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Beowulf and *Andreas*: intimate relations

Irina Dumitrescu

> As the centuries go by, there is always a crowd before that picture, gazing into its depths, seeing their own faces reflected in it, seeing more the longer they look, never being able to say quite what it is that they see.
>
> Virginia Woolf[1]

For years, it was not clear if *Beowulf* and *Andreas* were dating or had simply found themselves at the same restaurant, ordering the same specials. Burly, Germanic *Beowulf* and quirky, vaguely Mediterranean *Andreas* didn't seem like much of a fit, but they shared a predilection for speaking in epic formulas and collecting antiques. Anita Riedinger and Alison Powell, among other scholars, showed this was no accident: *Beowulf* and *Andreas* not only had been going steady, but like many younger lovers, *Andreas* had picked up *Beowulf*'s habits and mannerisms, even at the cost of looking awkward.[2] Rings and property, monstrous encounters, pagan practices, and ancient ruins – *Andreas* found all of these in *Beowulf*'s treasury and tried them on, with unsettling, or ridiculous, effects.

Relationships change people. Intimate encounters with poems do too. The story of Andrew and the Mermedonians was passed down in Greek and Latin before it met *Beowulf*, to say nothing of Old English prose, and most scholars agree that it was altered profoundly by its adoption of epic Anglo-Saxon vocabulary.[3] But literary influence does not travel in one direction alone. Martha Malamud has shown that Ausonius' *Cento nuptialis* outrageously alters Vergil's *Aeneid*, from which it draws; it becomes impossible to read the original epic without interference from the *Cento*'s erotic imagery.[4] *Beowulf*, too, despite being the couple's senior, is transformed through *Andreas*'s imitation. Its pagans become monstrous, as Richard North has recognized.[5] Indeed, *Andreas*

reveals the darker side of *Beowulf*: the blindness of heroes, the tenuous distinctions between monsters and men, and the deathly potential of history and its artefacts. Modern scholars have recognized these too, but *Andreas*, *Beowulf*'s most loving reader, saw them first.

What might a Late Antique apostolic adventure story find to like in a tale of disastrous Scandinavian politics and bothersome monsters? Cannibals, ancient architectural features, and a fallible hero are the beginning of an answer. While *Andreas* is often described as a hagiography, its hero is not the stalwart soldier of faith one so frequently finds in Late Antique and early medieval passion narratives; any barely pubescent maiden saint found in the legendaries of Prudentius or Ælfric is tougher in the face of threats and torture. The anonymous poet of *Andreas* decorates his protagonist with heroic epithets, but they are savagely ironic. Here is a story of an apostle who is asked by God to rescue his friend Matthew from a distant Mermedonian prison, where the latter is to be slaughtered and cooked up for a cannibal's snack. Instead of dutifully obeying the Lord, Andrew complains: it is too far, he does not know the way. Christ appears to him disguised as a seafarer, complete with a boat ready to take him to the cannibal city; Andrew does not recognize his former teacher, and saintsplains the miracles of Jesus to him. These wonders include not only calming storms and healing the sick but also commanding stone statues to speak and move. One might think that observing these marvels first-hand would have convinced Andrew of his Saviour's power, but the apostle's faith turns out to be very shakable indeed. After falling asleep on the ship, Andrew awakens on the Mermedonian shore and understands his mistake. Christ appears to him again and explains that Andrew will suffer torture but not death, exhorting him to be brave in the face of suffering. Andrew releases Matthew from the prison, but once the devil incites the Mermedonians to torture him, he forgets Christ's pep talk. Instead he whines and wishes for death. At this point, even the narrator seems to need a break from the proceedings. In an authorial interruption, he describes how long – or boring – the story has been, and suggests that a wiser man might find the battles and torments in his own mind. The story finds Andrew in prison again, where he commands a column inscribed with the Ten Commandments to release a deadly flood of water. The ensuing devastation convinces the Mermedonians to convert to Christianity, at which point Andrew prepares to abandon them. Christ appears once more to this unenthusiastic apostle and convinces him to teach the people

he has just baptized. So much for a hero who is described at the start of the poem as:

>   anræd   ellenweorces,
>   heard ond higerof,   nalas hildlata,
>   gearo, guðe fram   to godes campe. (232–234)[6]
>
> (prompt to deeds of courage, firm and strong of mind, not at all slow to fight, valiant and ready for battle in God's war.)

While *Beowulf* and *Andreas* have been spotted together for about a century and a half, they usually only prompt the question: 'Are they or aren't they?' Few critics have wondered about the nature of their intimacy. The major exception is Richard North, who, in an essay in his and Michael Bintley's edition of *Andreas*, has attempted to tease out the nuances of this strange romance. North addresses some of the best-known borrowings from *Beowulf*: the 'meoduscerwen' (serving of mead?) (1526b) doled out to the Mermedonians in the form of a deadly deluge, a play on the enigmatic 'ealuscerwen'[7] (serving of ale? terror?) (769a) served to the Danes in Heorot;[8] the way doors immediately open ('Duru sona onarn') (*A* 999b, *B* 721b) at the touch of Andrew and Grendel's hands; the narrators who have never heard of a 'cymlicor ceol' (more splendid ship) (*A* 361, *B* 38) than those of Christ and Scyld Scefing; and the treasures 'landes ond locenra beaga' (of land and linked rings) (*A* 303a, *B* 2995a) that Hygelac doles out and Andrew lacks.[9] It is hard to understand precisely what *Andreas* is doing with *Beowulf* under the book covers, but North suggests it's funny business. *Andreas* is a 'Cervantesque parody of *Beowulf*', he writes, one that mocks the Mermedonians by allusively connecting them both to Grendel and to the Scyldings.[10] Elsewhere, he and Bintley give the flip side of the argument, stating that the poet 'adopts a Beowulfian style of epic in order to undermine the values of *Beowulf* itself', noting his 'barbed references' to the *Beowulf* poet's apparently indulgent representation of heathens.[11] If *Andreas* borrows *Beowulf*'s clothing sometimes, the goal is not slavish imitation but drag.

