sittan and licgean, ðonne he wolde on cyricean singan and gebiddan, . . .wið ðon ðe *smið (faber)* ðæs þystran modes and dæde his deaþe nealæhte. . . .

15. *Aelfric's Colloquy*, edited by G. N. Garmonsway, p. 38 (lines 205-206):

> . . .Ic hæbbe *smiþas*, isene *smiþas*, goldsmiþ, seolforsmiþ, arsmiþ, treowwyrhtan γ manegra oþre mistlicra cræfta biggenceras. *Habeo fabros, ferrarios, aurificem, argentarium, eranium, lignarium et multos alios uariarum artium operatores.*

16. *The Gospel According to St. Mark in Anglo-Saxon and Northumbrian Versions*, edited by W. W. Skeat, p. 42, vi, 3 (Corpus MS):

. . .Hu nys [þys] se *smiþ* marian sunu

17. *ibid.*, p. 43 (Lindisfarne Gospels)

. . .*smið* γ wyrihte *faber*

18. *The Gospel According to St. Matthew in Anglo-Saxon and Northumbrian Versions*, edited by W. W. Skeat, p. 112. xiii, 55 (Corpus):

. . .þes ys *smiðes* sunu. . .

It may be seen from these examples that Bosworth did not build his 'worker in wood' theory on very solid foundations. Nowhere, in fact, is *smið* equated with the Latin term for 'worker in wood', *lignarius* (the Old English equivalent of which is *treowwyrhta* in 10. and 15.) Rather, it would appear that advocates of the 'worker in wood' theory have been led astray by the instances of *smið* in the Gospels of Mark and Matthew (16., 17., and 18.). Klump's 1908 study concludes that these are the crux of the matter:

Höchstens die Bibelstellen, wo Christus entweder selbst als *smiþ* oder als *smiþes sunu* bezeichnet wird, dürften einen noch etwas weiteren Begriff zulassen, aber sonst heisst ae. *smiþ* durchweg 'der Schmied'.[7]

The 'worker in wood' theory, it would seem, is an attempt to explain the use of *smið* in connection with the manual trade of Jesus and St Joseph and is based on the (false) assumption that Anglo-Saxons could only have conceived this to have been carpentry. If one takes into consideration the number of medieval authorities (including Bede) who speak of Jesus and

Joseph as blacksmiths, however, the examples of *smið* from the Gospels would seem to indicate not that *smið* meant a worker in wood, but that Anglo-Saxons equated Jesus's industrial background with metal-working.[8] In other words, the examples from the Gospels do not contradict, but rather confirm the conclusion that Old English *smið* meant simply 'smith'.

The conclusion that the term *smið* applied exclusively to metalworkers is the one that should follow from Bosworth's evidence. Indeed, if *smið* had once been applied to handicrafts other than metal-working we should expect perhaps to find some indication of this in the numerous terms for manual occupations formed from *smið*, such as *goldsmið*, *arsmið*, *selforsmið* etc. As Klump points out, however, these literal *smið* compounds (as distinct from isolated instances of figurative *smið* compounds) are all terms for metal-workers. Klump also notes that Old English *smið* was clearly not analogous in this respect to its cognate form Old Norse *smiþr*, to which it is sometimes compared. Old Norse *smiþr*, for example, could refer to a worker in metal, wood and other materials and accordingly gave rise to such compounds as *skusmiþr* (shoemaker), *skipasmiþr* (shipwright), *iarnsmiþr* (blacksmith) and *husasmiþr* (house-builder). The equivalent term for *smiþr* in Old English was not *smið*, but *wyrhta*, 'wright, workman, artificer', from which numerous occupational terms are formed. The much more restricted semantic range of *smið* is inherently metallurgical.[9] The hypothesis that 'smith' once had a much broader semantic range, like that of *smiþr*, pertains essentially to

the prehistory of the language and is, meanwhile, inherently speculative.

List of Abbreviations

Bradley	*Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, translated by S. A. J. Bradley, Everyman's Library (London, Melbourne and Toronto, 1982)
Bosworth-Toller	*An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary based on the Manuscript Collections of the late Joseph Bosworth*, edited and enlarged by T. Northcote Toller (London, 1898). *Supplement*, by T. Northcote Toller (1921). *Enlarged Addenda and Corrigenda*, by Alistair Campbell (1972)
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina (Turnhout)
EETS	Early English Text Society (London)
The Exeter Book	*The Exeter Book*, edited by George Philip Krapp and Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie, The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records 3 (London and New York, 1936)
FF	Folklore Fellows' (Helsinki, 1911-)

MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
PL	*Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina*, edited by J. P. Migne and others (Paris, 1844-)
PMLA	*Publications of the Modern Language Association*
R.S.	Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages, published under the direction of the Master of the Rolls
WF	*Wið Færstice*: see above, Chapter I, pp. 2-3.

NOTES

CHAPTER I: Introduction

1. N. R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* pp. 305-6 (no. 231). A modern edition of *Lacnunga* is to be found in J. H. G. Grattan and Charles Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine* pp. 95-227.

For full publication details of works cited please see the Bibliography. Throughout the notes references are given in shortened form. Thus an initial reference will normally give the title and relevant page(s) of a book or article as well as the name of the author or editor whose surname governs the book or article's alphabetical position in the Bibliography. Later references to the same work are further condensed to the shortest intelligible form.

2. Some indication of the textual controversy which surrounded *WF* in the nineteenth century is found in Felix Grendon, 'The Anglo-Saxon Charms', (1909), 214. Grendon could list in all ten previous editions, the first being that of Thomas Wright, *Reliquiae Antiquae* (1841), ii, 237. Today the standard edition of *WF* is that in *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, edited by Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie, pp. 122-123. Other modern editions include the following: G. Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, pp. 140-151; Grattan and Singer, pp. 172-177; and *Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Reader in Prose and Verse*, 15th edition, edited by Dorothy Whitelock, pp. 100-101.

3. Dobbie, pp. 122-123.

4. Howell D. Chickering, Jr., 'The Literary Magic of "Wið Færstice"', 84-85.

5. There are, in any case, good reasons to treat skeptically the notion that OE *smið* could mean someone other than a metal smith. These reasons are presented below in the Appendix and are further touched upon in Chapter IV (pp. 132-133).

6. Jacob Grimms's *Deutsche Mythologie*, 4th edition, is liberally sprinkled with Germanic smith-lore: see, for example, i, 312-314. The first edition of this work was published in 1835.

7. Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*, i, 381 and ii, 10-39.

8. *Jewellery through 7000 Years*, published for the Trustees of the British Museum, p. 129.

9. M. J. Swanton, *The Spearheads of the Anglo-Saxon Settlements*, p. 1.

10. G. Baldwin Brown, *The Arts in Early England*, Volume 3, *Saxon Art and Industry in the Pagan Period*, pp. 33-4.

11. Recent archaeological discoveries pertaining to smithcraft are summarized by David M. Wilson, 'Craft and Industry', pp. 261-269.

12. Grendon, 214.

13. See the following: Wilhelm Horn, 'Der altenglische Zauberspruch gegen den Hexenschuss', pp. 88-104; C. W. Kennedy, *The Earliest English Poetry*, p. 10; Storms, p. 208; Chickering, 'Literary Magic', 100; and Gert Sandmann, 'Studien zu altenglischen Zaubersprüchen', pp. 82-84.

14. A. R. Skemp, 'The Old English Charms', p. 292.

15. See the following: Grattan and Singer, p. 56; Wilfrid Bonser, *The Medical Background of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 345; C. L. Wrenn, *A Study of Old English Literature*, p. 168; Minna Doskow, 'Poetic Structure and the Problem of the Smiths in "Wið Færstice"', 323; Stanley Hauer, 'Structure and Unity in the Old English Charm *Wið Færstice*', 253-256.

16. Thus Charles Singer, 'Early English Magic and Medicine', 357, asserts that 'a large amount of disease was attributed . . . to the action of supernatural beings, elves, Æsir, smiths or witches whose shafts fired at the sufferer produced his torments'. The same statement is repeated almost verbatim by O. M. Dalton in his edition of Gregory of Tours, *The History of the Franks*, i, 416.

17. Chickering, 'Literary Magic', 100.

18. F. P. Magoun, Review of G. Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 208.

19. Hauer, 254.

20. See E. G. Stanley, *The Search for Anglo-Saxon Paganism*, *passim*.

21. S. A. Brooke, *The History of Early English Literature*, pp. 159-160.

22. Albert C. Baugh *et al.*, *A Literary History of England*, p. 42.

23. Chickering, 'Literary Magic', especially 93-4 and 102-4.

24. Hauer, 253.

25. Bonser, pp. 41-43.

26. J. E. Cross, *The Literate Anglo-Saxon — On Sources and Disseminations*, p. 3.

27. Cross, *Literate Anglo-Saxon*, p. 3.

CHAPTER II: Smithcraft and the Race of Cain

1. R. H. Charles, *Religious Development between the Old and New Testaments*, pp. 223-226.

2. See Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, ii, 491 (Book XV, Chapter 23). In the British Museum there survives a fragment of an Anglo-Saxon copy of a Latin version of the Book of Enoch: see J. D. A. Ogilvy, *Books Known to the English, 597-1066*, p. 69.

3. *The Book of Enoch*, translated by R. H. Charles, p. 35 (vii, 3-4). Subsequent references to this work, citing chapter and verse, are included within the text.

4. *Philo*, ii, 395 (Section 116).

5. *Josephus*, iv, 29-31 (Book I, Chapter 2, Section 2).

6. Origen, *Translatio Homiliarum Origenis in Jeremiam*, 608: 'de Cain ortus est faber aeris et ferri . . . malleator est filius Cain'.

7. Titus Lucretius Carus, *De Rerum Natura Libri Sex*, i, 496-500 (Book V, lines 1241-96). I have quoted Cyril Bailey's description of Lucretius's mission from this edition, i, 13.

8. *Early Christian Latin Poets from the Fourth to the Sixth Century*, translated by J. Kuhnmuench, p. 336 (*Alethia*, Book II, lines 136-40). The subsequent reference to *Alethia*, given in the text, is to this translation.

9. J. E. Raby, *A History of Christian-Latin Poetry from the Beginning to the Close of the Middle Ages*, p. 77.

10. Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance*, pp. 44-45 (note 35); p. xxiv; and Plate xiii (no. 25).

11. Peter Comestor, *Historia Scholastica*, 1079.

12. Augustine, *Concerning the City of God Against the Pagans*, p. 633 (Book XV, Chapter 20). Subsequent references to this work are given after quotations in the text.

