King Solomon's Magic:
The Power of a Written Text

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The written text on which I propose to focus in this paper—a *Pater Noster* inscribed in Germanic runes and Roman letters—is actually a text within a text. The larger text, an Old English dialogue to which editors have given the name "Solomon and Saturn I,"[1] I will argue, provides a context for the performance of a charm. It presents the Biblical King Solomon as a master magician who draws his power from the written words, indeed, from the written *letters*, of the *Pater Noster*. I will be giving attention, then, to a fictional representation of an oral performance.

It is not my intention to claim either that "Solomon and Saturn I" was orally composed, that is, created by a performer as he performed it before an audience; or that it was composed in writing, that is, with the opportunity to work slowly and go back to correct "mistakes" that writing affords, though I will have something to say about the greater likelihood of written composition. What I propose to do is discuss the way the poem develops what Alain Renoir might call "an empirical context within the text proper" (1988:18), in this case an extended exchange between two speakers that constitutes a setting for the performance of a charm by one of those two speakers. In doing so, I will refer to features of other Old English poems that are clearly identifiable as charms—the "Journey Charm" and "Nine Herbs Charm," for example—and to Thomas A. Sebeok's discussion of the charms of a people now living in Mari, a Soviet Socialist Republic situated on the north bank of the Volga, between Gorky and Kazan. First, however, it will be well to give brief attention to the pioneering work that has made possible the kind of reading I suggest.

Albert B. Lord, defining "formula" as Milman Parry defined it in his study of Homeric poetry—as "a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea" (1960:30), had already analyzed *Beowulf* lines 1473-87 in terms of

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[1] Citations will be to Menner 1941. Unless otherwise indicated, lines will be taken from Menner's A text, which is based on CCC [Corpus Christi College Ms.] 442, which he presents parallel to a B text based on CCC 41. Reference will also be made to Kemble 1848 (1974) and to Dobbie 1942.

their use of formulaic language when Francis P. Magoun wrote "The Oral-Formulaic Character of Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poetry," a 1953 article that is often taken as the beginning of oral-formulaic study as it applies to Old English poetry. Part of the reason for the considerable number of responses to Magoun's "Oral-Formulaic Character" essay would seem to lie in his manner of presentation. Using the same definition of "formula" and the same general procedures that Lord had used, Magoun analyzed *Beowulf* lines 1-25, then drew bolder conclusions than Lord had ventured to draw.

One of Magoun's conclusions was that "oral poetry is composed entirely of formulas, large and small, while lettered poetry is never formulaic," an "always and never" claim that he hedged only slightly with "though lettered poets occasionally repeat themselves or quote verbatim from other poets in order to produce a specific rhetorical or literary effect." Magoun also concluded that "the recurrence in a given poem of an appreciable number of formulas or formulaic phrases brands the latter as oral, just as a lack of such repetitions marks a poem as composed in a lettered tradition" (1953:446-47). Assertions as strong as these were bound to, and did, call forth a series of responses.

Alexandra Hennessey Olsen (1986, 1988) has discussed those responses, many of which provided useful refinements of Parry and Lord's definitions of "formula," "formulaic system," and "theme," in detail, so reference to just one paper of the series, Larry D. Benson's "The Literary Character of Anglo-Saxon Formulaic Poetry," will, I hope, suffice as an example of a counter-claim. Working from poems like Exeter Book Riddle 35, a fairly close translation of a Latin poem by Aldhelm that nevertheless makes use of formulas; a group of Old English psalms that, though they are close translations, are still heavily formulaic; and "The Phoenix," in which a poet uses formulaic language in his Old English translation of a long Latin poem, Benson asserts that "we must use the greatest caution in assuming the oral composition of any surviving Old English poem," and, with something less than the greatest caution, "when we know that a poet was literate, used written sources, and intended at least part of his poem for readers, we should assume written composition" (1966:40). We can readily find these three reasons, and more, to assume that "Solomon and Saturn I"—though it includes formulaic epithets like *sunu Dauides* ("son of David") to refer to King Solomon and phrases like *hæleða under hefenum* ("heroes under heaven")[2] to neatly fill a half-verse—was a written, not an oral composition.

