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Christopher A. Jones, Department of English, Ohio State University

'*Old English Literature and the Old Testament* is an excellent collection of essays important for Anglo-Saxon and cultural studies.'

George Hardin Brown, Department of English, Stanford University

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Toronto Anglo-Saxon Series

Fox
and
Sharma

Old English Literature
and the Old Testament

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Edited by
Michael Fox and
Manish Sharma



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*Edited by Michael Fox
and Manish Sharma*

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Abbreviations

ASE	<i>Anglo-Saxon England</i>
ASPR	G.P. Krapp and E.V.K. Dobbie, eds., <i>The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records</i> , 6 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931–42)
BT	Joseph Bosworth and T. Northcote Toller, <i>An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1898)
BTS	T. Northcote Toller, <i>An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary: Supplement</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921)
CCCC	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College
CCCM	Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis
C CSL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina
CH	<i>Ælfric's Catholic Homilies</i> , ed. Peter Clemoes and Malcolm Godden, 3 vols., EETS s.s. 17–18 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979–2000). Vol. 1: <i>The First Series</i> . Text. ed. Clemoes, 1997. Vol. 2: <i>The Second Series</i> . Text. ed. Godden, 1979. Vol. 3: <i>Introduction, Commentary, and Glossary</i> , ed. Godden, 2000.
CSASE	Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
DOE	<i>Dictionary of Old English: A to G</i> online, ed. Angus Cameron, Ashley Crandell Amos, Antonette diPaolo Healey et al. (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English Project, 2007)
EEMF	Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile
EETS	Early English Text Society
	o.s. old series
	s.s. supplementary series
ELN	<i>English Language Notes</i>

ES	<i>English Studies</i>
JEGP	(formerly) <i>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</i>
JMLat	<i>Journal of Medieval Latin</i>
LS	<i>Ælfric's Lives of Saints</i> , ed. W.W. Skeat, EETS o.s. 76, 82, 94, and 114, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1881–1900; repr. 1966)
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
MLN	<i>Modern Language Notes</i>
NM	<i>Neuphilologische Mitteilungen</i>
PL	<i>Patrologia Latina</i> , ed., J.P. Migne, 221 vols. (Paris, 1844–64)
PMLA	<i>Publications of the Modern Language Association</i>
PQ	<i>Philological Quarterly</i>
RES	<i>Review of English Studies</i>
SP	<i>Studies in Philology</i>

Rex regum et cyninga cyning:
'Speaking Hebrew' in Cynewulf's *Elene*

DAMIAN FLEMING

The influence of the Bible, and in particular the Old Testament, on the surviving corpus of Old English poetry has long been acknowledged, as other articles in this volume amply demonstrate.¹ The *Genesis* poems, *Exodus*, *Daniel*, and the verse portions of the *Paris Psalter* alone constitute over nine thousand lines of Old English verse based directly on the Old Testament. This study examines the more subtle, linguistic influence that the Old Testament had on Old English poetry. Through the medium of Latin, a handful of Hebrew loanwords and loan translations entered Old English,² as did constructions based on Hebraic ways of expressing ideas.³

-
- 1 A version of this paper was read at 'A Symposium on the Study and Use of the Bible in the Middle Ages,' University of Western Ontario, 22–3 March 2002. I am thankful for the help of the following during the preparation of this article: Andy Orchard, Antonette diPaolo Healey, David Townsend, David McDougall, Ian McDougall, and Tess Owens Fleming.
 - 2 See Helmut Gneuss, '*Anglicae linguae interpretatio*,' 109–48, esp. 123–5; Gneuss notes the Hebrew loanword (via Latin) *sabbat* and its parallel loan formation *restedæg*. Other Hebrew loanwords in Old English include *alleluia* and *fariseisc*; other loan formations on a Hebrew basis include *sundorhalga* for *Pharisaei* (= *divisi*), *rihtwisende* for *Sadducaei* (= *iusti*), and *hælend* for *Jesus* (= *salvator*); see Herbert Dean Meritt, *Fact and Lore about Old English Words*, 207–9.
 - 3 See Richard Marsden, 'Cain's Face and Other Problems,' 2–51, esp. 38–43; for particular instances in the *Dictionary of Old English A–F on CD-ROM*, ed. Angus Cameron, Ashley C. Amos, and Antonette diP. Healey, see s.vv. *āfestrian*, senses 2.d and 8; *andfangend*; *andfeng*, sense 2; *andfengnes*, sense 1.a; *āweorpan*, sense 1.a.iii.a.iii; *bearn*, senses I.C.1 and I.D.2; *belūcan*, sense 3.b.ii; *ēaland*, sense 3; *forweorpan*, sense 1.a.i; *fulnes*, sense 1; and *fyllednes*, sense 1. On Hebraisms in post-conquest English, see Marsden, "In the Twinkling of an Eye," 145–72. On biblical Hebraisms in later English, see J. Isaacs, 'The Authorized Version and After,' 196–234, esp. 209–14.