13. Raby, p. 76.

14. Cyprian, *Cypriani Galli Poetae Heptateuchos*, edited by Rudolf Peiper, p. 8 (lines 188-190).

15. The source in Juvenal, *Satire xiv*, line 118 ('incude adsidua semperque ardente camino'), noted by Peiper, is, it is true, an illustration of greed and thus unflattering, but Cyprian's lines do not suggest this. Nor are there any unflattering overtones in Aethelwulf's use of these lines. See Aethelwulf, *De Abbatibus*, p. xiv and p. 25 (lines 280-281). This work we discuss in more detail below, pp. 82-84.

16. Isidore of Seville, *Chronicon*, 1020.

17. Isidore of Seville, *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri XX*, Book III, Chapter 16, Section I.

18. *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, p. 278 (*The Book of the Duchess*, lines 1156-1166). The connection between music and the Tubalcain legend is examined by Paul E. Beichner, *The Medieval Representative of Music, Jubal or Tubalcain?*

19. Josephus, *Flavii Josephi Antiquitatis Iudaicae*, p. 131.

20. Remigius, *Commentarius in Genesim*, 71.

21. Peter Comestor, 1079.

22. Bede, *Libri Quatuor in Principium Genesis*, p. 87. Subsequent references to this work will be given after quotations in the text.

CHAPTER III: Smithcraft and the People of God

1. Abbé Texier, *Dictionnaire d'orfèvrerie, de gravure et de ciselure chrétiennes, ou de la mise en oeuvre artistique des métaux, des émaux et des pierreries*, col. 944.

2. H. R. Loyn, *Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Conquest*, p. 104.

3. F. W. Walbank, *The Hellenistic World*, p. 192.

4. Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art*, i, 115.

5. Hauser, i, 114.

6. Appropriate instances are cited by Walbank, p. 192, as well as by Hauser, i, 115 and 119.

7. John L. McKenzie *Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 942.

8. David Hugh Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, p. 309.

9. Farmer, p. 31.

10. Basil, *Ascetical Works*, p. 312 (*The Long Rules*, R. 38).

11. George Zarnecki, *The Monastic Achievement*, p. 15.

12. Benedict, *The Rule of Saint Benedict in Latin and English*, p. 128 (Chapter 57).

13. Hauser, i, 168-169. The subsequent reference to Hauser is included in the text.

14. *The Book of Paradise*, edited and translated by E. A. Wallis Budge, i, 544-5. A Latin version is to be found in Palladius, *De Vitis Patrum Liber Octavus sive Historia Lausiaca*, 1169 (Chapter 60).

15. *Aided Muirchertaig Meic Erca*, edited by Lil Nic Dhonnchadha, p. 5.

16. *The Tripartite Life of Patrick*, edited and translated by Whitley Stokes, i, 50 (line 26).

17. These are the dates given respectively by H. P. A. Oskamp, *The Voyage of Máel Dúin*, p. 48, and Carl Selmer, *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis*, pp. xxvii-xxviii. The subsequent reference to the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani* (Selmer's edition) is included within the text.

18. 'The Voyage of Mael Duin', edited and translated by Whitley Stokes, *Revue Celtique*, 10 (1889), 53-55.

19. Lloyd Laing, *Late Celtic Britain and Ireland c. 400 - 1200 AD*, pp. 245-6.

20. *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh*, edited and translated by Ludwig Bieler, pp. 140-141.

21. *Adomnan's Life of Columba*, p. 485 (Book III, Chapter 9).

22. Gregory of Tours, *Liber de Gloria Beatorum Confessorum*, 874-875 (Chapter 63).

23. *Gesta Abbatum Fontanellensium*, edited by G. H. Pertz, p. 284 (Chapter 10).

24. *Einhard and Notker the Stammerer: Two Lives of Charlemagne*, translated by Lewis Thorpe, pp. 126-7 (Book I, Chapter 29). The subsequent reference to *Gesta Karoli Magni*, given in the text, is to this translation.

25. Eugippius, *Vita S. Severini*, pp. 11-12 (Chapter 8).

26. George T. Gillespie, *A Catalogue of Persons Named in Heroic German Literature*, p. 142.

27. John Young Akerman, *Remains of Pagan Saxondom*, p. 60.

28. *Einhard and Notker the Stammerer*, translated by Lewis Thorpe, pp. 119-20 (Book I, Chapter 23).

29. Anti Aarne, *The Types of the Folk-tale*, pp. 121-122 (Type 330).

30. Ouen, *S. Eligii Episcopi Noviomensis Vita*, 482-594.

31. Farmer, p. 130, reports that 'no surviving piece of goldsmith's work is certainly Eloi's'. However coins discovered at Sutton Hoo are thought to bear his name; see Rupert Bruce-Mitford, *The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial: A Handbook*, p. 55.

32. William H. Forsyth, 'Saint Eloi and King Clothar', 144.

33. Louis Réau, *Iconographie de l'art chrétien*, iii, part 1, 426.

34. Réau, iii, part 1, 424.

35. Loyn, p. 104.

36. Bede, *A History of the English Church and People*, pp. 297-298. Our subsequent references to Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, given in the text, will be this translation by Leo Sherley-Price. In Latin, the dissolute artificer of Bede's tale is a *faber*, a word which in medieval Latin usually meant 'blacksmith': see below, pp. 124-128. Sherley-Price's reading of *faber* as 'worker in metal' is thus preferable to J. E. King's 'carpenter' (*Baedae Opera Historica*, ii, 277) or Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors's 'craftsman', (*Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, p. 503). In the Old English version of this tale, moreover, *faber* is rendered by *smið* and the man's workshop (*officina*) by *smiþþe* ('smithy'): see below, p. 231, number 14.

37. See above, pp. 36-41.

38. Loyn, p. 103.

39. Eddius Stephanus, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, p. 133 (Chapter 38). The Latin original of this passage, as given in Eddius Stephanus, *Vita Wilfridi I. Episcopi Eboracensis*, p. 231, is as follows: 'sine causa opus diligenter in membra sancti confessoris nostri metientes facere inchoabant, Deo enim resistente. Nam semper aut coangusta et ancxiata vincula circumamplectere membra non poterant aut tam dilata et laxata, ut de pedibus euangelizantis et de manibus baptizantis resoluta cadebant; et ideo timidi facti, sine vinculis hominem Dei . . . .'

40. The tale is found in *Chronicon Abbatiae de Evesham*, edited by W. D. Macray, pp. 23-27. Thomas says it is a tale which 'neminem praedecessorum nostrorum scripsisse credimus' (p. 23). He also attests its authenticity: 'Si vero alicui haec praedicta quae diximus incredibilia videntur, ad locum praefatum accedat; et fide occulata per ipsam rei evidentiam et facti notitiam et famam publicam, haec ita pro certo

inveniens, beatum Ecgwinum, immo Deum, laudabit . . .' (p. 27). See further, Michael Lapidge, 'The Medieval Hagiography of St. Ecgwine', 89.

41. *Chronicon Abbatiae de Evesham*, edited by Macray, pp. 25-26.

42. Christopher Brooke, *The Monastic World 1000 - 1300*, pp. 111-112.

43. Loyn, pp. 101 and 103.

44. *Baedae Opera Historica*, ii, 410 (*Vita Sanctorum Abbatum*, Chapter 8).

45. *Monumenta Moguntina*, edited by P. Jaffé, p. 216 (no. 77) and p. 301 (no. 134). A letter from a priest of Wearmouth *c.* 732-751 to Lul informs him that 'quatuor cultellos nostra consuetudine factos' have been sent to him (p. 216). A letter of 764 from Abbot Cuthbert of Wearmouth to Lul states that six years previously the Abbot had dispatched to Lul with his priest Hunwine 20 *cultellos* (p. 301).

46. *Liber Vitae*, edited by Walter de Gray Birch, p. 25, mentions 'Wulfric Aurifex Levita' (no. xxx), as well as 'Bryhtelm Aurifex' (no. xxxvi) and 'Byrnelm Aurifex' (no. lx).

47. *Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon*, edited by Joseph Stevenson, ii, 278 and i, 462-3.

48. Frank Barlow, *The English Church 1000 - 1066*, p. 336.

49. Eddius Stephanus, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, p. 111 (Chapter 14); *Baedae Opera Historica*, pp. 400-402 (*Vita Sanctorum Abbatum*, Chapter 5).

50. David Wilson, *The Anglo-Saxons*, p. 144.

51. C. R. Dodwell, 'Losses of Anglo-Saxon Art in the Middle Ages', *passim*, catalogues numerous examples.

52. J. E. Cross, 'The Old English Poetic Theme of "The Gifts of Men"', 66, and Douglas D. Short, '*Leoþocræftas* and the Pauline Analogy of the Body in the Old English *Gifts of Men*', 464. For the relevant passages of *Christ II*, *The Gifts of Men* and *The Fortunes of Men* see *The Exeter Book*, pp. 21-22, pp. 137-140, and pp. 155-156, respectively.

53. Michael J. B. Allen and Daniel G. Calder, *Sources and Analogues of Old English Poetry*, pp. 154-155.

54. *The Exeter Book*, p. 140 (*Gifts of Men*, lines 97-100). See also *Fortunes of Men*, lines 97-98, and *Christ*, lines 681-685, in *The Exeter Book*, p. 156 and p. 22, respectively.

55. Bradley, p. 328.

56. Theophilus, *De Diversis Artibus*, p. 63 (Preface to the Third Book).

57. Alcuin, *Monumenta Alcuiniana*, p. 459. Bezaleel is described in Exodus xxxi, 1-5 as a skilful craftsman in metal, stone and wood whom God had filled with the divine spirit.

58. Dorothy Whitelock, *The Beginnings of English Society*, pp. 105-106.

59. Hilaire Belloc, *The Four Men: A Farrago*, pp. 31-42. For a metrical Middle English version see *Early English Poems and Lives of Saints*, edited by F. J. Furnivall, pp. 36-37 (lines 57-92).

60. See above, p. 53. This motif occurs in the hagiography of Dunstan as early as Osbern's *vita* of *c.* 1090: see *Memorials of Saint Dunstan*, edited by William Stubbs, pp. 84-85 (Chapter 14).

61. For a discussion (by Alistair Campbell) of the poem's authorship and general subject matter see Aethelwulf, *De Abbatibus*, pp. ix-xlix. Subsequent references to this work will be given after quotations in the text.

62. See above, pp. 32-33.

63. F. E. Harmer, *Select English Historical Documents of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, pp. 36 and 66.

64. Farmer, pp. 42-43.

65. Richard Stanton, *A Menology of England and Wales; or, Brief Memorials of the Ancient British and English Saints*, p. 78.