What follows is a series of illuminations, each prompted by a moment of intimacy in a post-Anglo-Saxon work of literature. Each is a beam of light shining through tinted glass; each accentuates certain details and conceals others. The relationship between *Andreas* and *Beowulf* is shifting, enigmatic, playful. It resists simple interpretative claims. Accordingly, I use Alison Powell's rich collection of unique formulaic parallels to find points of particularly snug contact between

the epics. *Andreas* is a poem fascinated by exemplarity, but instead of depicting pupils who succeed in imitating their teachers, it shows us a saint who is an imperfect copy of his divine master. Likewise, *Andreas* is a self-consciously flawed likeness of *Beowulf*, its beloved mentor. This admittedly cubist chapter is one attempt to trace the bonds in this poetic odd couple.

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> He was not a bit like me, really; yet, as we stood leaning over my bed place, whispering side by side, with our dark heads together and our backs to the door, anybody bold enough to open it stealthily would have been treated to the sight of a double captain busy talking in whispers with his other self … shoulder touching shoulder almost.
>
> Joseph Conrad[12]

What creates intimacy between dissimilar things? Is it enough for two poems to stand beside one another? In the Exeter Book, the verses nestled among the riddles have heightened enigmatic qualities, sometimes urging us to count them among the cryptic hundred.[13] *Andreas* and the *Fates of the Apostles*, which follows immediately on its footsteps, were once considered to be the works of a single author, even a single poem.[14] Spatial companions become other selves, individual differences blurred in their shared moment or common undertaking. Secrets join them too, private murmurs that can be heard only in closeness. Hrothgar mourns the dead Æschere by calling him 'min runwita und min rædbora, / eaxlgestealla … þonne hniton feþan' (my confidant and my advisor, close comrade … when the foot troops clashed) (1325–6a, 1327b), his lament recalling both the times they spent fighting on foot, shoulder to shoulder, and the quieter moments of secret advice and deep trust.

The language of closeness is a generous lender. Its terms can be taken, adapted, reshaped, and returned. So it is that the speaker of 'The Wife's Lament' imagines herself missing her 'hlaford' (lord) (6) and searching for a new 'folgað' (retinue) (9), the closeness of their marital bond best expressed through the homosocial intimacy between a liege lord and his follower.[15] In *Andreas*, the relations between student and teacher, warrior and lord, religious follower and leader, creature and Creator are tightly braided together, at the centre of this knot an intimacy beyond words. The *Andreas* poet remembers how Hygelac received the news that his nephew Beowulf, a protector of warriors but also his 'lindgestealla' (shield comrade) (1973a), had come safely home. A variation on *eaxlgestealla*, with the image that word brings up of shoulder-to-shoulder fighting, *lindgestealla* only

appears in *Beowulf* and *Andreas*. *Andreas*, however, puts it in the devil's mouth, as he voices his disappointment that his little demons did such a poor job roughing up the saint: 'Hwæt wearð eow swa rofum, rincas mine, / lindgesteallan, þæt eow swa lyt gespeow?' (What happened to you, my bold warriors, my shield-companions, that you have been so unsuccessful?) (1343–4). One demon answers his father that it is difficult to deprive Andrew, that 'anhagan' (solitary being) (1351a), of his life, another devil encourages the band to fight that 'æglæcan' (formidable opponent) (1359a), to mock him about his exile ('oðwitan him his wræsið') (1358a).

The *Andreas* poet invites his readers to imagine the closeness of the devil and his hellish progeny, the demons who are at once bold warriors and cheeky children, by layering them with a a term of martial intimacy he takes from *Beowulf*. But then he flips the scene, giving us the demonic perspective: the hero is an awesome creature to be sure, but perhaps also an outcast or a monster. *Anhaga* is no rare word, but an audience member familiar with *Beowulf* might have remembered that it described its hero (2368a), a man about whom the question of exile also briefly hung. As Wulfgar pointedly remarks, 'Wen' ic þæt ge for wlenco, nalles for wræcsiðum / ac for higeþrymmum Hroðgar sohton' (I expect that you came here out of daring, not at all due to exile, but that you sought Hrothgar due to strength of heart) (338–9). That audience would be even likelier to recall the way 'æglæca' joins Grendel, his vengeful mother, the sea-creatures Beowulf fights, the dragon, as well as Beowulf himself and Sigemund.[16] The word *æglæca* is where hero and monster meet, joined in the loneliness of their uncanny strength. The *Andreas* poet saw this at work in *Beowulf*, and imagined a demonic community of warriors at arms, terrified but stirred by the invasion of a saintly villain.

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> 'Blythely', quod he; 'com sytte adoun!
> I telle thee upon condicioun
> That thou shalt hooly, with al thy wyt,
> Doo thyn entent to herkene hit.'
> 'Yis, syr … I shal ryght blythely, so God me save,
> Hooly, with al the wit I have,
> Here yow as wel as I kan.'
>
> Geoffrey Chaucer[17]

Andreas is a poem about teaching. More precisely, it is an exploration of the various shapes the relationship between teacher and student

can take. At the start of the poem, Andrew is a proselytizer, teaching the people the path to life ('leode lærde on lifes weg') (170). He is also a hypocrite who fails to believe in God's power. Later, on the boat, he teaches his followers to have faith in Christ, recalling for them the miracles Jesus performed in their presence. Christ teaches him throughout, sometimes prompting him to search his memory for the keys to spiritual succour, sometimes embodying for Andrew the example he is to follow. Later, Andrew teaches the Mermedonians, but half-heartedly, forced to return to his needy students to establish them in their new faith.[18]

The bond between teacher and student is one of faith, a plighting of troth, a promise to reveal and to attempt to understand that revelation. It is also a relation of copying, of echoing words, of occasional misunderstandings, some of them productive. The attitude of Andrew to his teacher Christ is analogous to the position of *Andreas* to *Beowulf*; both relationships follow the logic of exemplarity, and both experience the failure of that logic. Andrew is a bragging warrior but a dense student, and in his inability to learn from Jesus' many miracles he reveals the impotence of Christian teaching. So, too, does *Andreas* reveal the potential hollowness of Beowulf's boasts. He pays particular attention to Beowulf's speech before Wealhtheow:

> *Ic þæt hogode,*   *þa ic on holm gestah,*
> *sæbat* gesæt   mid minra secga gedriht,
> þæt ic anunga   eowra leoda
> willan geworhte   oþðe on wæl crunge
> feondgrapum fæst.   Ic *gefremman sceal*
> eorlic *ellen*,   oþðe endedæg
> on þisse meoduhealle   minne gebidan. (632–8, italics added
> throughout to highlight parallels)

> (I intended, when I set out to sea, sat down in a ship with my band of men, that I would completely accomplish the wishes of your people or fall in battle, trapped in the enemy's grip. I shall accomplish a heroic exertion or experience my final day in this mead-hall.)