The focus of this article is one specific type of Hebrew syntax adopted in Old English, the so-called augmentative or superlative genitive. In particular, I argue that Cynewulf seems to be aware of the biblical and Hebraic origin of this construction and uses it in his poem *Elene* to distinguish the diction of the Jewish characters from that of the Christian ones.

In the superlative genitive construction, a noun in any case is modified by the same noun in the genitive plural, raising the meaning of the first noun to the superlative; well-known examples include *king of kings*, *lord of lords*, and *Song of Songs*.⁴ Although this construction is used as a means of 'superlation' in pre-Christian Latin,⁵ its popularity and wide use in the Christian west is due to its use within the Hebrew Bible and the subsequent translation of the construction into Latin in the Vulgate.⁶ The few modern grammars of medieval or ecclesiastical Latin that treat this construction generally attribute its origin to an imitation of the Hebrew.⁷

- 4 For an overview of this construction in ancient languages, see Gerd Schäfer, 'König der Könige' – 'Lied der Lieder'; see also Calvert Watkins, *How to Kill a Dragon*, 241–6. This syntactical construction is not explored in detail in Bruce Mitchell, *Old English Syntax*; discussion there is restricted to these remarks (§1296): 'Strictly speaking, the partitive genitive represents the whole from which a part is taken. Muxin ... is right to point out the difference between what he calls the "partitive" genitive ... from the "elective" – sometimes known as the "cognate" or "emphatic" genitive – e.g. *CH I.2*, 197.223 *ealra worulda woruld*, *CH II.20*, 191.35 *ealra goda God* (in which *one of a kind* is chosen). But we can reasonably use the term "partitive" for both' (Mitchell, vol. 1, 545). The only treatments of the subject in Old English that I have found are in Roberta Frank, 'Some Uses of Paronomasia in Old English Scriptural Verse,' 207–26, esp. 221–2, and Niilo Peltola, 'Observations on Intensification in Old English Poetry,' 649–90, esp. 686–90.
- 5 Jeffrey Wills, *Repetition in Latin Poetry*, 193, shows that the construction exists in classical Latin, citing uses in Plautus, Pliny, Seneca, Petronius, Martial, and Lucretius, which can be explained without reference to a foreign influence. Wills notes, however, that the use of the construction in classical Latin is marginal; see also J.B. Hofmann, *Lateinische Syntax und Stilistik*, §54, sec. 7.
- 6 On Jerome's translation techniques, see Benjamin Kedar-Kopfstein, 'The Vulgate as a Translation'; for this construction in particular see esp. 250, 'The noun in a construct state with its own plural is used to express a superlative degree. This was not unknown in L[atin]; V[ulgate] thus consistently follows Heb[rew]: Gn. 9:25; Dt. 10:17; 1 Rg. 6:16; Nm. 3:32; 1 Rg. 8:27.'
- 7 See Franz Kaulen, *Sprachliches Handbuch zur biblischen Vulgata*, 255, §138a, 'Durch Wiederholung des nämlichen Substantivs im Genitiv wird nach hebräischer Weise eine Steigerung des in demselben liegenden Begriffs hervorgebracht'; see also Albert Blaise, *Manuel du latin chrétien*, 83, §87, 'Génitif augmentatif; bien qu'il ne soit pas inconnu à la littérature profane ... c'est avant tout un hébraïsme.' This is echoed by Alison Goddard Elliot, 'A Brief Introduction to Medieval Latin Grammar,' without reference to Hebrew, only that 'the construction becomes far more widespread in Christian Latin,' 18. John F.