CHAPTER IV: The Master of All Masters

1. We shall use the edition of *The Smyth and His Dame*, in *Remains of the Early Popular Poetry of England*, edited by W. Carew Hazlitt, iii, 200-220. Subsequently, line references to *The Smyth and His Dame* (in Hazlitt's edition) are given after quotations in the text. The preceding quotation comprises lines 172-179.

2. Aarne, pp. 258-259 (Type 753).

3. William Neil, *Concise Dictionary of Religious Quotations*, p. 166 (no. 12). Neil offers a further example: 'When Christ to manhood came / A craftsman was he made / And served the glad apprentice time / Bound to the joiner's trade' (no. 11).

4. *Altenglische Legenden*, edited by C. Horstmann, p. 322.

5. Carl-Martin Edsman, *Ignis Divinus: Le feu comme moyen de rejeunissement et d'immortalité: contes, légendes, mythes et rites*, pp. 129-131.

6. Carl Marstrander, 'Deux contes irlandais', pp. 444-445. Subsequent references to this article are included in the text.

7. *Remains*, iii, 200.

8. For a critical summary of these see Edsman, pp. 115-117.

9. Mircea Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible* p. 107.

10. Jacques Hervieux, *The New Testament Apocrypha*, p. 11. The subsequent reference to this work is included in the text.

11. *New Testament Apocrypha*, edited by E. Hennecke *et al.*, i, 396 (Chapters 10 and 13).

12. Lucien Cerfaux, *The Four Gospels*, p. 122.

13. John Edwin Wells, *A Manual of Writings in Middle English*, p. 174.

14. See, for example, George Webbe Dasent, *Popular Tales from the Norse*, p. lxxxv. According to Dasent, the tale is 'almost purely heathen'. Pagan influence is also detected by A. S. Rappoport, *Medieval Legends of Christ*, p. 143.

15. Hervieux, pp. 116-117. The subsequent reference to Hervieux is included in the text.

16. Earl R. Anderson, 'Social Idealism in Aelfric's *Colloquy*', 155-156, gives as examples Vespa's *Iudicium coci et pistoris* and a Carolingian fragment entitled *De navigio et agricultura.*

17. Frederick W. Robins, *The Smith: The Tradition and Lore of an Ancient Craft*, pp. 76-7. Robins gives no source for this tale. See also Frederick E. Sawyer, '"Old Clem" Celebrations and Blacksmiths' Lore', 322-326.

18. *Anglo-Saxon Prose*, edited and translated by Michael Swanton, p. 113. Subsequent references to Aelfric's *Colloquy* (in this translation) are given after quotations in the text.

19. Loyn, p. 104.

20. *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, p. 54 (lines 3760-3763); see also p. 686 (note to line 3762) for a useful discussion of the historical background.

21. *The Oxford Book of Medieval English Verse*, edited by Celia and Kenneth Sisam, pp. 372-373, (lines 19-22).

22. Marstrander, 'Deux contes irlandais': Christ is accompanied by other saints in Nos 56 and 57, pp. 433-434; St Peter takes the place of Christ in No. 86, p. 445.

23. Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History and The Martyrs of Palestine*, i, 378 (*Martyrs of Palestine*, Longer Recension, Chapter 10, Section 2).

24. Augustine, *Confessions*, p. 245 (Book X, Chapter 37).

25. *Writings of Saint Augustine*, Volume IV, pp. 443-444 (*Enchiridion*, Chapter, 89). This same metaphor is also to be found in Bede, *In Lucae Evangelium Expositio In Marci Evangelium Expositio*, p. 248 (lines 678-690).

26. *Prudentius*, i, 343 (lines 908-915).

27. *The Liber Usualis*, edited by the Benedictines of Solesmes, p. 1362.

28. Benedict, *The Rule of St. Benet: Latin and Anglo-Saxon Interlinear Version*, p. 23 (line 1).

29. Ailred of Rievaulx, '*Informacio Alredi Abbatis monasterij de Rieualle ad sororem suam inclusam*: Translata de Latino in Anglicum per Thomas N.', 306. This is a Middle English translation by one Thomas N., otherwise unknown. The Latin original of this passage is given as follows: '[Et dicit Scriptura:] *Qui non est tentatus, non est probatus* (Eccl. 34, 9). Virginitas aurum est, cella fornax, conflatur diabolus, ignis tentatio, caro virginis vas luteum in quo aurum reconditur, nec vas ulterius a quolibet artifice reparatur.'

30. Janet Grayson, *Structure and Imagery in Ancrene Wisse*, p. 93 (Grayson's translation). The Middle English original of this passage is to be found in *Ancrene Wisse*, edited by J. R. R. Tolkien, p. 147: 'Al þis world is godes smið to smeoðien his icorene. wult tu pet godd nabbe na fur in his smiððe. ne bealies ne homeres? fur is scheome γ pine. Þíne bealies beoð þe þe misseggeð. Þíne homeres .' þe þe hearmið.' E. J. Dobson, *The Origins of Ancrene Wisse*, p. 15, dates this work firmly as '1215-21 or perhaps a little later'.

31. Grayson, *Structure and Imagery*, p. 90 (Grayson's translation). The Middle English original of this passage is to be found in *Ancrene Wisse*, edited by Tolkien, p. 95: 'Secnesse is þi goldsmið þe iþe blisse of heouene ouerguldeð þi crune. se þe secnesse is mare se þe goldsmið is bisgre. γ se hit lengre least.' se he brihteð hire swiðere.'

32. Richard Rolle, *The Fire of Love*, p. 113 (Chapter 22).

33. Cynewulf, *Elene*, p. 102 (lines 1308-1312).

34. *The Poems of Robert Southwell S. J.*, pp. 15-16 (lines 17-28).

35. *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, p. 58 (Stanza 10).

36. Henry Morton Robinson, *The Cardinal*, p. 234 (Book II, Chapter 4).

37. Henry Goerge Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 1769 (*τέκτων*).

38. E. F. Sutcliffe, 'St. Joseph's Trade: An Enquiry into the Evidence', 198.

39. Jean Daniélou, *Primitive Christian Symbols*, p. 94.

40. Daniélou, pp. 94-95 (quoting Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, Chapter 88).

41. Daniélou, *Primitive Christian Symbols*, p. 90 (quoting Irenaeus. *Against Heresies*, Book IV, Chapter 34, Section 4).

42. Origen, *Against Celsus*, p. 588 (Book VI, Chapter 34).

43. Sutcliffe, 180.

44. Hilary of Poiters, *In Matthaeum*, 996-7.

45. Ambrose, *Traité sur l'evangile de S. Luc*, i, 117-119 (Book III, Chapter 2).

46. Bede, *In Lucae Evangelium Expositio*, p. 502 (*In Marci Evangelium Expositio*, lines 543-547). This edition by D. Hurst clearly indicates Bede's knowledge of Ambrose's exegesis of this passage and prints in italics lines 540-543, which Bede adopted from Ambrose's *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam.* This work of Ambrose Bede knew well, as we may see from Hurst's Index Scriptorum pp. 671-672.

47. See *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, edited by Vincent Taylor, p. 300.

48. Sutcliffe, 196-198.

49. Walter von Wartburg, *Französisches etymologisches Wörterbuch: Eine Darstellung des galloromanischen Sprachschatze*, iii, 341-2 ('*Faber* schmied').

50. Isidore, *Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri*, (Book XIX, Chapter 6, Sections 1-2).

51. *ibid.*, Book XIX, Chapter 7.

52. Sutcliffe, 181-184. See further Peter Chrysologus, *De Christo fabri filio appellato et de invidia*, 334-335. Anselm of Laon, *Enarrationes in Evangelium Matthaei*, 1377, claims to follow the authority of Bede in this matter. Other early authorities who followed Bede and described Christ as the son of a metal smith are Rabanus Maurus, *Commentariorum in Matthaeum libri octo ad Haistulphum*, 957, and Walafrid Strabo, *Glossa ordinaria*, PL, cxiv, 200. (These last two authorities are not mentioned by Sutcliffe.)

53. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentum in Matthaeum et Joannem Evangelistas*, i, 137.

54. Sutcliffe, 188, cites a number of authorities (including Cardinal Cajetan) who held that the question of what sort of artisan Joseph had been was indeterminable.

55. Leander of Seville, *De institutione virginum et contemptu mundi*, 888. For a comparable Basilian passage see Basil, pp. 317-318 (*The Long Rules*, R. 42).

56. Leander of Seville, *The Training of Nuns and the Contempt of the World*, p. 218.

57. Isidore of Seville, *Regula Monachorum*, 873 (Chapter 5).

58. Sutcliffe, 194.

59. Réau, iii, part 2, 757.

60. Nikolaus Pevsner, *Yorkshire: The West Riding* p. 280.

61. See, in the editions of W. W. Skeat, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew in Anglo-Saxon and Northumbrian Versions*, p. 113 and *The Gospel According to St. Mark in Anglo-Saxon and Northumbrian Versions*, p. 43.

62. Skeat: *Matthew*, p. 112 and *Mark*, p. 42.

63. 'The Old English Version of the Gospel of Nicodemus', edited by W. H. Hulme, 471.

64. See *Angelsächsische Homilien und Heiligenleben*, edited by B. Assmann, p. 591.

65. Bosworth-Toller ('*wyrhta*', II.a).

66. *Vices and Virtues, Being a Soul's Confession of Its Sins with Reason's Description of the Virtues: A Middle English Dialogue of about 1200 A. D.*, edited by F. Holthausen, i, 51 (line 4).

67. *An Old English Miscellany*, edited by Richard Morris, p. 39 (line 59).

68. *A Stanzaic Life of Christ Compiled from Higden's Polychronicon and the Legende Aurea*, edited by Frances A. Foster, p. 191 (line 5688).

69. *The Gothic and Anglo-Saxon Gospels in Parallel Columns with the Versions of Wycliffe and Tyndale*, edited by Joseph Bosworth, pp. 71 and 191.

70. Bede, *In Lucae Evangelium Expositio*, p. 105 (lines 223-225).

71. Marstrander, pp. 414-415 (No. 23).

CHAPTER V: Metal Smiths and Heroes

1. Storms, pp. 5 and 125.

2. Northrop Frye, *Spiritus Mundi: Essays on Literature. Myth and Society* pp. 123-147. One does not have to agree with Frye's judgements to appreciate that his essay is not an antiquarian treatise, but a useful contribution to literary criticism.

3. Kemp Malone's often quoted compliment is in his contribution to Baugh *et al*, p. 42.

4. T. A. Shippey, *Old English Verse*, p. 14.

5. *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, edited by Fr. Klaber, p. 145.

6. Hauer, 254.

7. R. I. Page, *Life in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 82.

8. *Beowulf: A Dual-Language Edition*, edited and translated by Howell D. Chickering, Jr., pp. 117-119 (lines 1192-1196).