First of all, though the poet does not specifically say that he himself reads, he makes a number of references to writing. As the dialogue opens,

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[2] See Riedinger 1985:294-317 for discussion of the "convenient epithet" and for the "something under the heavens" phrase, for which she proposes the term "set."

Saturn, the first speaker, claims to have gained wisdom from books and to have been taught by interpreters of books. Having introduced himself in this way, Saturn says he seeks a special knowledge that he understands is contained in a particular text, then asks Solomon to direct him to that text—a wonderful "palm-twigged *Pater Noster*." As Robert J. Menner notes (1941:43), Saturn's phrase suggests that the poet actually saw tablets on which the words of the *Pater Noster* were inscribed and ornamented with palm branches; and when Solomon later speaks of the *Pater Noster* as being "golden" and "adorned with gems" and says it has "silver leaves," this, again, suggests a text that has been seen, a written text. And there are also linguistic indications that the poet was literate. The poet uses the Latin nominative singular in the name *Saturnus*, he refers to *istoriam* (B4, "history"), he calls the *Pater Noster* a *cantic* (B24, "canticle or song"), and, of course, he uses Roman, as well as runic, letters to spell out the words of the *Pater Noster*.

A second reason to assume that the Old English "Solomon and Saturn I" was composed in writing may be found in the fact that our anonymous poet could have acquired his story in written form. Though the Latin texts he might have used are not available to us, some of *their* probable sources are still extant. Tracing the story the Anglo-Saxon poet inherited, Menner points out that dialogues in which Solomon plays a major role go back to legends about the wise king of the Old Testament who was the supposed author of a series of Biblical texts and many books of magic—and to the Talmud and Cabbalistic writings. An extensive literature concerning Solomon and Saturn came to western Europe through contacts with the Orient, Menner says, and as those stories passed from Hebrew to Greek to Latin the dialogue form played an important part in their transmission. The inherited form itself provides further reason to believe that "Solomon and Saturn I" was a written composition, since, as Walter Ong has observed, the dialogue was one of the means by which early writers enabled readers to place themselves in relationship to written texts (1982:103).

Benson's first two reasons for assuming written composition, then, can certainly be called upon here. A poet who uses occasional Latin words and inflections and has a character introduce himself by saying what he has read is very likely to have been a literate man. The Old English "Solomon and Saturn I" poet is also likely to have acquired his story from written sources. His poem not only presents the same characters, but it develops the same themes—the testing of Solomon's wisdom and Solomon's triumph over a host of demons—that are found in the Talmud and in Cabbalistic texts. Finally, as we shall see when Solomon calls each runic and Roman letter of the *Pater Noster* by name, Benson's third reason to assume that a text was composed in writing—that at least part of the text should rely on

an audience's acquaintance with the significations of written letters—is also applicable to the text under consideration.

But the task here is not to settle the perennially recurring question of oral or written composition. It is to show how a poet establishes a dramatic context for the performance of what must be regarded as an oral genre—a charm; so at this point it will be well to acknowledge a particular difficulty that Old English scholars who attempt to write about oral genres must deal with. As John D. Niles explains, without knowing its social contexts, we can be at a loss even to determine the genre of a given poem (1980:47). Anglo-Saxonists cannot travel back in time, nor can we call the performers of Old English riddles, proverbs, and charms back to life in order to hear them speak and see them interact with their audiences. We can learn a great deal from careful descriptions of contemporary performance, but the best that most of us can do, as far as our own task of observation is concerned, is to read the written texts that have come down to us with the intention of learning all we can about the performance of oral genres from the reports, fictional or otherwise, that we find in those texts.