For the moment a good pupil of his heroic model, Andrew repeats the beginning of Beowulf's boast in his own attempt to rally the troops during a sea-storm:

> *Ge þæt gehogodon,*   *þa ge on holm stigon,*
> þæt ge on fara folc   feorh gelæddon,
> ond for dryhtnes lufan   deað þrowodon (429–31)

(You intended, when you set out to sea, to carry your life to hostile people and to suffer death for the love of the Lord.)

Andrew underscores the echo of Beowulf's speech a few lines later by introducing the story of Jesus calming the storm with 'Swa gesælde iu, þæt we on *sæbate*' (so it happened long ago, that we in a ship) (438). Still, in reminding his men of their willingness to be martyrs and, indeed, of their lord's remarkable control of wild waves, Andrew acknowledges their fear. Their bravery has already faltered, as has his own, their promises shallow.

Much later, Christ appears again to buttress Andrew's strength before his three days of torture: '*Scealt* ðu, Andreas, *ellen fremman*!' (Andrew, you shall accomplish a heroic exertion) (1208). Once again, Andrew only follows part of the lesson, enduring stalwartly for two days, then complaining about his suffering on the third. In writing his drama of instruction, the *Andreas* poet breaks up one Beowulfian boast into two Christian teaching moments, scenes that draw attention to students' ultimate vulnerability despite their bold intentions. Appropriately, variations on *ellen fremman* only appear in these two poems, the third instance being the famous introduction of the Spear Danes in the first lines of *Beowulf*, those princes who '*ellen fremedon*' (3). The reliably ironic poet of *Andreas* may have sensed the disappointment in that line too.

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The side of the ship made an opaque belt of shadow on the darkling glassy shimmer of the sea. But I saw at once something elongated and pale floating very close to the ladder. Before I could form a guess a faint flash of phosphorescent light, which seemed to issue suddenly from the naked body of a man, flickered in the sleeping water with the elusive, silent play of summer lightning in a night sky.

<div align="right">Joseph Conrad[19]</div>

Intimacy coalesces on the edges of things. It glimmers on the borders between land and water, life and death. No wonder that the poet of *Andreas* introduces Mermedonia as an 'igland' (island) (15a) and a 'mearcland' (borderland) (19a). In the poem's analogues, the home of the cannibals is simply a city. North and Bintley note the seeming contradiction between these two descriptions, explaining that 'Mermedonia is a borderland because it is on the fringes of human society and experience, like Grendel's mere in *Beowulf* and the

Crowland hermitage in *Guthlac*.'[20] *Andreas* understands that shores are sites of encounter, both with dangerous strangers and with mortality itself.

Marginal spaces are also where *Andreas* connects to *Beowulf*, using the older poem's moving shore scenes to highlight the instability of Andrew's hagiographical mission. The *Andreas* poet borrows boldly – as has often been noted – from the description of Scyld Scefing's funeral ship:

> Þær wæs madma fela
> of feorwegum   frætwa gelæded.
> Ne *hyrde* ic *cymlicor   ceol* gegyrwan
> hildewæpnum   ond heaðowædum,
> billum ond byrnum;   him on bearme læg
> madma mænigo,   þa him mid scoldon
> on flodes æht   feor gewitan.
> Nalæs hi hine læssan   lacum teodan,
> Þeod*gestreonum* (36b–44a)

(There were many treasures, precious things, brought from distant ways. I never heard of a ship more beautifully adorned with war-weapons and battle-clothes, with swords and coats of mail. On his chest lay a multitude of treasures which were to go far with him into the water's possession. Nor did they provide him with lesser gifts, with treasures of the people.)

When Andrew sits next to the disguised Christ in his boat, the narrator of *Andreas* pays his heroes an epic compliment:

> æfre ic ne *hyrde*
> þon *cymlicor   ceol* gehladenne
> heah*gestreonum*. (360b–362a)

(I never heard of a ship more beautifully laden with costly treasures.)

This parallel has often been noted as evidence for *Andreas*'s borrowing from *Beowulf*, and not without controversy. The narrator's remark seems at first an inappropriate description of holy men, though at second glance it elegantly captures the spiritual worth of Christ and his saint.[21] Critics have not noted, however, the dark shadow that *Beowulf* casts on *Andreas* here. Two ships set off, one bearing its treasure-laden corpse to parts unknown, the other carrying a hesitant hero to a cannibal land. Indeed, the ship Andrew has boarded carries a dead man too, one who has disguised himself as a seafarer for the time being.