9. Tacitus, *The Agricola and the Germania*, p. 114 (*Germania*, Chapter 15).

10. Paulus Diaconus, *Pauli Historia Langobardorum*, p. 70 (Book I, Chapter 27). As *Ælfwine*, Alboin is praised in *Widsith*, for his generous gifts of jewellery: see R. W. Chambers, *Widsith: A Study in Old English Heroic Legend*, pp. 211-212 (*Widsith*, lines 70-74) and pp. 123-126.

11. *Asser's Life of King Alfred, Together with the Annals of St. Neots Erroneously Ascribed to Asser*, p. 59 (*Life of King Alfred*, Chapter 76, line 5).

12. Whitelock, *Beginnings*, p. 105.

13. Eddius, *Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, p. 122 (Chapter 22).

14. *Diplomatarium Anglicum Aevi Saxonici*, edited by Benjamin Thorpe, p. 92. The gift was made by Abbot Eanmund and the monastery of Breedon to King Berhtwulf on 25th December, 841. Another charter (on pp. 90-91) records that on 28th March, 840, Bishop Heaberht presented the same king and his queen with costly gifts which included a dish 'fabrefactum', a ring, and a cup 'deauratum'.

15. See *Egil's Saga*, translated by Hermann Pálsson and Paul Edwards, p. 21 (Chapter 1) and p. 78 (Chapter 30). The subsequent references to *Egil's Saga*, included after quotations in the text, are to this translation.

16. David Wilson, 'Craft and Industry' p. 268. For a more detailed discussion of continental smith graves see Michael Müller-Wille, 'Der frühmittelalterliche Schmied im Spiegel skandinavischer Grabfunde', 148-201.

17. William Shakespeare, *King Henry V*, pp. 90-91 (Act IV, Prologue, lines 1-14).

18. Walenty Roždzieński, *Officina Ferraria: A Polish Poem of 1612 Describing the Noble Craft of Ironwork*, pp. 99-100.

19. Wilson, 'Craft and Industry', p. 263.

20. Radomir Pleiner, *Staré Evropské Kovářství: Stav Metalografického Výzkumu*, p. 181.

21. Theophilus, p. 65 (Book III, Chapter 2).

22. Page, pp. 83-4.

23. *The Exeter Book*, p. 198 (*Riddle 35*, lines 1-2), p. 198 (*Riddle 37*, line 3) and p. 239 (*Riddle 87*, line 3).

24. *The Exeter Book*, p. 156 (*Fortunes of Men*, lines 72-76).

25. Bradley, p. 343.

26. Whitelock, *Beginnings* p. 105.

27. *The Exeter Book*, p. 139 (*Gifts of Men*, lines 61-66).

28. Bradley, p. 327.

29. N. R. Ker, 'A Supplement to *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon*', 127. In quoting this maxim I have arranged the lines so as to emphasize their close resemblance to Old English verse.

30. *The Exeter Book*, p. 102 (*The Phoenix*, lines 301-304).

31. Bradley, p. 292 (slightly emended).

32. *The Exeter Book*, p. 193 (*Riddle 26*, lines 11-14).

33. Bradley, p. 374.

34. *Beowulf*, edited by Klaeber, p. 55 (lines 1448-1454).

35. Bradley, p. 450.

36. *Teon* is used in *Caedmon's Hymn*: see *Seven Old English Poems*, edited by John C. Pope, p. 4 (line 8). The creation song in *Beowulf*, edited by Klaeber, pp. 4-5 (lines 90-98), meanwhile, uses *wyrcan* (line 92) and *gesettan* (line 94), as well as *gefrætwian*, 'adorn' (line 96).

37. *Seven Old English Poems*, edited by Pope, p. 8 (*The Battle of Brunanburh*, lines 72-73).

38. *The Exeter Book*, p. 184 (*Riddle 5*, lines 7-8).

39. Bradley, p. 372.

40. *The Exeter Book*, p. 232 (*Riddle 71*, lines 3-5).

41. This translation is based on that of W. S. Mackie, *The Exeter Book: Part ii*, p. 209 (*Riddle 70*, lines 3-5).

42. *Seven Old English Poems*, edited by Pope, p. 20 (*The Battle of Maldon*, lines 108-9).

43. George Borrow, *Lavengro*, p. 438 (Chapter 83).

44. Rudyard Kipling, *Puck of Pook's Hill*, pp. 16-27.

45. Gillespie, p. 143.

46. *Survivals in Old Norwegian of Medieval French and German Literature, together with the Latin Versions of the Heroic Legend of Walter of Aquitaine*, edited and translated by H. M. Smyser and F. P. Magoun, p. 74 and p. 65 respectively. See also: *Waldere*, edited by F. Norman, p. 35 (I, line 2); *Beowulf*, edited by Klaeber, p. 18 (line 455); and *Waltharius*, edited by Karl Strecker, p. 64 (line 965).

47. See Gillespie, p. 141.

48. P. Maurus, 'Die Wielandsage in der Literatur', 56.

49. Thus Shippey, p. 76, and [P. H.] Mallet, *Northern Antiquities; or, An Historical Account of the Manners, Customs, Religion and Laws ... of the Ancient Scandinavians*, p. 376, both call Weland 'the Northern Daedalus'.

50. *The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, compiled and edited by Paul Harvey, p. 130.

51. Gillespie, p. 143.

52. Gillespie, p. 141.

53. See *Corpus Poeticum Boreale: The Poetry of the Old Northern Tongue from the Earliest Times to the Thirteenth Century*, edited and translated by Gudbrand Vigfusson and F. York Powell, i, 173, (*Völundarkviða*, lines 116-118).

54. Gillespie, p. 143.

55. *Corpus Poeticum Boreale*, i, 169-170 (*Völundarkviða*, lines 1-9 and 41) and Gillespie, p. 141 (note 8).

56. Lotte Motz, 'The Craftsman in the Mound', 50-53, catalogues numerous instances of the belief that elf or dwarf smiths inhabited hills and rocks, but she observes that 'if we leave the north and north-west of Europe the link between the dwellers of the rock and the skill of smithcraft becomes much looser' (52).

57. A recent study of the Anglo-Saxon material by H. Stuart, 'The Anglo-Saxon Elf', finds no cause even to mention smithcraft.

58. See *The Saga of the Volsungs*, translated by R. G. Finch, p. 33 (Chapter 19).

59. Richard N. Bailey, *Viking Age Sculpture*, pp. 106-116.

60. Bede, *In Regum XXX Quaestiones*, p. 321.

61. Bede, *In Regum*, p. 322.

62. Alfred, *King Alfred's Old English Version of Boethius 'De Consolatione Philosophiae'*, p. 46 (xix). In referring to what Boethius actually said I have quoted Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, p. 75 (Book II, Chapter 7).

63. H. R. Ellis Davidson, 'Weland the Smith', 159.

64. 'Wayland's Smithy' is generally identified with a reference to 'Welandes smiððan' in a Berkshire Charter of 955 A.D. : see *Codex Diplomaticus Aevi Saxonici*, edited by J. M. Kemble, v, 332 (No. 1172).

65. Davidson, 147.

66. Gillespie, p. 143 (note 2).

67. *The Exeter Book*, p. 178 (lines 1-7).

68. Bradley, p. 364.

69. *The Junius Manuscript*, edited by George Philip Krapp, p. 35 (lines 1082-1089).

70. *The World's Best-Loved Poems*, compiled by James Gilchrist Lawson, pp. 316-317.

71. Shippey, p. 14.

72. Horst Ohlhaver, *Der germanische Schmied und sein Werkzeug*, p. 98.

73. *Beowulf and the Finnsburg Fragment*, edited by C. L. Wrenn, p. 54

74. *ibid.*, p. 212 (note to line 1562).

75. Jacob Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, ii, 547. The three previous references (to giant masons in Old English verse) can respectively be found

in *The Exeter Book*, p. 227 (*Ruin*, line 2) and p. 136 (*Wanderer*, line 87), and *Beowulf*, edited by Klaeber, p. 102 (line 2717).

76. *Beowulf*, edited by Klaeber, p. 63 (lines 1688-1698). We looked at the Book of Enoch's treatment of the origins of smithcraft in Chapter II, pp. 23-24. Oliver Emerson, 'Legends of Cain, Especially in Old and Middle English', 915, argues that whoever composed *Beowulf* did not derive the idea of giant sword-smiths from Germanic myth: 'it can not be,' Emerson remarks, 'that the poet who had so clearly in mind the medieval Cain story could have connected the magic sword with a heathen myth, and placed upon it an inscription of biblical origin.'

77. Bradley, p. 456.

78. Ruth Mellinkoff,'Cain's Monstrous Progeny in *Beowulf*: Part I, Noachic Tradition' and 'Cain's Monstrous Progeny in *Beowulf*: Part II, Post-Diluvian Survival'.

79. Mellinkoff, 'Cain's Monstrous Progeny in *Beowulf*: Part I, Noachic Tradition', 155 (note 1).

80. *The Exeter Book*, p. 163 (lines 192-204).

81. Bradley, p. 350.

82. See *Beowulf*, edited by Klaeber, p. 63 (lines 1679, 1697 and 1681, respectively).

83. *Beowulf*, edited by Klaeber, p. 62 (lines 1661-1664).

84. Bradley, p. 455.

85. Magoun, 208.

CHAPTER VI: Smithcraft and Wonder-Working

1. E. V. Gordon, *An Introduction to Old Norse*, p. 203 (note to line 476).

2. Adamnan, *Adomnan's Life of Columba*, pp. 480-483 (Book III, Chapter 8).

3. Basil, p. 335 (*The Long Rules*, R. 55).

4. See above pp. 7-8.

5. Donald Attwater, *A Catholic Dictionary*, p. 559 ('Wonder-working').

6. Karl Bihlmeyer, *Church History*, ii, 125 (Section 100.3).

7. R. W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages*, p. 31.

8. J. A. MacCulloch, *Medieval Faith and Fable*, p. 144.

9. MacCulloch, p. 148.

10. Barlow, pp. 21-22 (note 6).

11. Storms, pp. 288-291 (No. 51).

12. Storms, pp. 276-279 (Nos. 36-40).

13. Storms, p. 307 (No. 81).

14. Storms, pp. 248-251 (No. 22) and pp. 222-225 (No. 17B).

15. Skemp, 291-292.

16. Doskow, 324-325.

17. Barlow, p. 336.

18. The smith is mentioned by Aelfric in 'The Legend of St. Swithun', *Aelfric's Lives of the Saints*, i, 442, and by Wulfstan cantor, *Narratio metrica de Sancto Swithuno*, p. 87.