Scenes that show performers performing, however, are somewhat few and far between;[3] so if we are to learn all we can, we must also give close attention to what Fred C. Robinson has called the poem's "most immediate context," its manuscript context (1980). In the case of "Solomon and Saturn I," we have two manuscripts, one of which would seem to provide some justification for reading the poem not simply as a charm, but as a poem that presents the performance of a charm.

"Solomon and Saturn I" appears with two other Old English Solomon and Saturn dialogues in complete, but not completely readable, form in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 422. The first page of this manuscript is largely illegible because it was once pasted to its cover, and, as Dobbie and Menner describe it, there are other problems with damaged or faded handwriting. Fortunately, for the sake of basic readability and for a suggestion about genre as well, the first ninety-three lines of "Solomon and Saturn I" are also preserved in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41, which, Dobbie notes, was one of the manuscripts that Bishop Leofric gave to Exeter Cathedral, a fact that dates the manuscript before the bishop's death in 1072.

As Dobbie describes CCC 41, it contains a number of short texts in its margins, including the first ninety-three lines of "Solomon and Saturn

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[3] Donald K. Fry (1975) presents four performance scenes: *Beowulf* 853-917; *Beowulf* 2105-14; *Egil's Saga*, chapters 59-60; and Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, IV, 24. The scene I focus on here, though it does not shed light on the topic of oral composition as Fry's examples do, can nevertheless be taken as an example that may teach us something about oral performance.

I," written in a single, small, rather unusual eleventh-century hand (1942:1). As Raymond J. S. Grant characterizes this second manuscript context, the ninety-three "Solomon and Saturn" lines are found with a number of other Old English and Latin "blessing and charms," along with a conglomeration of other texts, including a record of the gift to Exeter, selections from a martyrology, some homiletic writing, and so forth, in the margins of an Old English translation of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*. Grant, however, does not see the compilation as being so random as the above list might suggest. He finds that the charms of this manuscript fall into three easily defined groups: those against theft, those against specific physical ills, and "loricas," or "charms for the general protection of the body and soul throughout every phase of this life and the next." It is easy to see why the "Journey Charm," in particular, should be called a lorica, since it provides its performer an opportunity to promise protection against every hostile being that travels on the land.[4] The reason to include "Solomon and Saturn I" in this category is not so readily apparent, but Grant calls it "the most extended lorica" of CCC 41 (1978:26).

One of the hard questions we might well ask is: did the scribe who wrote the first ninety-three lines of "Solomon and Saturn I" in the margins of CCC 41 consider what he was writing to be a charm? That he knew charms and valued them enough to preserve them would seem to be self-evident, but the presence of the other, more miscellaneous texts also to be found in his handwriting precludes our answering this question about the genre of the poem with a definite yes. Nevertheless, the "extension" of what Grant has taken to be a charm provides opportunity to talk about what seems to be nothing less than a setting for the performance of a charm, an "empirical context within the text proper."

In preparation for my discussion of this setting, without making any pretense that some kind of magical transference makes it possible to extend conclusions drawn from observations of contemporary real-life charm performance to a fictionalized representation of performance from a far distant past, I will now introduce the terms with which Thomas Sebeok describes "The Structure and Content of Cheremis Charms" (1964).[5] "A *narrator*," he says, "addresses—or a singer sings to—a palpable *audience*, spinning a text which, to be effective, requires: a *context* molding his recitation; a *tradition* fully, or at least partially, in common to the speaker and his listeners; and, finally, a physical and psychological *nexus* enabling them to enter and remain in contact" (363).

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[4] For discussion of this charm see Stewart 1981:259-73 and Amies 1983:448-62.

[5] Sebeok and Lane (1949:130-51) explain that the "Cheremis" are known to themselves and Soviet officialdom as the "Mari," and that they speak languages belonging to the Uralic family, specifically the Volga-Finnic branch of the Finno-Ugric group.