Dividing lines are where recognition happens; sometimes the basis for intimacy is a fence after all. After the sea voyage, angels gently lay Andrew and his men on the sand ('greote') (847a) outside the Mermedonian city walls. The poet describes sun, clouds, and city in a scene of Boethian illumination original to the narrative, but thickly made up of borrowings from *Beowulf*. Indeed, this is the densest agglomeration of unique parallels to *Beowulf* that I find in the entire poem:

> leton þone halgan   be herestræte
> swefan on sybbe   under swegles hleo,
> bliðne *bidan*   burhwealle *neh*,
> his niðhetum,   *nihtlangne fyrst*,
> oðþæt dryhten forlet   dægcandelle
> scire scinan.   *Sceadu sweðerodon,*
> *wonn under wolcnum*;   þa com wederes blæst,
> hador heofonleoma,   ofer hofu *blican.*
> Onwoc þa *wiges heard,   wang sceawode,*
> fore burggeatum;   *beorgas steape,*
> hleoðu hlifodon,   ymbe *harne stan*
> tigelfagan trafu,   torras stodon,
> *windige weallas.*   Þa se wisa oncneow
> þæt he Marmedonia   mægðe hæfde
> siðe gesohte,   swa him sylf bebead,
> þa he him fore gescraf,   fæder mancynnes. (831–46)

(They left the saint sleeping in peace by the high way, under the sky's covering, to await joyful close to the city wall and his deadly enemies, for the space of a night, until the Lord allowed the day-candle to shine brightly. The shades withdrew, dark under the clouds. Then came the sky's flame, bright heavenly light, shining over the dwellings. The war-hard man then awoke, looked at the land before the town gates. Steep mountains, cliffs towered, around the grey stone stood tile-adorned buildings, towers, windy walls. Then the wise man realized that he had sought the people of the Mermedonians from far, just as the Father of Mankind himself, who had appointed him before, commanded him.)

Andrew has much to recognize after this passage: who the captain of the boat was, his own error of faith, the city of Mermedonia. But the poem's readers are also prompted to wake up from their beachy slumber and note that they are no longer in a sub-Roman province but somewhere in Scandinavia. They might begin in Heorot, waiting for a night for Grendel ('nihtlongne first nean bidan') (528), move through the sea with Beowulf, as the waters calmed and he

could see the land's windy walls ('brimu swaþredon / þæt ic sænæssas geseon mihte, / windige weallas') (570b–572a). They might think to the night falling on Heorot again, the shapes of shadows stalking, dark under the clouds ('scaduhelma gesceapu scriðan cwoman / wan under wolcnum') (650–1a), or be transported to Beowulf's ship, the men finally sighting the sea-cliffs and steep hills ('brimclifu blican, beorgas steape') (222). Or they could be transported to the battle of Sigemund, that man hard in war, with a dragon under a hoary rock ('syþðan wiges heard wyrm acwealde … under harne stan') (886, 887b). Or that grey rock might be the one Hrothgar saw as he scanned the unfriendly landscape for Æschere's head ('wong sceawian … ofer harne stan') (1413b, 1415a). *Andreas* echoes phrases that *Beowulf* likes a lot, so these lines might also recall the wind and walls of 1224a, the clouds of 1374a, or the grey stones of 2553b and 2744b. And just as Andrew recognizes that he had sought a city, as the Lord had ordained for him, so the poem's audience might realize they had sought a remembered place through those many allusions, one ordained for them by the author. On the Mermedonian shore, between water and city walls, under a sky shifting from night to day, two poems intertwine.

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> The shadowy, dark head, like mine, seemed to nod imperceptibly above the ghostly gray of my sleeping suit. It was, in the night, as though I had been faced by my own reflection in the depths of a somber and immense mirror.
>
> <div align="right">Joseph Conrad[22]</div>

Likeness can be easier to find in death, or just near it. This may be due to the workings of empathy, which allow us brief glimpses of a stranger's humanity when we watch them suffer. It may be the way darkness masks identifying details; in a world of shadows, all souls are clothed in the same tenebrous hue. Or it may be that in the process of dying, we are so often reduced to our bare components of blood and muscle and bone, universal and unremarkable.

The hero of *Andreas* suffers three times, on three days, in imitation of Christ. The descriptions of his bloody torture echo each other and, thickly, *Beowulf*'s scenes of death. *Andreas* borrows *Beowulf*'s vocabulary of gore, connecting to the earlier poem through the raw materials of life and death. It uses the language of suffering to render stranger what is already an unusual saintly passion. Unlike typical pain-resistant saints, who smile or crack jokes as their bodies

are viciously disassembled, Andrew really hurts. He hurts so much, in fact, that on the third day of his trial he complains about the extremity of his punishment, notes that Christ complained on the cross after only one day of torture, and wishes for death, hinting that he has been abandoned by his protector (1401–28). But *Andreas* gives its cowardly saint epic treatment. Take, to begin with, a passage describing Andrew's body during the first day of his trial:

> Wæs þæs halgan lic
> sarbennum soden,   swate bestemed,
> banhus abrocen;   *blod yðum weoll,*
> *haton heolfre.* (1238b–1241a)

(The saint's body was afflicted with sore wounds, soaked with blood, the bone-house destroyed. Blood flowed in waves, with hot gore.)

A space later, Andrew's second torment echoes the first:

> Swat *yðum weoll*
> þurh bancofan,   *blod* lifrum swealg,
> *hatan heolfre;*   hra weorces ne sann
> wundum werig.   Þa cwom wopes hring
> þurh þæs beornes breost (1275b–9a)

(Blood flowed in waves, through the bone-chamber, blood poured in gushes, with hot gore. The body did not cease suffering, exhausted from the wounds. Then came a ring of tears, through the man's breast.)

Both passages feature versions of the half-line 'hatan heolfre', as well as 'blod' and 'weallan'. In using a common vocabulary of surging waves of hot blood, Andrew's first two days of torture both recall the dark lake in which Grendel dies:

> Ðær wæs on *blode*   brim *weallende*;
> atol *yða* geswing   eal gemenged
> *haton heolfre*   heorodreore *weol*. (847–9)

(There the water surged bloodily, a scary swirl of waves all mixed up with hot gore bubbled with sword-blood.)

Andreas paints Andrew's saintly passion with the burgundy tones of a blood-stained lake, as if the murky water were staining his hagiographic set piece, as if Grendel's mere had entered Andrew only to be bled out again. In using this particular cluster of words twice, it reminds us that *Beowulf* does so too. After the Danes

discover Æschere's head, they gaze at the horrifying lake again: 'Flod *blode weol* – folc to sægon – / *hatan heolfre*' (The water surged with blood – the people looked on – with hot gore) (1422–3a). The intimacy between the two poems takes place in the substance of suffering bodies, in the hideous similarity between apostle and Danish warrior and kin of Cain as their bone-houses are destroyed.