19. See below, pp. 206-209 and pp. 203-206.

20. John Adair, *The Pilgrim's Way: Shrines and Saints in Britain and Ireland*, p. 14.

21. *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*, i, 1028-1029 ('Ampelio').

22. Texier, col. 103.

23. Texier, col. 937.

24. Texier, col. 936.

25. Bieler, p. 141.

26. See above, pp. 84-85.

27. *Chronicon monasterii de Abingdon*, edited by Stevenson, ii, 278. (This gives only the Latin text. I must apologize for being unable to recall the source of my translation).

28. Farmer, p. 113.

29. Adair, p. 69 (Canterbury) and p. 87 (Glastonbury).

30. Benvenuto Cellini, *Memoirs of Benvenuto Cellini, A Florentine Artist, Written by Himself*, p. 427 (Chapter 40).

31. Cellini, pp. 435-437 (Chapter 41).

32. Réau, iii, part 1, 424.

33. Farmer, p. xiii.

34. William Henderson, *Notes on the Folk-Lore of the Northern Countries and the Borders*, p. 81.

35. MacCulloch, p. 150.

36. Attwater, p. 357.

37. See Cynewulf, *Elene*, pp. 95-9 (lines 1062-1200), and Aelfric, *The Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, ii, 302-7.

38. *The Northern Passion: French Texts, Variants and Fragments*, edited by Frances A. Foster, i, 168-173 (lines 1339-1502) and ii, 64-65. See also Jane A. Bakere, *The Cornish Ordinalia: A Critical Study*, pp. 105 and 182.

39. Henderson, p. 187.

40. For Scotland see Walter Gregor, *Notes on the Folk-Lore of the North East of Scotland*, p. 45. For Germany see Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer and Hanns Bächtold-Stäubli, *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, ix, Nachtrag, 261. The absence of analogous customs in American folk-lore,

meanwhile, is noted by Wayland D. Hand, *Magical Medicine*, p. 51.

41. Sandmann, pp. 82-84.

42. See above, pp. 135-137.

43. See above, p. 76.

CHAPTER VII: The Power of Legendary Metal Smiths: Conclusion

1. Seamus Heaney, *Door into the Dark*, p. 19.

2. Chickering, 'Literary Magic', 104.

3. Morton W. Bloomfield, 'The Form of "Deor"', 540.

4. Hauer, 250.

5. Chickering, 'Literary Magic', 95-6.

6. Magoun, 207.

7. *The Exeter Book*, p. 24 (lines 779-782).

8. Bradley, p. 226.

9. Such interpretations are discussed in some detail by Chickering, 'Literary Magic', 87-88.

10. Compare Aethelwulf, pp. 25-26 (lines 303-304): '**c**ontinuo insonuit per**c**ussis **c**udo **m**etallis / **m**alleus, et **u**acuas **u**olitans cum **u**erberat auras . . .'. (Alliterating consonants are printed in boldface.)

11. J. H. G. Grattan, 'Three Anglo-Saxon Charms from the "Lacnunga"', 2.

12. In contemporary Spanish *fabril* means 'perteneciente o relativo a las fabricas', according to Miguel de Toro y Gisbert, *Pequeño Larousse Illustrado*, p. 455. A cognate English form *fabrile*, 'of or belonging to a craftsman or his craft' occurs in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, but it appears to have been current only in the seventeenth century.

13. See Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*, especially p. 212 (Chapter 27), which extols the blacksmith Joe Gargery's Christian piety and 'simple dignity', and pp. 436-448 (Chapter 57), in which the smith nurses Pip through a serious illness. For an account, meanwhile, of the Cardillac theme in German literature and opera see the article devoted to E. T. A. Hoffman's *Die Fräulein von Scudéri* in *Kindlers Literatur Lexikon*, ii, 197-199. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's 'The Village Blacksmith' may be found in *The Poetical Works of Longfellow*, p. 61, as well as in numerous anthologies of popular verse.

14. Thomas De Quincey, 'The Poetry of Pope', pp. 268-271.

APPENDIX: Old English *Smið*

1. Wilhelm Klump, 'Die altenglischen Handwerkernamen sachlich und sprachlich erläutert', 97-104.

2. See the entries for '*Smið*' in J. Bosworth, *A Dictionary of the Anglo-Saxon Language* (1838) and Bosworth-Toller.

3. *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, edited and translated by F. L. Attenborough, p. 74 (Alfred 19.3).

4. *ibid.*, p. 56 (Ine 63).

5. Frederick Pollock and F. W. Maitland, *The History of English Law before the Time of Edward I*, i, 31.

6. Isidore, *Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri*, Book XIX, Chapter 6, Sections 1-2. See also above, pp. 125-126.

7. Klump, 104.

8. See above, pp. 115-134.

9. Klump, 103-104.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aarne, Antti, *The Types of the Folk-Tale: A Classification and Bibliography*, translated and enlarged by Stith Thompson, 2nd revised edn, FF Communications, 184 (1964)

Adair, John, *The Pilgrim's Way: Shrines and Saints in Britain and Ireland*, with photographs by Peter Chèze-Brown (London, 1978)

Adamnan: *Adomnan's Life of Columba*, ed. and trans. by Alan Orr Anderson and Marjorie Ogilvie Anderson (London, 1961)

Aelfric: *Aelfric's Colloquy*, ed. by G. N. Garmonsway, 2nd edn, Methuen's Old English Library (London, 1947)

————————, *Aelfrics Grammatik und Glossar*, ed. by Julius Zuptiza, Sammlung englischer Denkmäler in kritischen Ausgaben, 1 (Berlin, 1966) [Reprint: originally publ. Berlin, 1880]

————————, *The Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, ed. by B. Thorpe, 2 vols (London, 1844-6)

————————, *Aelfric's Lives of the Saints, Being a Set of Sermons on Saints' Days Formerly Observed by the English Church*, ed. by W. W. Skeat, EETS, 76, 82, 94 and 114, 2 vols (1881-1900)

Aethelwulf, *De Abbatibus*, ed. and trans. by A. Campbell (Oxford, 1967)

Ailred of Rievaulx: '*Informacio Alredi Abbatis monasterij de Rieualle ad sororem suam inclusam*: Translata de Latino in Anglicum per Thomam N.', ed. by C. Horstmann, *Englische Studien*, 7 (1884), 304-344

Akerman, John Yonge, *Remains of Pagan Saxondom* (London, 1855)

Alcuin: *Monumenta Alcuiniana*, ed. by Philipp Jaffé, W. Wattenbach and E. Dümmler, Bibliotheca Rerum Germanicarum, 6 (Aalen, 1964) Reprint: originally published Berlin, 1873

Alford, Violet, 'St. Eloi's Day at Signes, 1957', *Folklore*, 69 (1958), 123-128

Alfred: *King Alfred's Old English Version of Boethius De Consolatione Philosophiae*, ed. by Walter John Sedgefield (Oxford, 1899)

Allen, Michael J. B. , and Daniel G. Calder, *Sources and Analogues of Old English Poetry* (Cambridge, 1976)

Ambrose, *Traité sur l'evangile de S. Luc*, ed. and trans. into French by Gabriel Tissot, Sources chrétiennes, 45 and 52, 2 vols (Paris, 1956-1958)

Ancrene Wisse: see Tolkien, J. R. R., ed.

Anderson, Earl, 'Social Idealism in Aelfric's *Colloquy*', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3 (1974), 153-162

Anselm of Laon, *Enarrationes in Evangelium Matthaei*, PL, clxii (1889), 1227-1500

Aquinas, Thomas, *Commentum in Matthaeum et Joannem Evangelistas*, Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Doctoris Angelici Ordinis Praedicatorum Opera Omnia, 10, 2 vols (Parma, 1861)

Asser: *Asser's Life of King Alfred, Together with the Annals of St. Neots Erroneously Ascribed to Asser*, ed. by W. H. Stevenson (Oxford, 1904)

Assmann, B., ed., *Angelsächsische Homilien und Heiligenleben*, Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Prosa, begründet von C. W. M. Grein, fortgesetzt von R. Wülker, 3 (Kassel, 1889)

Attenborough, F. L., ed. and trans., *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings* (Cambridge, 1922)

Attwater, Donald, ed., *A Catholic Dictionary (The Catholic Encyclopaedic Dictionary)* (New York, 1941) Reprint: orig. publ. 1931

Audoenus: See Ouen

Augustine, *Concerning the City of God Against the Pagans*, trans. by Henry Bettenson with an intro. by David Knowles, Pelican Classics (Harmondsworth, 1972)

————————, *Confessions*, trans. by R. S. Pine-Coffin, Penguin Classics (Harmondsworth, 1961)

————————, *De Civitate Dei*, ed. by Bernard Dombart and Alphonse

Kalb, reprinted with some corrections, Aurelii Augustini Opera, Pars xiv, 1-2, CCSL, 47-48, 2 vols (1955)

————————: *Writings of Saint Augustine*, vol. IV: *Christian Instruction (trans. by John J. Gavignan); Admonition and Grace (trans. by John Courtney Murray); The Christian Combat (trans. by Robert P. Russell); Faith, Hope and Charity (trans. by Bernard M. Peebles)*, The Fathers of the Church, 2 (New York, 1950)

Bailey, Richard N., *Viking Age Sculpture in Northern England*, Collins Archaeology (London, 1980)

Bakere, Jane A., *The Cornish Ordinalia: A Critical Study* (Cardiff, 1980)

Barlow, Frank, *The English Church 1000-1066: A History of the Later Anglo-Saxon Church*, 2nd edn (London and New York, 1979)

Basil, *Ascetical Works*, trans. by M. Monica Wagner, Fathers of the Church, 9 (Washington, 1950)

Baugh, Albert, C., *et al.*, *A Literary History of England* (London and New York, 1948)

Bede: *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. and trans. by Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969)

————————, *A History of the English Church and People*, trans. by Leo Sherley-Price, rev. by R. E. Latham, Penguin Classics (Harmondsworth, 1968)

————————: *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. by T. Miller, EETS, 95-96 and 110-111, 2 vols (1890-98)

————————: *Baedae Opera Historica*, ed. and trans. by J. .E. King, Loeb Classical Library, 2 vols (New York and London, 1930)

————————: *In Lucae Evangelium Expositio In Marci Evangelium Expositio*, ed. by D. Hurst, Bedae Venerabilis Opera Pars ii, Opera Exegetica, 3, CCSL, 120 (1960)

————————, *In Regum Librum XXX Quaestiones*, ed. by D. Hurst, Bedae Venerabilis Opera Pars ii, Opera Exegetica, 2, CCSL, 119 (1962), pp. 289-382