Seow succinctly defines the Hebrew construction in reference to the opening of *Ecclesiastes* thus:

The juxtaposition of the singular and the plural of the same noun is the standard way in Hebrew to express the superlative: e.g., 'king of kings' = 'supreme king' (Dan. 2:37; Ezra 7:12), 'servant of servants' = 'abject servant' (Gen. 9:25), and 'god of gods' = 'highest god' (Deut. 10:17). Thus, *hābēl hābālim* refers to absolute or the ultimate *hebel*, a word that has been translated as 'vanity'.⁸

Presumably because of the rarity of the construction in pre-Christian Latin authors, it is not treated in the antique grammars, which primarily sought to explicate classical Latin usage. The majority of early medieval grammars are significantly dependent upon the pre-Christian grammars and thus also do not discuss the construction. As a result, it is not discussed in Priscian, Probus, or Donatus, or in the specifically Christian, insular grammars of Asporius, Tatwine, Boniface, the *Ars Bernensis*, Sedulius Scottus, Murethach, and the *Ars Laurehamensis*.⁹ I have found this construction explained by only two early medieval grammarians; one of them is Virgilius Maro Grammaticus, an author who is known for his

Collins, *A Primer of Ecclesiastical Latin*, 307, states, 'In imitation of a Hebraic idiom, a noun in the genitive case may follow a different case of itself (e.g., in *saecula saeculorum* "forever and ever").' W.E. Plater and H.J. White, *A Grammar of the Vulgate*, 19–20, indicate that 'the genitive is also used to heighten the meaning of the first word and raise it to a superlative; so "caelum caeli, in saecula saeculorum," etc.' Regarding modern English, Isaacs notes, 'it is in the other phrases and categories of phrase that Hebrew idiom has left its mark; superlatives, such as "Holy of Holies," "Song of Songs," "King of Kings," and "Vanity of Vanities,"' ('The Authorized Version,' 210).

- 8 C.L. Seow, *Ecclesiastes*, 101; see also Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar as Edited and Enlarged by the Late E. Krauttsch*, trans. A.E. Cowley, §133.i; Ronald J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax*, §47.
- 9 Priscian, *Institutiones grammaticae*, ed. H. Keil, in *Grammaticae Latini (GL)*, ed. H. Keil, 2:1–597, 3:1–377; Probus, *Instituta artium*, ed. H. Keil, in *GL*, 4:47–192; Donatus, *Ars Grammatica*, ed. H. Keil, in *GL*, 4:355–402; Asporius, *Ars*, ed. Hermann Hegan, in *GL*, 8:39–61; Tatwine, *Ars*, ed. M. DeMarco, 1–93; Boniface, *Ars grammatica*, ed. G.J. Gebauer and B. Löfstedt, 1–99; *Ars anonyma Bernensis*, ed. H. Hagen, in *GL*, 8:62–142; Sedulius Scottus, *Commentum Sedulii Scotti in maiorem Donatum grammaticum*, ed. Denis Brearley; Murethach, *In Donati artem maiorem*, ed. L. Holtz; *Ars Laurehamensis*, ed. B. Löfstedt. On these grammars and their use in Anglo-Saxon England, see Vivien Law, *Grammar and Grammarians in the Early Middle Ages and The Insular Latin Grammarians*. I am grateful to the late Dr Law for her invaluable advice via email at an early stage in the development of this article.

deviations from the norm.¹⁰ He begins his section concerning the comparative and superlative degrees of nouns with a discussion of the formation and use of the superlative genitive construction:

Nunc de comparatione pauca dicenda sunt. Possituius gradus cum genituo seruit – licet ex sollicitismo –, tamen superlatiui facit opus, ut sapiens sapientum, quasi hoc diceret: sapientissimus sapientum.¹¹

[Now a few things have to be said about comparison. The positive degree works with the genitive, although this is a solecism, and does the job of the superlative, as ‘wise man of wise men,’ as if this should say: ‘the wisest of wise men.’]¹²

The Carolingian grammarian Smaragdus, writing in the ninth century, begins his discussion of the superlative in a similar fashion, and without the critical judgment of Virgilius’s *licet ex sollicitismo*; on the contrary, Smaragdus’s presentation makes the construction seem like a natural part of the superlative degree:

Superlatius gradus dicitur, eo quod positio et comparatio superferatur. Coniungitur namque genituo casui, suo semper generi et semper plurali, ut fortissimus rex regum et Dominus Dominorum.¹³

[The superlative degree is named such because it surpasses the positive and comparative degrees. And it is joined to the genitive case, with its own gender and always plural, as the strongest ‘king of kings and Lord of Lords.’]

10 On Virgilius Maro Grammaticus, see Vivien Law, *Wisdom, Authority and Grammar in the Seventh Century*; on the influence and knowledge of his works in Anglo-Saxon England, see Law, *The Insular Latin Grammarians*, 49–52.

11 *Virgilius Maro Grammaticus: Opera omnia*, ed. B. Löfstedt, 143.