Andrew's tortures do other work as well. The hot welling blood that soaks him recalls the mere, but the combination of destructive heat and bones recalls two moments connected to the death of Beowulf. One occurs as the dragon bites into him:

> <u>hat</u> ond heaðogrim,   heals ealne ymbefeng
> biteran <u>ban</u>um.   He ge<u>blod</u>egod wearð
> sawuldriore;   <u>swat yðum weoll</u>. (2691–3)

> (hot and battle-grim, it surrounded the entire neck with sharp teeth.
> He was imbued with life-blood. The blood surged in waves.)

Later, at his funeral, the flame consumes Beowulf's body, 'oð þæt he ða <u>banhus</u> ge<u>brocen</u> hæfde / <u>hat</u> on hreðre' (until it had broken the bone-house, hot in the heart) (3147–8a). Both of these moments trace the undoing of Beowulf's body, appropriate sources for the physical unmaking of Andrew.

Richard North has noted the ways in which Andrew is a response to Beowulf, joining the older hero's epic qualities to the happy possibility of Christian redemption. Andrew, put differently, wins his battles, his *banhus* does not stay *gebrocen*. Still, the close lexical relationship between *Andreas* and *Beowulf* underscores intimacies within the older poem. Andrew's tortures allusively join Beowulf's death to Grendel's and Æschere's, suggesting the horror of all death, unconcerned with heroism, monstrosity, or sanctity. What the *Andreas* poet finds in *Beowulf* are bones breaking, hot gore, waves of surging blood.

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> And byd him that, on alle thyng,
> He take up Seys body the kyng,
> That lyeth ful pale and nothyng rody.
> Bid hym crepe into the body
> And doo it goon to Alcione
> The quene, ther she lyeth allone,
> And shewe hir shortly, hit ys no nay,
> How hit was dreynt thys other day;

And do the body speke ryght soo,
Ryght as hyt was woned to doo
The whiles that it was alyve.

Geoffrey Chaucer[23]

The insomniac narrator of Chaucer's *The Book of the Duchess* reads the story of Ceyx and Alcyone to while away the night. He finds in Morpheus's encounter with Alcyone while inhabiting Ceyx's drowned body a scene of multiple intimacies: the committed love of husband and wife, meeting once again at night, albeit only in seeming; the uncanny closeness of a god creeping into a corpse and speaking with its voice. This vision is embedded in a scene of reading, in the narrator's bedtime encounter with a marvellous 'romaunce' (48). The old fables written in this book provoke wonder in the narrator: in reading them he also experiences a dark encounter with a zombie text speaking from the past. *Andreas*, too, is haunted by both bodies and texts. Its story is populated by the walking dead. Christ appears inhabiting the body of a seafarer, the stone angel orders Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to rise from their graves and proclaim the Lord, and drowned Mermedonians are raised up to life again. The revivified dead in both *Andreas* and *Duchess* stand for the way a writer can make an old text live again by using it as a source, retelling it, just as Chaucer retells the story of Alcyone from Ovid, or the *Andreas* poet recalls Cynewulf and *Beowulf*. Chaucer's take on this motif reminds us that the use of sources has an affective component, ironic, satirical, distanced, loving, awed, or desiring. Above all, the encounter with a zombie is one of wonder, in its full medieval sense of marvelling and horror.[24]

The stone angel in *Andreas* is not dead per se, but it is a thing miraculously made to move and enliven the dead. In doing so, it not only awakens buried patriarchs who figure the dead letter of the Old Testament, it also animates the monsters of *Beowulf*. When Jesus commands the stone angel to search out the graves in Mamre, the line describing his command recalls the curse of Cain:

Gewat he þa feran,   swa him frea mihtig,
scyppend wera,   *gescrifen hæfde*,
ofer *mearc*paðu (786–8a)

(He went travelling then over the path through the march, just as the powerful lord, the creator of men, had appointed to him)

Line 787 forms a unique parallel to *Beowulf* 106, 'siþðan him *scyppen forscrifen hæfde*' (since the creator had condemned him), describing

Grendel's banishment to the fens. The poet of *Andreas* slyly changes the negative *forscrifan* (to condemn, proscribe) to the more ambivalent term *gescrifan* (to judge, assign, appoint; to shrive, censure),[25] but he reinforces the connection to Grendel, the '*mearc*stapa' (wanderer or stepper in the borderlands) by having the stone angel walk on the '*mearc*paðu' (march-path). The parallel suggests that walkers of the marches are dangerous, even – or perhaps because – they have been appointed to their liminal spaces by God. *Andreas*'s description of the rising of the dead patriarchs is haunted by *Beowulf* too, if only by extension. The introduction of Grendel is followed by an awakening, the 'eotenas ond ylfe ond orcneas' (giants and elves and monsters) (112) that arose or 'onwocon' from Cain's crime against Abel.

The wonder of the stone angel scene in *Andreas*, one that prompts the Jews observing it to accuse Jesus of witchcraft, lies partly in its reincarnation of Beowulfian monsters. The angel embodies Grendel as it steps along borderlands, but even before it begins moving it recalls the dragon and its treasure:

> Ne dorste þa forhylman   hælendes bebod
> wundor fore weorodum,   ac of wealle ahleop,
> *frod fyrngeweorc*,   þæt he on foldan stod,
> *stan fram stane*. (735–8a)

> (The wonder before the multitudes did not dare then to leave the Saviour's command uncompleted, but it leapt from the wall, the wise ancient work, so that it stood on the earth, stone from stone.)

This stunning scene echoes another awakening near stone, as the dragon in *Beowulf* is interrupted from his sleep by the theft of his treasure:

>   frea sceawode
> fira *fyrngeweorc*   forman siðe.
> Þa se wyrm onwoc,   wroht wæs geniwad;
> *stonc* ða æfter *stane* (2285b–2288a)

> (The lord examined the ancient work of men for the first time. Then the dragon awoke, quarrel was renewed. It sniffed along the stone)

A few lines earlier, the dragon is 'wintrum *frod*' (wise in winters) (2277a), strengthening this cluster of light echoes. The angel that commands dead bodies to rise and speak also carries in its matter and its movement the creatures of *Beowulf*, especially as they appear

in scenes of animation, awakening, incitement. The sculpture that comes alive moves with the decisiveness of a cursed descendant of Cain, with the smell of an old dragon. *Beowulf* slips into the textual body of *Andreas* in uncanny ways, animating its stones and its corpses with inhuman energy.