In "Solomon and Saturn I," Saturn, though he is the first to speak, can be considered an "audience," since his purpose is to ask Solomon to speak to him. In lines 1-20, Saturn presents himself as a man who has long sought and still seeks for knowledge. He has read the books of Libya, Greece, and India; he has been advised by translators about the wisdom of these books. He has sought, but not found, what he refers to as *se gepalmtwigoda Pater Noster* (B12, "the palm-twigged Our Father"). He requests that Solomon "put him right" or "satisfy" him with truth by "saying" that "song," thus permitting him to go forth "whole" and return to his home in Chaldea. Saturn promises to pay for the words of Solomon with thirty pounds of gold and his twelve sons, and his promise establishes the genuineness of his request. Saturn's second speech is a question about who can open the doors of heaven (36-38). His third speech is a request for further knowledge that concludes with this description of his own mental state (57b-62):

> [M]ec ðæs on worolde full oft
> fyrwit frineð,   fus gewiteð,
> modðgemengeð.   Næ[nig] manna watð
> hæleða under hefenum,   hu min hige dreoseð
> bysig æfter bocum.   Hwilum me bryne stigeð,
> hige heortan neah   hædre wealleð.

> Curiosity about things of the world
> very often presses me for answers, yearning,
> it moves, disturbs the mind. No man knows,
> no hero under the heavens, how my thought darkens,
> restless after [reading] books. Sometimes a burning rises in me,
> a thought close to the heart anxiously wells up.

Saturn's restless searching has brought him no satisfaction. All his reading has brought only disturbance to his mind. In calling upon, or "testing" the wisdom of Solomon,[6] what he asks for is a remedy for a mental affliction—his inability to find peace of mind.

Solomon, who speaks three-fourths of the lines of the poem, is, in Sebeok's terms, the "narrator," the speaker who mainly spins the "text." He asserts—and his sentence takes on the syntax of proverbial wisdom—that those who do not know how to praise God are possessed by the devil and, like the beasts of the field, go *butan gewitte* (23b, "without understanding"). Solomon claims that the *Pater Noster* has the power to

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[6] "Solomon and Saturn II," a poem I discuss elsewhere (1989:12-24), develops the "testing" theme more directly by presenting Solomon and Saturn as two contestants engaged in a riddling match. In the poem being considered here, there are, however, suggestions of the testing-of-wisdom theme in Saturn's opening claims of his own learning and in his request for Solomon's "answer" to his problem, which concerns a need for a special knowledge.

open the gates of heaven, fell death, and quench the devil's fire. He says that the power of which he speaks, a function of both written and spoken words, comes from Christ, who (50b-52)

> gewritu læreð,
> stefnum steoreð   and h[im] stede healdeð
> heofona rices,   heregeatewa wigeð.

> teaches the scriptures,
> guides [men] through sounds, and holds [for them] the
> foundation of heaven-kingdom, fights with war-gear.

Saturn, then, is the primary "audience," the audience within the dramatic structure of the poem. Solomon is the "narrator." Though Saturn's wisdom is not equal to Solomon's, he shares a "tradition" that attributes great power to the Lord's Prayer. He may not know the prayer, but he has heard of its power. Otherwise, he could not have requested that Solomon teach him the words he believes will satisfy his curiosity and settle his restless mind.

From the first or second century onward, great efforts were exerted to encourage Anglo-Saxon Christians to learn the words of the *Pater Noster*. Although, as Menner points out, a great many laymen "regarded it chiefly as a powerful means of warding off spiritual or physical evil" (1941:39), it can be assumed that the larger "audience" of those who heard "Solomon and Saturn I" subscribed, like Saturn, to a tradition that attributed power to prayer. Along with this tradition, the larger listening, or reading, audience might well have shared a belief in the special power of the written word. The performer of the charm "For Unfruitful Land,"[7] for example, was required, in addition to reciting a number of *Pater Noster*s,[8] to write the names of the four apostles on four crosses to placed at the corners of a field; and charms that employed SATOR formulas were included in CCC 41 and in other manuscripts as welines[9] In addition to

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[7] For the text of this charm, see Dobbie 1942:116-18; for text and facing translation Storms 1948:172-77; for consideration of its performance Niles 1980 and Nelson 1984.