————————, *Libri Quatuor in Principium Genesis Usque ad Nativitatem*

Isaac et Eiectionem Ismahelis, ed. by C. W. Jones, Bedae Venerabilis Opera Pars ii, Opera Exegetica, 1, CCSL. 118A (1967)

Beichner, Paul E., *The Medieval Representation of Music. Jubal or Tubalcain?*, Texts and Studies in the History of Medieval Education, ed. by J. N. Garvin, 2 (Notre Dame, 1954)

Belloc, Hilaire, *The Four Men: A Farrago* (London, 1948)

Benedict: *The Rule of Saint Benedict in Latin and English*, ed. and trans. by Justin McCann (Westminster, Maryland, 1952)

————————: *The Rule of St. Benet: Latin and Anglo-Saxon Interlinear Version*, ed. by H. Logeman, EETS, 90 (1888)

BIBLE: *The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version, Containing the Old and New Testaments, Catholic Edition*, prepared by the Catholic Biblical Association of Great Britain (London, 1966)

————————:*The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*. ed. by Alfred Marshall (Grand Rapids, 1975) Reprint: orig, publ. 1958

————————: *Biblia Sacra Latina ex Biblia Sacra Vulgatae Editionis Sixti V et Clementis VIII* (London, 1970)

Bibliotheca Sanctorum, Instituto Giovanni XXIII nella Pontifica Università Lateranense, 12 vols (Rome, 1961-1970)

Bieler, Ludwig, ed. and trans., with a contribution by Fergus Kelly, *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh*, Scriptores Latini Hiberniae. 10 (Dublin, 1979)

Bihlmeyer, Karl, *Church History*, rev. by Hermann Tüchle, trans. by Victor E. Mills and Francis J. Muller, 3 vols (Westminster, Maryland, 1958-66)

Birch, Walter de Gray, ed., *Liber Vitae: Register and Martyrology of New Minster and Hyde Abbey Winchester* (London and Winchester, 1892)

Bloomfield, Morton W., 'The Form of "Deor"', PMLA, 79 (1964), 534-541

Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. by V. E. Watts, Penguin Classics (Harmondsworth, 1969)

Bonser, Wilfrid, *The Medical Background of Anglo-Saxon England: A Study in History, Psychology and Folklore* (London, 1963)

Borrow, George, *Lavengro*, The Holborn Library (London, 1947) First publ. 1851

Bosworth, Joseph, *A Dictionary of the Anglo-Saxon Language* (London, 1838)

———————————: *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Based on the Manuscript Collections of the Late Joseph Bosworth*, ed. and enlarged by T. Northcote Toller (London, 1898). *Supplement*, by T. Northcote Toller (1921). *Enlarged Addenda and Corrigenda*, by Alistair Campbell (1972)

———————————, ed., *The Gothic and Anglo-Saxon Gospels in Parallel Columns with the Versions of Wycliffe and Tyndale* (London, 1874)

Bradley, S. A. J., trans., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry: An Anthology of Old English Poems in Prose Translation*, Everyman's Library (London, Melbourne and Toronto, 1982)

British Museum, Trustees of the, *Jewellery through 7000 Years* (London, 1976)

Brooke, Christopher, *The Monastic World 1000-1300* (London, 1974)

Brooke, S. A., *The History of Early English Literature, Being the History of English Poetry from Its Beginnings to the Accession of King Alfred* (London, 1892)

Brown, G. Baldwin, *The Arts in Early England*, 6 vols (London, 1903-37)

Bruce-Mitford, Rupert, *The Sutton Hoo Ship-Burial: A Handbook*, 2nd edn (London, 1972)

Budge, E. A. Wallis, ed. and trans., *The Book of Paradise, Being the Histories and Sayings of the Monks and Ascetics of the Egyptian Desert By Palladius, Hieronymous and Others*, Lady Meux Manuscript, No. 6, 2 vols (London, 1904)

Cellini, Benvenuto, *Memoirs of Benvenuto Cellini, A Florentine Artist, Written by Himself*, trans. by Thomas Roscoe, Everyman's Library (London and New York, 1906) First publ. 1822

Cerfaux, Lucien, *The Four Gospels*, trans. by Patrick Hepburne-Scott (London, 1960)

Chambers, R. W., *Widsith: A Study in Old English Heroic Legend* (Cambridge, 1912)

Charles, R. H., trans., *The Book of Enoch*, intro. by W. O. E. Oesterley (London, 1952) Reprint: orig. publ. 1912

————————, *Religious Development Between the Old and New Testaments* (Oxford, 1914)

Chaucer, Geoffrey: *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. by F. N. Robinson, 2nd edn (Boston, 1957)

Chesterton, G. K., 'John Ruskin', in *A Handful of Authors: Essays on Books and Writers*, ed. by Dorothy Collins (New York, 1969), pp. 147-156 Reprint of London, 1953 edn

Chickering, Howell D., Jr., ed. and trans., *Beowulf: A Dual-Language Edition* (Garden City, 1977)

————————, 'The Literary Magic of "Wið Færstice"', *Viator*, 2 (1971), 83-104

Collingwood, W. G., *Northumbrian Crosses* (London, 1927)

Cross, J. E., *The Literate Anglo-Saxon—On Sources and Disseminations*, British Academy Israel Gollancz Memorial Lecture (London, 1972)

————————, 'The Old English Poetic Theme of "The Gifts of Men"', *Neophilologus*, 46 (1962), 66-70

Cynewulf, *Elene*, in *The Vercelli Book*, ed. by G. P. Krapp, Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, 2 (London and New York, 1932), pp. 66-102

Cyprian: *Cypriani Galli Poetae Heptateuchos*, ed. by Rudolf Peiper, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, 23 (Vienna, 1881)

Daniélou, Jean, *Primitive Christian Symbols*, trans. by Donald A8twater (Baltimore, 1964) Original French edn publ. Paris, 1961

Dasent, George Webbe, *Popular Tales from the Norse*, new edn (Edinburgh, 1903) First edn publ. in 1858

Davidson, H. R. Ellis, 'Weland the Smith', *Folklore*, 69 (1958), 145-159

De navigio et agricultura, ed. by Paul de Winterfeld, MGH, Poetae Latini Aevi Carolini, 4, part 1 (Berlin, 1899), 244-246

De Quincey, Thomas, 'The Poetry of Pope', in *De Quincey as Critic*, ed. by John E. Jordan (London and Boston, 1973), 266-305

DeWald, Ernest, *The Illustrations of the Utrecht Psalter* (Princeton, 1932)

Dhonnchadha: see Nic Dhonnchadha

Dickens, Charles, *Great Expectations*, with illustrations by F. W. Pailthorpe and an Introduction by Frederick Page, The Oxford Illustrated Dickens (London, 1953)

Dobbie, Elliott Van Kirk, ed., *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, 6 (London and New York, 1942)

Dobson, E. J., *The Origins of Ancrene Wisse* (Oxford, 1976)

Dodwell, C. R., 'Losses of Anglo-Saxon Art in the Middle Ages', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, 56 (1973-1974), 74-92

Donne, John: *Donne: Poetical Works*, ed. by Herbert Grierson (Oxford, 1933)

Doskow, Minna, 'Poetic Structure and the Problem of the Smiths in "Wið Færstice"', *Papers on Language and Literature*, 12 (1976), 321-26

Eddius Stephanus, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, in *Anglo-Saxon Saints and Heroes*, trans. by Clinton Albertson (New York, 1967), pp. 85-162

————————, *Vita Wilfridi I. Episcopi Eboracensis*, ed. by W. Levison, MGH, Scriptorum Rerum Merovingium, 6 (Hannover and Leipzig, 1913), pp. 161-263

Edsman, Carl-Martin, *Ignis Divinus: Le feu comme moyen de rejeunissement et d'immortalité: contes, légendes, mythes et rites*, Publications of the New Society of Letters at Lund, 34 (Lund, 1949)

Emerson, Oliver F., 'Legends of Cain, Especially in Old and Middle English', PMLA, 21 (1906), 831-929

Enoch, Book of: see Charles, R. H., ed.

Eliade, Mircea, *The Forge and the Crucible*, trans. by Stephen Corrin, Harper Torchbooks (New York and Evanston, 1971) Original French edn publ. Paris, 1956

Eugippius, *Vita S. Severini*, ed. by Hermann Sauppe, MGH, Auctores Antiquissimi, 1, Pars Posterior (Berlin, 1961) Reprint: first publ. Berlin, 1877

Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History and The Martyrs of Palestine*. trans. by Hugh Jackson Lawlor and John Ernest Leonard Oulton, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2 vols (London, 1927-28)

Farmer, David Hugh, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford and New York, 1982)

Finch, R. G., trans., *The Saga of the Volsungs* (London, 1965)

Forbes, R. J., *Metallurgy in Antiquity: A Notebook for Archaeologists and Technologists* (Leiden, 1950)

Forsyth, William H., 'Saint Eloi and King Clothar', *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* (1946), 143-144

Foster, Frances A., ed., *The Northern Passion: French Text, Variants and Fragments*, EETS, 145 and 147, 2 vols (1913-16)

————————, ed., *A Stanzaic Life of Christ Compiled from Higden's Polychronicon and the Legende Aurea*, EETS, 166 (1926)

Frenzel, Elisabeth, 'Stoff- und Motivgeschichte', *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturgeschichte*, begründet von Paul Merker und Wolfgang Stammler, 4 (Berlin and New York, 1980), pp. 213-228

Frye, Northrop, *Spiritus Mundi: Essays on Literature, Myth, and Society* (London and Bloomington, 1976)

Furnivall, F. J., ed., *Early English Poems and Lives of Saints* (Berlin, 1862)

Gillespie, George T., *A Catalogue of Persons Named in Heroic German Literature* (Oxford, 1973)

Gordon, E. V., *An Introduction to Old Norse*, reprinted from corrected sheets of the 2nd edn revised by A. R. Taylor (Oxford, 1962)

Grattan, J. H. G., 'Three Anglo-Saxon Charms from the "Lacnunga"', *Modern Language Review*, 22 (1927), 1-6

————————, and Charles Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine, Illustrated Specially from the Semi-Pagan Text 'Lacnunga'*, Publications of the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum, New Series, No. 3 (London, New York and Toronto, 1952)

Grayson, Janet, *Structure and Imagery in Ancrene Wisse*, (Hannover, New

Hampshire, 1974)

Gregory of Tours, *The History of the Franks*, ed. by O. M. Dalton, 2 vols (Oxford, 1927)

————————, *Liber de Gloria Beatorum Confessorum*, PL, lxxi (1849), 827-912

Grendon, Felix, 'The Anglo-Saxon Charms', *Journal of American Folklore*, 22 (1909), 105-237