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> Sitting on the floor with her arms round Mrs. Ramsay's knees, close as she could get, smiling to think that Mrs. Ramsay would never know the reason of that pressure, she imagined how in the chambers of the mind and heart of the woman who was, physically, touching her, were stood, like the treasures in the tombs of kings, tablets bearing sacred inscriptions, which if one could spell them out, would teach one everything, but they would never be offered openly, never made public. What art was there, known to love or cunning, by which one pressed through into those secret chambers? What device for becoming, like waters poured into one jar, inextricably the same, one with the object one adored? … for it was not knowledge but unity she desired, not inscriptions on tablets, nothing that could be written in any language known to men, but intimacy itself, which is knowledge, she had thought, leaning her head on Mrs. Ramsay's knee.
>
> Virginia Woolf[26]

Certain Old English poems show how the intimacy of a relationship can be felt, and remembered, through the body's gestures. When the main speaker of *The Wanderer* falls asleep, he recalls a physical proximity to his lord at once formal and childlike: 'þinceð him on mode þæt he his mondryhten / clyppe ond cysse ond on cneo lecge / honda ond heafod' (it seems in his heart that he is embracing and kissing his liege lord, and laying his hands and head on his knee) (41–3a). Knees suggest familial or tribal relation in old Germanic languages.[27] In *Andreas*, the Jewish high priest at the Temple claims that he knows that Christ is no divinity, but a person born in this land, among his relatives or 'cneomagum' (knee-relatives) (685b). Like shoulders, knees join people to one another in social and affective relations.

But there are other ways to express intimacy of the soul through the body. Reading each other is one of them, looking into the tablets of the heart, decoding the inscriptions of another person's character or soul. Hrothgar does this when he looks at the hilt Beowulf brings him and explains Beowulf to himself. 'Oferhyda ne gym' (do not be intent on pride) (1760b), he says to a man who will fall prey to

that very sin, and he warns him of all the ways he might go on to die. While examining the mysterious letters ('runstafas') (1695a) on an old work of giants ('enta ærgeweorc') (1679a), Hrothgar in fact reads the young warrior standing before him, swelling in his victory.[28]

The *Andreas* poet shapes his material into just such a scene of double-reading. It occurs late in the poem, after Andrew is visited in prison by Christ, who miraculously restores the apostle to physical health following three days of brutal torture. The poet interjects at this point to describe the process by which he has composed the poem, complaining of the difficulty of telling the story of these heroic deeds. The narrative flashes back into the prison, where Andrew sees columns by the wall, which, like the hilt in *Beowulf*, are the ancient work of giants ('eald enta geweorc') (1495a). Andrew addresses one of the columns, asks it to release a flood to destroy the Mermedonians, and tells it that God inscribed his ten laws on it, described as 'terrible mysteries' ('recene geryno') (1511a). Andrew finally prompts the column to understand itself: 'þu scealt hræðe cyðan / gif ðu his ondgitan ænige hæbbe' ('you will quickly demonstrate if you have any understanding of him') (1520b–1521). The column responds silently, but fatally. It opens and lets out a stream that visits horror and death on the Mermedonians.

In other versions of Andrew's story, there is no authorial interruption. The column has no mysterious writing on it, nor is it particularly ancient. A statue on top of the column opens its mouth to let out the flood when commanded by Andrew, but there is no suggestion that either the column or the statue could be readable. In the moment when Andrew suggests a reading of the column, the *Andreas* poet prompts his audience to re-read *Beowulf*. The authorial interruption and the description of Andrew's gaze and address to the column have multiple unique borrowings from *Beowulf*, with a particularly thick cluster at lines 1487–95.

What does *Andreas* read inscribed in *Beowulf*? Unsurprisingly, pride and failure. Or perhaps not so unsurprisingly. So often *Andreas* is described as telling a saint's life in English heroic language, as if the vocabulary of heroism were an obvious good in the Anglo-Saxon period, a sweet sugar coating around the bitter pill of a Christian story. The passage mentioned above echoes a number of single lines in *Beowulf*, but also three small clusters, and these are more telling. A man wise in the law should recall the hardship of grim battles ('grimra guða') (1487a), says the narrator, adding that it is an old story how he suffered a great number ('weorna feala')

(1490a) of torments. The reader might recall the story of Andrew from its Latin source at that moment, and might just as well remember Unferth's exchange with Beowulf, in which Unferth suggests that Beowulf's previous success at 'grimre guðe' (527a) will not be repeated, and Beowulf accuses him of speaking a bit too much, 'worn fela' (530a), about Breca.

Another memory surfaces, of an older Beowulf, weaker but still boastful. After the authorial interruption, the imprisoned Andrew sees columns standing by the wall: 'He be wealle geseah … stapulas standan … eald enta geweorc' (1492a, 1494a, 1495a). It is a clear echo of Beowulf's approach to the dragon's barrow, when he sees stone arches by the wall: 'Geseah ða be wealle … stondan stanbogan' (2542a, 2545a). This is more than a borrowing. Beowulf sees not only the stone arches, but also a hot burning stream that keeps him from approaching the hoard (2545–9), dividing him from the gold he has just sworn to obtain or die ('gold gegangan') (2536a). Listeners who did remember the scene from the older epic might have picked up on the *Andreas* poet's little joke.[29] 'Læt nu of þinum staþole streamas weallan' (let streams flow forth from your foundation now) (1503), Andrew says to the stone column, 'ðu golde eart, / sincgife, sylla' (you are better than gold or a gift of treasure) (1508b–1509a). There is no internal reason for Andrew to tell the column it is better than treasure or gold, unless in reading it, he reads Beowulf. He reminds the audience of the folly of a king who left his people to search for gold, was willing even to risk his own life for that treasure, and was stopped temporarily by a stream coming from a stone.