[8] See Jolly 1985 on the use of Christian prayers in Anglo-Saxon charms.

[9] For SATOR formulas see Grant 1978:19-22 and Storms 1948:281-83. Storms explains that the magical power of the SATOR formula, which is apparently based on the letters of the PATER NOSTER, depends on the letters being written in such a way that the word SATOR can be read from right to left, left to right, top to bottom, and bottom to top. He presents the formula below in connection with a CCC 41 charm for childbirth:

belief in the power of the written word, there was a general attribution of special, magical power to texts written in runes, a native, pagan alphabet.[10] And finally, it can be assumed, there was a belief that the power to utter a name was consistently accompanied by power over the thing, creature, or person named.[11]

If power over individual destinies was associated with the control of words, then, loss of control was just as surely associated with loss of language and a concomitant loss of reason. The fourth chapter of the book of Daniel tells how Nebuchadnezzar, a king of the Chaldeans, lived as a dumb beast deprived of reason because he did not know the word of God; the Old English *Andreas* presents the disciple Matthew saying that, as a result of being forced to drink a mind-destroying potion, he must "dæde fremman swa þa dumban neat" (67, "perform deeds as the dumb beasts [perform them]") (Krapp 1932:4); and Solomon, giving his view of the condition of the man who does not know the words of the Prayer, says

> [he] weallað swa nieten,
> feldgongende   feoh butan gewitte (B22b-23)
>
> [he] wanders like an animal,
> a beast travelling in the field without intelligence.

Two more "traditions" may further establish Solomon's credibility as a magician who has a remedy for "unsoundness of mind." The title of an Old English charm, "Wið Deofle and Ungemynde" ("Against the Devil and Insanity") points to a commonly held belief about the cause of mental disturbance (Storms 1948:260-63). The devil caused men to suffer from "unsound mind." And who had power over the devil? Solomon. During the Old English period, it was believed that Solomon had written not just Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, the Book of Wisdom, and Ecclesiasticus, but also many books of magic that demonstrated his power

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S A T O R
A R E P O
T E N E T
O P E R A
R O T A S

[10] Menner (1941) provides much relevant information about runic lore. For general background and specific uses of runes, see also Kemble 1840, Halsall 1981:3-27, and Page 1987.

[11] For example, calling out *sigewif* ("victory-women"), the name given queen bees, is one of the ways in which the performer of "For a Swarm of Bees," one of the several charms included in CCC 41, asserts his control.

over the demons of the underworld. And Solomon was a type for Christ,[12] who of course triumphed over Satan and harrowed hell.

These "traditions," then, would seem sufficient to establish a psychological "nexus" between Saturn, whom we may consider as primary "audience," and Solomon, the "narrator" of "Solomon and Saturn I." They would also make it possible for contact between the "Solomon and Saturn I" poet and his larger audience to be maintained. That larger audience might be expected to see fairly easily that the "context" that molds Solomon's recitation is his intention to demonstrate to Saturn that what he has asked for will indeed help him. In fact, familiarity with ways that performers of Old English charms relied on the power of words[13] might make it seem almost a matter of course for a great magician to find his source of power in the words of a written text. In any case, these are the words with which Solomon describes his source of power (B 63-67):

> Gylden is se Godes cwide, gymmum astæned,
> hafað seolofren [leaf].   Sundor mæg æghwylc
> þurh gæstæs gife   godspellian.
> He bið sefan snytero   and sawle hunig
> and modes meolc, mærþa gesælgost.

> Golden is the word of God, adorned with precious stones,
> [it] has silver leaves. Everyone, individually, through
> the gift of the Spirit, can declare the gospel.
> It is wisdom to the heart and honey to the soul
> and milk to the mind, most blessed of glories.