Grimm, Jacob, *Deutsche Mythologie*, 4th edn, ed. by Elard Hugo Meyer, 3 vols (Graz, 1953) Reprint: this edn first publ. Berlin, 1875-78

————————, *Teutonic Mythology*, trans. by J. S. Stallybrass, 4 vols (Gloucester, Massachusetts, 1976) Reprint: this trans. first publ. London, 1883-1888

Hand, Wayland D., *Magical Medicine: The Folkloric Component of Medicine in the Folk Belief, Custom and Ritual of the People of Europe and America* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1980)

Harmer, F. E., *Select English Historical Documents of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries* (Cambridge, 1914)

Harvey, Paul, compiler and ed., *The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, reprinted with corrections (Oxford, 1974) First publ. 1937

Hauer, Stanley R., 'Structure and Unity in the Old English Charm *Wið Færstice*', *English Language Notes*, 15 (1977-78), 250-7

Hauser, Arnold, *The Social History of Art*, trans. by Stanley Godman, 4 vols (New York, 1951)

Hazlitt, W. Carew, ed., *Remains of the Early Popular Poetry of England*, 3 vols (London, 1866)

Heaney, Seamus, *Door into the Dark* (London, 1969)

Henderson, William, *Notes on the Folk-Lore of the Northern Counties and the Borders*, new edition with many additional notes, Publications of the Folk-Lore Society, 2 (London, 1879) First edn publ. 1866

Hennecke, E., W. Schneemelcher *et al.*, eds and trans, *New Testament Apocrypha*, trans. from the German by R. McL. Wilson, 2 vols (Philadelphia, 1963-65)

Hermann, Paul, ed. and trans., *Die Geschichte von den Völsungen*, in *Isländische Heldenromane*, Sammlung Thule, 21 (Jena, 1923), pp. 39-136

Hervieux, Jacques, *The New Testament Apocrypha*, trans. by Wulstan Hibberd, Twentieth Century Encyclopaedia of Catholicism, 72 (New York, 1960)

Hilary of Poitiers, *In Matthaeum*, PL, ix (1844), 917-1078

Hoffmann-Krayer, Eduard, and Hanns Bächtold-Stäubli, *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, 10 vols (Berlin and Leipzig, 1927-1942)

Holthausen, F., ed., *Vices and Virtues, Being a Soul's Confession of Its Sins with Reason's Description of the Virtues: A Middle English Dialogue of about 1200 A.D.*, EETS, 89 and 159, 2 vols (1888-1921)

Homer, *The Odyssey*, ed. and trans. by A. T. Murray, Loeb Classical Library, 2 vols (London and New York, 1919)

Hopkins, Gerard Manley, *Poems*, ed. by Robert Bridges and W. H. Gardner, 3rd edn (London and New York, 1948)

Horn, Wilhelm, 'Der altenglische Zauberspruch gegen den Hexenschuss', *Probleme der englischen Sprache und Kultur: Festschrift Johannes Hoops zum 60. Geburtstag*, hrsg. von Wolfgang Keller, Germanische Bibliothek, II. Abteilung, Band 20 (Heidelberg, 1925), pp. 88-104

Horstmann, C., ed., *Altenglische Legenden*, Neue Folge (Heilbronn, 1881)

Howlett, D. R., 'The Provenance, Date and Structure of *De Abbatibus*', *Archaeologia Aeliana*, 15th Ser., 3 (1975), 121-30

Hulme, W. H., ed., 'The Old English Version of the Gospel of Nicodemus', PMLA, 13 (1898), 457-542

Isidore of Seville, *Chronicon*, PL, lxxxiii (1862)

------------, *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri XX*, ed. by W. M. Lindsay, 2 vols (Oxford, 1911-13)

------------, *Regula Monachorum*, PL, lxxxiii (1862), 867-894

Jaffé, P., ed., *Monumenta Moguntina*, Bibliothecum Rerum Germanicarum, 3 (Berlin, 1866)

Josephus: *Flavii Josephi Antiquitatis Iudaicae*, ed. by Franz Blatt, Acta Jutlandica, 30:1, Humanistik serie, 44 (Aarhus, 1958)

————————: *Josephus*, ed. and trans. by H. St. J. Thackeray, Ralph G. Marcus, and others, Loeb Classical Library, 9 vols (London and New York, 1926-65)

Juvenal, ed. and trans. by W. V. Clausen, Loeb Classical Library (London and New York, 1959)

Kemble, J. M., ed., *Codex Diplomaticus Aevi Saxonici*, 6 vols (London, 1839-48)

Kennedy, C. W., *The Earliest English Poetry: A Critical Survey* (London, 1943)

Ker, N. R., *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford, 1957)

————————, 'A Supplement to *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon*', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 5 (1976), 121-135

Kipling, Rudyard, *Puck of Pook's Hill* (London, 1906)

Kindlers Literatur Lexikon, ed. by Wolfgang von Einsiedel *et al.*, 7 vols (Zürich, 1964)

Klaeber, Fr., ed., *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, 3rd edn with first and second supplements (Lexington, Massachusetts, 1950)

Klump, Wilhelm, 'Die altenglischen Handwerkernamen sachlich und sprachlich erläutert', *Anglistische Forschungen*, 24 (1908)

Krapp, George Philip, and Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie, eds, *The Exeter Book*, Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, 3 (London and New York, 1936)

————————, ed., *The Junius Manuscript*, The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, 1 (London and New York, 1931)

Kuhnmuench, J., ed. and trans., *Early Christian Latin Poets from the Fourth to the Sixth Century* (Chicago, 1929)

Laing, Lloyd, *Late Celtic Britain and Ireland c. 400-1200 AD* (London, 1975)

Laistner, M. L. W., *A Hand-List of Bede Manuscripts*, with the collaboration of H. H. King (Ithaca, New York, 1943)

Lapidge, Michael, 'The Medieval Hagiography of St. Ecgwine', *Vale of Evesham Historical Society Research Papers*, 6 (1977), 77-93

Lawson, James Gilchrist, ed., *The World's Best Loved Poems* (London and New York, 1927)

Leake, Jane Acomb, *The Geats of Beowulf: A Study in the Geographical Mythology of the Middle Ages* (Madison, Milwaukee and London, 1967)

Leander of Seville, *De institutione virginum et contemptu mundi*, PL, lxxii (1844)

————————, *The Training of Nuns and the Contempt of the World*, in *Iberian Fathers*, The Fathers of the Church, 62 and 63, 2 vols (Washington, 1969), vol. 1, trans. by Claude W. Barlow, pp. 183-228

Lewis, C. T., and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary Founded on Andrews' Edition of Freund's Latin Dictionary* (Oxford, 1907)

Liber Usualis: see Solesmes, Benedictines of

Liddell, Henry George, and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, revised and augmented by Henry Stuart Jones with the assistance of Roderick McKenzie (Oxford, 1940)

Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth, *The Poetical Works of Longfellow* (Oxford, 1904)

Loyn, H. R., *Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Conquest* (New York, 1962)

Lucretius: Titus Lucretius Carus, *De Rerum Natura Libri Sex*, ed. and trans. by Cyril Bailey, 3 vols (Oxford, 1947)

MacCulloch, J. A., *Medieval Faith and Fable*, with a Foreword by J. G. Frazer (London, 1932)

Mackie, W. S., ed. and trans., *The Exeter Book. Part II. Poems IX-XXXII*, EETS, 194 (1934)

Macray, William Dunn, ed., *Chronicon Abbatiae de Evesham ad Annum 1418*, R.S., 29 (London, 1863)

Magoun, F. P., Review of G. Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, in *Speculum*, 28

(1953), 203-12

Mallet, [P. H.,] *Northern Antiquities; or, An Historical Account of the Manners, Customs, Religion and Laws . . . of the Ancient Scandinavians*, trans. from the French by Bishop Percy, new edn revised and enlarged by I. A. Blackwell, Bohn's Antiquarian Library (London, 1859) [Percy's trans. first publ. in 1770]

Maritain, Jacques, *Art and Scholasticism with Other Essays*, trans. by J. F. Scanlan (London, 1930)

Marstrander, Carl, 'Deux contes irlandais', *Miscellany Presented to Kuno Meyer by Some of His Friends and Pupils on the Occasion of His Appointment to the Chair of Celtic Philology in the University of Berlin*, ed. by Osborn Bergin and Carl Marstrander (Halle a. S., 1912), pp. 371-486

McKenzie, John L., *Dictionary of the Bible* (London, Dublin and Melbourne, 1968)

Maurus, P., 'Die Wielandsage in der Literatur', *Münchener Beitrage zur Romanischen und Englischen Philologie*, 25 (1902)

Mellinkoff, Ruth, 'Cain's Monstrous Progeny in *Beowulf*: Part I, Noachic Tradition', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 8 (1979), 143-162

————————, 'Cain's Monstrous Progeny in *Beowulf*: Part II, Post-Diluvian Survival', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 9 (1981), 183-197

Morris, Richard, ed., *An Old English Miscellany Containing a Bestiary, Kentish Sermons, Proverbs of Alfred, Religious Poems of the Thirteenth Century*, EETS, 49 (1872)

Motz, Lotte, 'The Craftsman in the Mound', *Folklore*, 88 (1977), 46-60

Müller-Wille, Michael, 'Der frühmittelalterliche Schmied im Spiegel skandinavischer Grabfunde', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 11 (1977), 127-201

Neil, William, *Concise Dictionary of Religious Quotations*, (Grand Rapids, 1974)

Nic Dhonnchadha, Lil, ed., *Aided Muirchertaig Meic Erca*, The Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, Mediaeval and Modern Irish Series, 19 (Dublin, 1964)

Norman, F., ed., *Waldere*, 2nd edn, Methuen's Old English Library (London, 1949)

Ogilvy, J. D. A., *Books Known to the English, 597-1066* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1967)

Ohlhaver, Horst, *Der germanische Schmied und sein Werkzeug*. Hamburger Schriften zur Vorgeschichte und germanischen Frühgeschichte, 2 (Leipzig, 1939)

Origen, *Against Celsus*, trans. by Frederick Crombie, in *Fathers of the Third Century: Tertullian. . . ; Minucius Felix; Commodian; Origen. . . , The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of The Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, American reprint of Edinburgh edn revised by A. Cleveland Coxe, vol. 4 (Buffalo, 1885), pp. 395-669

————————, *Translatio Homiliarum Origenis in Jeremiam*, PL, xxv (1845), 584-809

Oskamp, H. P. A., *The Voyage of Máel Dúin: A Study in Early Irish Voyage Literature Followed by an Edition of Imram Curaig Máele Dúin from the Yellow Book of Lecan in Trinity College Dublin* (Groningen, 1970)