Andrew in prison also summons a scene of death, the end of the boast:

>   Ða se æðeling giong
> þæt he *bi wealle*   wishycgende
> gesæt on sesse;   *seah on enta geweorc*,
> hu ða stanbogan   *stapulum fæste*
> ece eorðreced   innan healde. (2715b–2719)

> (Then the prince went, so that he sat on a seat by the wall thinking wisely. He looked on the work of giants, how the stone arches, firm in their columns, held the earth-hall perpetually from the inside.)

Here, *Beowulf* echoes itself, repeating the image of a man near a wall, gazing at old architectural features, but this time sitting to contemplate his pyrrhic victory.

Andreas thus recalls three moments from *Beowulf* in lines 1487–95: the hero's youthful debate with Unferth about the extent of his brave deeds; his entry into the dragon's barrow; and his final, dying gaze at that same earth-hall. This passage is a riddle that, for a while, might be resolved as Beowulf or as Andrew. Perhaps the audience was meant to see the superiority of the saint, his power over deadly streams, his endurance in closed spaces filled with the crafted but foreboding old work of giants. Still, the audience might have seen something else too, the visual echo between Andrew, in his prison cell, nearly killed but now with terrifying destructive energy at his command, and Beowulf in the dragon's lair, vanquished by a monstrous power he could not, ultimately, control. Perhaps it is appropriate that the *Andreas* narrator's elaborately humble interjection quotes Wiglaf, the man who views the wreckage of Beowulf's community.[30] The story of the saint is 'ofer min gemet' (over my capacity) (1481a), says the narrator, just as Wiglaf helped his kinsman 'ofer min gemet' (2879a). *Andreas* communes with *Beowulf*'s monstrous heroes and hidden places of devastating liquidation. It also resonates with its observant, critical voices, with Unferth and Wiglaf, men who understand the limits of heroism.

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

> We grow closer through distance, through a gap of time or space or context across which we are somehow better able to apprehend connection than if that which we seek were directly at hand.
>
> <div align="right">Stacey D'Erasmo[31]</div>

Does absence make the heart grow fonder because the loved one's blemishes and peccadilloes are out of sight? Or is it something deeper, the fear of death that might arrive at any time, the knowledge that, in a flash, a temporary separation could become permanent? Does intimacy reside in distance or in reunion? In matching scenes of reconnection, *Beowulf* and *Andreas* convey the sweet familiarity of seeing a beloved friend or leader. When Beowulf fights Grendel's mother in the mere, the Scyldings see the blood mingled with water and write him off for dead. His own troop awaits him faithfully, however, staring at the water and hoping he will emerge. When he does so, their greeting is almost maternal in its relief:

> Eodon him *þa togeanes,   Gode þancodon*,
> ðryðlic þegna heap,   þeodnes gefegon,
> *þæs þe hi* hyne *gesundne   geseon moston.* (1626–8)

(They went then to meet him, the mighty band of thanes, thanked God, rejoiced in their chief, that they might see him unhurt.)

Andreas could not resist connecting to this moment of connection. Here is Matthew's reaction when he sees that Andrew has come to him in the Mermedonian prison:

> Geseh þa under swegle   swæsne geferan,
> halig haligne;   hyht wæs geniwad.
> *Aras þa togenes,   Gode þancade*
> *þæs ðe hie onsunde   æfre moston*
> *geseon* under sunnan (1009–13a)

(He saw there under the sky his dear companion, saint saw saint. Hope was renewed. He rose then to meet him, thanked God that they might ever see each other under the sun.)

Andreas transforms the reunion of military band and lord into an encounter between two friends and equals, and transposes it, momentarily and figuratively, outdoors. Intimacy, this moment seems to suggest, is recovery, it is the hope of vanquishing death, it is a step into the light.

What does *Andreas* achieve by moving towards *Beowulf*, then? Here is a poem obsessed with bringing back the dead, with its stone angel that awakens patriarchs from their graves and its wayward saint who brings back his dead teacher. *Andreas* teaches that miracles can recall the deceased, but memory does too; after all, Andrew's education throughout the poem is to understand what he can achieve by remembering Christ's power. The poem brings back *Beowulf* too, but at the level of style. It is filled with allusions to the previous epic, miniature riddles that could be solved with Beowulfian scenes. As long as Beowulf is a question, he still lives. Perhaps this is why *Andreas* draws so heavily on Beowulf's encounter with the dragon. It seems interested in fixing its readers in that precise moment when the Geatish hero is poised on the edge of death. By weaving the poetry of *Beowulf* into its narrative, *Andreas* proves that style is never dead, that its history can always be rewritten. *Andreas*'s imitation of *Beowulf* is creative misreading, wry criticism, and intimate reawakening.

Notes

1 Virginia Woolf, 'Montaigne', in Andrew McNellie (ed.), *The essays of Virginia Woolf*, vol. 4 (London: Hogarth Press, 1994), p. 71.

2 Anita R. Riedinger, 'The formulaic relationship between *Beowulf* and *Andreas*', in Helen Damico and John Leyerle (eds), *Heroic poetry in the Anglo-Saxon period: studies in honor of Jess B. Bessinger, Jr.* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1993), pp. 283–312; Anita R. Riedinger, '*Andreas* and the formula in transition', in Patrick J. Gallacher and Helen Damico (eds), *Hermeneutics and medieval culture* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989), pp. 183–91; Alison M. Powell, 'Verbal parallels in *Andreas* and its relationship to *Beowulf* and Cynewulf', PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2002; Julius Zupitza, 'Zur Frage nach der Quelle von Cynewulfs Andreas', *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur*, 30 (1886), 175–85; Hans Schabram, 'Andreas und Beowulf. Parallelstellen als Zeugnis für literarische Abhängigkeit', *Nachrichten der Giessener Hochschulgesellschaft*, 34 (1965), 201–18; David Hamilton, '*Andreas* and *Beowulf*: placing the hero', in Lewis E. Nicholson and Dolores Warwick Frese (eds), *Anglo-Saxon poetry: essays in appreciation for John C. McGalliard* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), pp. 81–98; Paul Cavill, '*Beowulf* and *Andreas*: two maxims', *Neophilologus*, 77 (1993), 479–87; Claes Schaar, *Critical studies in the Cynewulf group* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1949), pp. 261–97; Leonard J. Peters, 'The relationship of the Old English *Andreas* to *Beowulf*', *PMLA*, 66.5 (1951), 844–63; Andy Orchard, 'The originality of *Andreas*', in Leonard Neidorf, Rafael J. Pascual, and Tom Shippey (eds), *Old English philology: studies in honour of R. D. Fulk* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2016), pp. 331–70.