The *Pater Noster* has the power to fetch the soul from the perpetual night under the earth and unbind the fetters of the devil, even if he binds the soul with fifty locks.[14] It destroys hunger, it plunders hell, it turns aside the storm, it establishes wonder. The *Pater Noster* is a firm foundation for the courageous men of middle-earth, it is stronger than every stone. It is leech for the lame, light for the blind, a door of understanding for the deaf, tongue for the dumb, shield for the sinful. It is the hall, or great domain, of the Creator, carrier of the flood, savior of the people. It is the guardian of the wave, the lowly fishes, the surging flame of serpents, the wood in

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[12] Frye (1982:178) cites their rank as king and their recognition as men of wisdom as attributes that establish the relationship between Solomon and Christ.

[13] See Nöth 1977 for consideration of the magic act and the magic word.

[14] Menner notes the possibility that the B scribe's spelling of *clusum* ("locks") may be a direct imitation from Latin *clausa*. Here it is also interesting to note that Bede tells a story (see Sherley-Price 1955:243-45) of a prisoner whose chains fell off when friends sang masses for his soul.

which wild animals live. It is the guardian of the wasteland, and also of the enclosures in which men keep their valued possessions.

All this power, Solomon tells Saturn, is accessible to the man who knows the words of the Prayer. With this preface and this promise, Solomon turns to the *Pater Noster* as the performer of the "Nine Herbs Charm" turned to the natural world. When the magician of the "Nine Herbs Charm" gathered herbs for his unbeatable, all-purpose remedy, he called their names out one by one. In naming his herbs, the "Nine Herbs" performer personified them, and at the same time he asserted his control over the nine stalwart warriors who would defeat the nine poisons that threatened the physical health of human beings.[15]

Solomon also asserts his power with his voice. Indeed, by uttering the names of the letters of the prayer he brings them to life.[16] The source of his power is a written *Pater Noster*, but what is particularly interesting about this is not the fact that it is a *written* text, nor that it is written in runes (though these runes, like the ones Woden saw on the ground when he suffered on the tree of the world, will be seen to have tremendous power), nor even that it is a prayer (the *Pater Noster* does not *function* as a prayer in this poem[17]), but the way Solomon gives individual life to each of its runic and Roman letters. Wrenching each letter from its *Pater Noster* context, separating each signifier from its normal alphabetic function,[18] the great magician hypostasizes[19] his units of power as he utters their names. One by one, the named letters become warriors ready to serve the will of Solomon.

ᛈ (P), the first letter of the Prayer, is given animate life and

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[15] See Dobbie 1942:119-21 and Storms 1948:186-96; also Braekman 1980 and Weston 1985 for magico-religious backgrounds of "Nine Herbs."

[16] See Foley 1979 and 1981 for discussion of the dependence of charms on oral performance for their power.

[17] That is, it is not used to address a request to a superior being.

[18] The Old English runes had dual significations. Performing their logographic functions, runes could stand for whole words; performing their alphabetic functions, they could represent single sounds and thus be used to spell words. The individual letters of the Old English "Rune Poem," an alphabet poem that begins "ᚠ (feoh) byþ frofur fira gehwylcum" ("F [wealth] is a benefit to all men"), perform both functions; but the runes of Solomon's *Pater Noster* have just alphabetic functions, at least until he speaks them to aggressive life.

[19] Kenneth L. Pike (1967:108) says that spelling words aloud is a form of hypostasis, since parts of a formal sequence of letters normally utilized for reading as wholes are named individually and thus given existence as separate entities.