Ouen, *S. Eligii Episcopi Noviomensis Vita*, PL, lxxxvii (1863), 482-594

Oxford English Dictionary, Being a Corrected Re-Issue, with an Introduction, Supplement and Bibliography, of A New English Dictionary, ed. by James A. H. Murray *et al.*, 12 vols and supplement (Oxford, 1933)

Page, R. I., *Life in Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 1970)

Palladius, *De Vitis Patrum Liber Octavus sive Historia Lausiaca*, PL, lxxiii (1844)

Pálsson, Hermann, and Paul Edwards, trans, *Egil's Saga*, Penguin Classics (Harmondsworth, 1976)

Panofsky, Erwin, *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (New York, 1962)

Paulus Diaconus: *Pauli Historia Langobardorum*, ed. by L. Bethmann and G. Waitz, MGH, Scriptores Rerum Langobardorum et Italicarum Saec. VI-IX (Hannover, 1878)

Pertz, G. H., ed., *Gesta Abbatum Fontanellensium usque ad a. 833*, MGH, Scriptores, 2 (Hannover, 1829)

Peter Chrysologus, *De Christo fabri filio appellato et de invidia*, PL, lii (1894), 333-337

Peter Comestor, *Historia Scholastica*, PL, cxcviii (1855), 1049-1722

Pevsner, Nikolaus, *Yorkshire: The West Riding*, 2nd edn revised by Enid Radcliffe, The Buildings of England (Harmondsworth, 1967)

Philo Judaeus: *Philo*, ed. and trans. by F. H. Colton and G. H. Whitaker, Loeb Classical Library, 10 vols (London and New York, 1929-62)

Pleiner, Radomir, *Staré Evropské Kovářství: Stav Metalografického Výzkumu* (Prague, 1962)

Pollock, Frederick, and F. W. Maitland, *The History of English Law Before the Time of Edward I*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1911)

Pope, John C., ed., *Seven Old English Poems* (Indianapolis and New York, 1966)

Prudentius, ed. and trans. by H. J. Thomson, 2 vols (London and New York, 1949)

Rabanus Maurus, *Commentariorum in Matthaeum libri octo ad Haistulphum*, PL, cvii (1864), 727-1156

Raby, J. E., *A History of Christian-Latin Poetry from the Beginning to the Close of the Middle Ages*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1953)

Rappoport, A. S., *Medieval Legends of Christ* (London, 1934)

Réau, Louis, *Iconographie de l'art chrétien*, 3 vols (Paris, 1955-9)

Remigius, *Commentarius in Genesim*, PL cxxxi (1884), 51-134

Robins, Frederick W., *The Smith: The Tradition and Lore of an Ancient Craft* (London, 1953)

Robinson, Henry Morton, *The Cardinal*, Giant Cardinal edn (New York, 1952)

Rolle, Richard, *The Fire of Love*, trans. by Clifton Wolters, Penguin Classics (Harmondsworth, 1972)

Roždzieński, Walenty, *Officina Ferraria: A Polish Poem of 1612 Describing the Noble Craft of Ironwork*, trans. by Stefan Płuszczewski, ed. by WacławRóziański and Cyril Stanley Smith, intro. by Jerzy Piaskowski, Society for the History of Technology Monograph Series, 9 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1976)

Rufinus, *Historia Monachorum seu Liber de Vitis Patrum*, PL. xxi (1878), 387-462

Sandmann, Gert, 'Studien zu altenglischen Zaubersprüchen' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Münster, 1975)

Sawyer, Frederick E., '"Old Clem" Celebrations and Blacksmiths' Lore', *Folk Lore Journal*, 2 (1884), 321-329

Selmer, Carl, ed., *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis from Early Latin Manuscripts*, University of Notre Dame Publications in Medieval Studies, 16 (Notre Dame, 1959)

Shakespeare, William, *King Henry V*, ed. by J. H. Walter, The Arden Shakespeare (London, 1954)

Shippey, T. A., *Old English Verse*, Hutchinson University Library (London, 1972)

Short, Douglas, D., '*Leoþocræftas* and the Pauline Analogy of the Body in the Old English *Gifts of Men*', *Neophilologus*, 59 (1975), 463-65

Singer, Charles, 'Early English Magic and Medicine', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 9 (1919-20), 341-374

Sisam, Celia and Kenneth, eds, *The Oxford Book of Medieval Verse* (Oxford, 1970)

Skeat, W. W., ed., *The Gospel According to St. Mark in Anglo-Saxon and Northumbrian Versions* (Cambridge, 1871)

————————, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew in Anglo-Saxon and Northumbrian Versions* (Cambridge, 1887)

Skemp, A. R., 'The Old English Charms', *Modern Language Review*, 6 (1911), 289-301

Smyser, H. M. and F. P. Magoun, eds and trans, *Survivals in Old Norwegian of Medieval English, French, and German Literature, together with the Latin Versions of the Heroic Legend of Walter of*

Aquitaine, Connecticut College Monograph, No. 1 (New London, Connecticut, 1941)

Solesmes, Benedictines of, eds, *The Liber Usualis*, with intro. and rubrics in English (Tournai and New York, 1963)

Southern, R. W., *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages*, The Pelican History of the Church, 2 (Harmondsworth, 1970)

Southwell, Robert, *The Poems of Robert Southwell, S. J.*, ed. by James H. McDonald and Nancy Pollard Brown (Oxford, 1967)

Stanley, E. G., *The Search for Anglo-Saxon Paganism* (Cambridge, 1964)

Stanton, Richard, *A Menology of England and Wales; or, Brief Memorials of the Ancient British and English Saints* (London, 1892)

Stevenson, Joseph, ed., *Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon*, R.S., 2, 2 vols (London, 1858)

Stokes, Whitley, ed. and trans., *The Tripartite Life of St. Patrick*, R.S., 89, 2 vols (London, 1887)

————————, ed. and trans., 'The Voyage of Mael Duin', *Revue Celtique*, 9 (1888), 447-495, and 10 (1889), 50-95

Storms, G., *Anglo-Saxon Magic* (The Hague, 1948)

Strecker, Karl, ed., *Waltharius*, MGH, Poetae Latini Aevi Carolini, 6, Pars 1 (Weimar, 1951), 1-85

Stuart, H., 'The Anglo-Saxon Elf', *Studia Neophilologica*, 48 (1976), 313-20

Stubbs, William, ed., *Memorials of Saint Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury*, R.S., 63 (London, 1874)

Sutcliffe, E. F., 'St. Joseph's Trade: An Enquiry into the Evidence', *Irish Theological Quarterly* (1915), 179-201

Swanton, Michael, ed. and trans., *Anglo-Saxon Prose*, Everyman's University Library (London and Totowa, 1975)

————————, *The Spearheads of the Anglo-Saxon Settlements* (Oxford, 1973)

Swartout, Robert E., *The Monastic Craftsman: An Inquiry into the Services*

of Monks to Art in Britain and in Europe North of the Alps during the Middle Ages (Cambridge, 1932)

Tacitus, *The Agricola and the Germania*, trans. by H. Mattingly, revised by S. A. Handford, Penguin Classics (Harmondsworth, 1970)

Taylor, Vincent, ed., *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, 2nd edn (London, 1966)

Texier, Abbé, *Dictionnaire d'orfèvrerie, de gravure et de ciselure chrétiennes, ou de la mise en oeuvre artistique des métaux, des émaux et des pierreries* (Paris, 1857)

Theophilus, *De Diversis Artibus*, ed. and trans. by C. R. Dodwell (London, 1961)

Thorpe, Benjamin, ed., *Diplomatarium Anglicum Aevi Saxonici: A Collection of English Charters from the Reign of King Aethelberht of Kent, A.D. DC.V. to that of William the Conqueror* (London, 1865)

Thorpe, Lewis, trans., *Einhard and Notker the Stammerer: Two Lives of Charlemagne*, Penguin Classics (Harmondsworth, 1969)

Tolkien, J. R. R. ed., *Ancrene Wisse*, with an introduction by N. R. Ker, EETS, 249 (1962)

Toro y Gisbert, Miguel de, *Pequeño Larousse Ilustrado*, revised by Ramón García-Pelayo y Gros (Paris, 1964)

Van Doren, Mark, *Collected and New Poems 1924-1963* (New York, 1963)

Vespa, *Iudicium coci et pistoris iudice Vulcano*, in *Anthologia Latina*, new edn, ed. by Francis Buecheler and Alexander Riese, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1894-7), i, part 1, 166-170

Vigfusson, Gudbrand, and F. York Powell, eds and trans, *Corpus Poeticum Boreale: The Poetry of the Old Northern Tongue from the Earliest Times to the Thirteenth Century*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1883)

Virgil, ed. and trans. by H. Rushton Fairclough, Loeb Classical Library, 2 vols (London and Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1960-66)

von Wartburg, Walter, *Französisches etymologisches Wörterbuch: Eine Darstellung des galloromanischen Sprachschatze* (Leipzig, 1922-)

Walafrid Strabo, *Glossa ordinaria*, PL, cxiii (1879), and PL, cxiv (1879).

9-752

Walbank, F. W., *The Hellenistic World* (Brighton, 1981)

Wells, John Edwin, *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1400* (New Haven, 1916)

Whitelock, Dorothy, *The Beginnings of English Society*, 2nd edn with revisions, Pelican History of England, 2 (Harmondsworth, 1974)

————————, ed., *Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Reader in Prose and Verse*, 15th edn (Oxford, 1967)

Wilson, David, *The Anglo-Saxons* (London, 1960)

————————, 'Craft and Industry', *The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by David M. Wilson (London, 1976), pp. 253-81

Wrenn, C. L., ed., *Beowulf and the Finnsburg Fragment* (London, 1953)

————————, *A Study of Old English Literature* (London, 1967)

Wright, Thomas, ed., *Anglo-Saxon and Old English Vocabularies*, 2nd edn, ed. and collated by R. P. Wülcker, 2 vols (London, 1884)

————————, *Reliquiae Antiquae*, 2 vols (London, 1841)

Wulfstan Cantor, *Narratio metrica de Sancto Swithuno*, in *Frithegodi monachi Breuiloquium vitae beati Wilfredi et Wulfstani Cantoris Narratio metrica de Sancto Swithuno*, ed. by Alistair Campbell (Zurich, 1950)

Zarnecki, George, *The Monastic Achievement* (London, 1972)

Additions to the Bibliography

Meaney, Audrey L., *Anglo-Saxon Amulets and Curing Stones*, British Archaeological Reports, British Series, 96 (Oxford, 1981)

Singer, Charles, ed., and others, *A History of Technology*, 5 vols (Oxford, 1954-58)