3 For Andreas's sources and parallels, see Franz Blatt (ed.), *Die lateinischen Bearbeitungen der Acta Andreae et Matthiae apud Anthropophagos* (Gießen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1930); Robert Boenig, *The acts of Andrew in the country of the cannibals: translations from the Greek, Latin, and Old English* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1991); 'Πράξεις Ἀνδρέου καὶ Ματθεία εἰς τὴν χώραν τῶν ἀνθρωφάγων', in Constantin Tischendorf (ed.), *Acta apostolorum apocrypha* (Leipzig: Avenarius and Mendelssohn, 1851); Richard Adelbert Lipsius and Maximilien Bonnet (eds), *Acta apostolorum apocrypha* (Leipzig: Hermann Mendelssohn, 1898); R. Morris (ed.), *The Blickling Homilies*, Early English Text Society (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 228–49; James W. Bright and James R. Hulbert (eds), *Bright's Anglo-Saxon reader* (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1963), pp. 113–28.

4 Martha A. Malamud, *A poetics of transformation: Prudentius and classical mythology* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 37.

5 Richard North, 'Meet the pagans: on the misuse of *Beowulf* in *Andreas*', in Marilina Cesario and Hugh Magennis (eds), *Aspects of knowledge: preserving and reinventing traditions of learning in the Middle Ages* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), pp. 185–209.

6   Quotations from *Andreas* are from Richard North and Michael Bintley (eds), *Andreas: an edition* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016) and are cited in the text by line number. Translations are my own.

7   Quotations from *Beowulf*, with occasional minor changes, are from R. D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork, and John D. Niles (eds), *Klaeber's Beowulf*, 4th edn (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014) and are cited in the text by line number. Translations are my own.

8   See also R. M. Lumiansky, 'The contexts of O.E. "ealuscerwen" and "meoduscerwen"', *JEGP*, 48.1 (1949), 116–26.

9   North, 'Meet the pagans'.

10 Ibid., p. 205.

11 North and Bintley, *Andreas*, p. 64.

12 Joseph Conrad, 'The secret sharer', in *Heart of darkness and the secret sharer* (New York: Bantam Books, 1969), p. 151.

13 See, for example, John Niles's analysis of 'The Wife's Lament' and 'The Husband's Message' alongside other enigmatic texts in John D. Niles, *Old English enigmatic poems and the play of the texts* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006). On the more expansive riddle tradition, see Andy Orchard, 'Enigma variations: the Anglo-Saxon riddle-tradition', in Andy Orchard and Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe (eds), *Latin learning and English lore: studies in Anglo-Saxon literature for Michael Lapidge*, vol 1 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), pp. 284–304.

14 George Philip Krapp (ed.), *Andreas and The Fates of the Apostles: two Anglo-Saxon narrative poems* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1906), p. xxxv; Jason R. Puskar, '*Hwa þas fitte fegde*? Questioning Cynewulf's claim of authorship', *ES*, 92.1 (2011), 1–19.

15 David Clark, *Between medieval men: male friendship and desire in early medieval English literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 35.

16 Andy Orchard, *Pride and prodigies: studies in the monsters of the Beowulf-manuscript* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1995), pp. 32–3.

17 Geoffrey Chaucer, *The book of the duchess*, in Larry D. Benson (ed.), *The Riverside Chaucer* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), pp. 329–46, ll. 749–57.

18 See Amity Reading, 'Baptism, conversion, and selfhood in the Old English *Andreas*', *Studies in philology*, 112.1 (2015), 1–23, at 20; Irina Dumitrescu, *The experience of education in Anglo-Saxon literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 90–128.

19 Conrad, 'The secret sharer', p. 142.

20 North and Bintley, *Andreas*, p. 82.

21 David Hamilton, 'The diet and digestion of allegory in *Andreas*', *ASE*, 1 (1972), 147–58, at 155.

22 Conrad, 'The secret sharer', p. 146.

23 Chaucer, *The book of the duchess*, ll. 140–51.

24 Dennis Quinn, '*Me audiendi … stupentem:* the restoration of wonder in Boethius's *Consolation*', *University of Toronto quarterly*, 57.4 (1988),

447–70; Caroline Walker Bynum, 'Wonder', *The American historical review*, 102.1 (1997), 1–26.

25 Joseph Bosworth and T. Northcote Toller (eds), *An Anglo-Saxon dictionary* (London: Oxford University Press, 1898), s.v. 'forscrifan', 'gescrifan'.

26 Virginia Woolf, *To the lighthouse* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1955), pp. 78–9.

27 Rosemarie Lühr (ed.), *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Althochdeutschen*, vol. 5, *iba–luzzilo* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2014), s.v. 'kniuwento'.

28 See also Seth Lerer, *Literacy and power in Anglo-Saxon literature* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), pp. 158–94.

29 On the humour pervading *Andreas*, see Jonathan Wilcox, 'Eating people is wrong: funny style in *Andreas* and its analogues', in Catherine E. Karkov and George Hardin Brown (eds), *Anglo-Saxon styles* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003), pp. 201–22.

30 For more on Wiglaf, see Mary Dockray-Miller's chapter in this volume, pp. 304–18.

31 Stacey D'Erasmo, *The art of intimacy: the space between* (Minneapolis, MN: Graywolf Press, 2013), p. 112.