equipped with a golden goad to smite the devil. ᚦ (A) follows in his path with overpowering strength and also strikes the devil. ↑ (T), as John P. Hermann points out (1976), acts in a way that finds a precise counterpart in Prudentius' Psychomachia. The T rune stabs the tongue of the fiend, twists his throat, and breaks his jaw. ᛖ (E), to whom Solomon attributes a wish always to stand firm against all devils, also injures him. Solomon confers high rank, a capability to feel emotion, and a considerable degree of physical strength upon the next letter. ᚱ (R), the prince of book-letters, angrily seeks the devil, seizes him by the hair, breaks his shanks on the rocks, and forces him to seek refuge in helines Roman N and O together,[20] "twins of the church" (who seem in their "two-ness" to be at least distantly related to chervil and fennel, the "very mighty two" of "Nine Herbs"), attack the devil. With ᛋ (S), both the Christian Sun/Son associations[21] and the acts of Prudentius' Sobrietas are called upon. ᛋ , the prince of angels and staff of glory, grabs the fiend by his feet, breaks his jaw on the hard stones, and strews his teeth among the hordes that inhabit helines With this detail and its completion of the call to life of the letters that spell out PATERNOSTER (each letter is hypostasized just once), there is a temporary lull of violent action. The thane of Satan, very still, hides himself for a time in the shadows.

The action begins again when another "mighty two," ᛢ (Q) and ᚢ (U), which do go together in the Latin equivalents of English WH words, join forces. The two "bold folk-leaders," equipped with "light spears, long shafts" (here variation comes into play, providing another kind of doubling[22]), do not hold back their "blows, severe strokes." ᛁ [I], ᛚ (L), and the angry ᚳ (C) follow, girded for war, and the poet now takes the shape of a letter as his stimulus for descriptive characterization. The curved C carries bitter terror and forces the devil underground. Two more letters, ᚠ (F) and ᛗ (M), set fire to the devil's hair, again recalling Prudentius' great allegory of spiritual battle, and finally ᚷ (G), sent by

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[20] See Meling 1976 for a proposal that Roman *n* and runic � be taken as "twins of the church."

[21] Logographically, as its short "Rune Poem" description shows (see Halsall 1981:88), the rune ᛋ signified the word *sigel* ("sun"). The "Solomon and Saturn I" poet's "prince of angels" is a circumlocution for the *Sunu* ("Son") commonly associated with *sigel*.

[22] I am using the term "variation" here in the sense in which it is defined by Arthur G. Brodeur (1959:40): "a double or multiple statement of the same concept or idea in different words."

God as a comfort to men,[23] follows after ⋈ (D), full of magic power, and the two join with "fire," for which no runic symbol is given, perhaps because Á, the logograph for "torch" or "fire," has already been used. This sequence ends with the Roman letter *H*, which takes on the character of a warrior equipped by an angel, and with Solomon's assertion of the letter-warrior's power to throw the devil up to high heaven with his blows, strike him until his bones glitter, his veins bleed, and his fighting rage gushes forth.

The *Pater Noster* of "Solomon and Saturn I" functions, as we have just seen, as a master magician's source of verbal power, not as a prayer. With the completion of this demonstration of his ability to "speak" its letters to life, Solomon directly asserts his belief in the power of the spoken word (146-50a):

> Mæg simle se Godes cwide gumena gehwylcum
> ealra feonda gehwane   fleondne gebrengan
> ðurh mannes muð,   manfulra heap
> sweartne geswencan,   næfre hie ðæs syllice
> bleoum bregdað. . ..

> For every man, the saying of God, [spoken]
> through the mouth of a man, can always put all devils,
> the dark throng of sinful ones, to flight, no matter
> how variously they change their forms. . ..

Here, by joining *cwide* (which can be translated "word," but the context suggests the appropriateness of "saying") to *ðurh mannes muð* ("through the mouth of a man"), Solomon emphasizes the necessity for those who would overcome devils to speak the words of the *Pater Noster*.

What follows is a short account of the various forms the devils to be overcome may take. The passage is difficult, but Dobbie (164) concludes that "it is at least clear that lines 150b ff. represent the evil spirits as taking successively the forms of birds, fish and serpents." In these forms, the shape-shifting devils threaten the lives of men and beasts on land and sea. Here, as the poem moves toward its conclusion, a devil (the subject of the sentence is an indefinite "he," but the agents of the preceding sentences have all been demons) is said to sometimes fetter the hand of a warrior and make it heavy when he needs to defend his life in battle. This "sometimes" leads to a short passage that deals, once again, with written and spoken words.

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[23] Here, as in the case of �sᛋ (S), there is a correspondence to the logographic significance of an individual rune presented in the "Rune Poem."

This time the words are written on a sword. It will be well to have an account of the writing of those words before us (161-63a):

> Awriteð he on his wæpne   wællnota heap,
> bealwe bocstafas,   bill forscrifeð
> meces mærðo.

> He writes on his weapon a host of death-marks,
> deadly book-letters, casts a spell on the sword,
> the glory of the sword.

Tradition provides at least two possible explanations for the letters cut into the blade of the sword. The positive associations of "the glory of the sword" suggest that they could be victory-runes. In this case, their power, like the power of Solomon's hypostasized runes, could be enhanced, even brought to life, by the spoken words of the man who wields the sword. On the other hand, they may be death-runes that cast a spell on the sword and render it useless. The "he" that serves as subject of the verb "Awriteð" in 161a, like the "he" of 158a, who fettered the hand of a warrior, may well refer to an individual member of the group of shape-shifters. In this case, the *Pater Noster* that Solomon says the warrior must sing would function as a counter-spell. In either case, the man who hopes to survive in battle must sing the words that Solomon prescribes. This is Solomon's instruction for utterance (166-69):

> . . . symle he sceal singan,   ðonne he his sweord geteo,
> Pater Noster,   and ðæt Palmtreow
> biddan mid blisse,   ðæt him bu gife
> feorh and folme,   ðonne his feond cyme.

> [the man] must always sing the *Pater Noster*
> when he draws his sword, and pray to the Palm-tree
> with happy heart, so that both life and strength of hand
> may be given him, when his enemy comes.

The instruction to "sing" the words, especially in the light of Heather Stewart's discussion of directions for the performance of charms (1985), supports an interpretation of Solomon's words as directions for the performance of a charm. *Singan*, Stewart points out, was consistently used with respect to the utterance of longer incantations, and the *Pater Noster* would seem to fall into that category. And the fact that the "he," presumably a warrior, of 166a is also directed to "pray" to the Palm-tree should not obscure our recognition of the general nature of Solomon's

instructions, because, as Storms and others have pointed out, a charm can certainly include a prayer. We far more often hear about how Anglo-Saxon Christians followed St. Gregory's counsel on the value of incorporating pagan traditions into Christian ritual, but in this case an old tradition, to adapt Kemble's trenchant phrase, has just been "*christened* by the addition of a little holy water" (1848:7). Whether consisting of victory-runes or death-runes, the "text" that has been spun establishes a "context" for the utterance of words intended to accomplish specific, practical purposes.[24] The strange and difficult poem we find preserved, in part, in the margins of Corpus Christi 41 and marching down the middle of the page in Corpus Christi 442 shows Solomon seizing the very letters with which the *Pater Noster* is written. Solomon "speaks" those letters to life. Having thus demonstrated his power—and the primacy of the spoken word—the legendary magician claims that any man who "speaks the words through his mouth" can triumph over a host of demons. Finally—and the imperative stance is a prerequisite for the performance of charms[25]— Solomon says that the man who draws the sword must utter the words he tells him to say.

If the words written on the sword are victory-runes, they must be "spoken" to life if they are to help the man who wields it; if they are death-runes their malevolence can be overcome, Solomon assures Saturn, by uttering the words of the *Pater Noster*. In either case it is clear, since Solomon prescribes their use in the manner of charm performance, that the words of the written *Pater Noster* have been incorporated by a very viable oral tradition in "Solomon and Saturn I."

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[24] Bronislaw Malinowski (1954:37-38) distinguishes between the magical rite that has "a definite practical purpose" and the religious ceremony that has "no purpose directed toward a subsequent event."

[25] Charms need not necessarily present performers with opportunities to utter grammatically imperative sentences like those we see, for example, in "For Unfruitful Land" and "For a Swarm of Bees"; but they do consistently present opportunities for their performers to take command, that is, to manipulate words and things in ways intended to accomplish specific ends.

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