12 All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

13 Smaragdus, *Liber in partibus Donati*, ed. B. Löfstedt, L. Holtz, and A. Kibre, 38–9. Joyce Hill has demonstrated the large influence that Smaragdus had on Ælfric in homiletic matters but does not discuss their grammars: Joyce Hill, ‘Ælfric and Smaragdus,’ 203–37. Vivien Law suggested to me that Smaragdus was widely used from the ninth through eleventh centuries in Anglo-Saxon England as well as on the continent (personal communication by email, 20 November 2001). However, Helmut Gneuss points out, as far as manuscripts are concerned, ‘there is no evidence for the availability of the grammars of Alcuin, Hrabanus Maurus, and Smaragdus in pre-conquest England’ (‘The Study of Language in Anglo-Saxon England,’ 12). On Smaragdus generally, and the possibility that he knew some Hebrew, see Fidel Rädle, *Studien zu Smaragd von Saint-Mihiel*, 51–60, esp. 60.

It is only after this explanation that Smaragdus explains the regular formation of superlative adjectives from the positive degree. Ælfric’s vernacular grammar of the Latin language does not contain any occurrences or discussion of the superlative genitive construction.¹⁴

Although this construction is not discussed in most ancient and medieval Latin grammars, the early medieval reader would encounter it frequently and presumably be quite familiar with it; the Vulgate Bible has many examples that were as familiar to the Anglo-Saxons as they are to us: *seruus seruorum* (Genesis 9:25), *sancta sanctorum* (Exodus 26:34; 3 Regum 6:16), *princeps principum* (Numbers 3:32; 1 Paralipomenon 27:3), *Deus deorum et Dominus dominantium* (Deuteronomy 10:17), *caelum et caeli caelorum* (3 Regum 8:27), *uanitas uanitatum* (Ecclesiastes 1:2), *rex regum* (1 Ezra 7:12), *saeculum/-a saeculi/-orum* (Psalms, passim; Apocalypse, passim), and *rex regum et Dominus dominantium* (1 Timothy 6:15; Apocalypse 19:16). Not surprisingly, the use of this construction is more common and varied in the Old Testament books originally written in Hebrew than in the books of the New Testament, originally composed in Greek.¹⁵ It is noteworthy that Smaragdus’s claim that the second element in this construction is always plural (*semper plurali*) is not true; while singular + genitive plural is the most common form of the construction, the Old Testament’s common *saeculum saeculi* shows that it is not absolute. It should also be noted that New Testament use of the construction does conform to Smaragdus’s rule and is limited to positive terms, referring to God (*rex regum et Dominus dominantium*), eternity (*in saecula saeculorum*), or angels (*milia milium*).

This construction seems to have made a smooth transition from Latin into Old English. It is commonly used in Old English prose in imitation of its use in Latin. Thus, for example, the phrase *worulda woruld* is used over three hundred times in the psalter glosses to gloss *saeculum/-a saeculi/-orum*. The same phrase, again in imitation of the Latin, is commonly used in doxological contexts, especially as part of closing formulae to homilies.¹⁶

14 *Ælfrics Grammar und Glossar*, ed. Julius Zupitza.

15 In the Greek of the New Testament the use of this construction is also generally viewed as a Hebraism.

16 The ending of Ælfric’s *CH* 1.7 is typical: ‘se þe leofað & rixað. mid fæder & halgum gaste. on ealra worulda woruld. AMEN.’ Similar endings conclude his *CH* 1.2, 7, 13, 17, 19, 24, 28, 30, 31, 35, 36, 40; II.6, 7, 13, 15, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 36.1, 38, 40, 42, 44, 45; Ælfric’s *Lives of Saints* Eugenia, Peter’s Chair, Forty Soldiers, Book of Kings, Alban; Ælfric’s homily 12, 31 (ed. Pope); Ælfric’s homily 4, 12 (ed. Assmann). In total, Ælfric ends 37 of 151 homilies, or approximately one-quarter, with the phrase *on ealra*

Ælfric in particular uses superlative genitive names for God, often in doublets. Such formulations most likely originally stem from the New Testament's *rex regum et Dominus dominantium*; perhaps as a result, the doublets like this in Old English always include *cýninga cýning*. Ælfric uses the following titles for God:

eaþra cýninga cýning & blaforða blaforð (CH I.1, 178.8–9)¹⁷
eaþra biscopa biscop and eaþra cýninga cýning (CH II.1, 7.166–7)¹⁸
eaþra cýninga cýning & eaþra sacerða sacerð (ÆIntSig 62.411).¹⁹

Similar doublets can also be found in anonymous texts, such as *eaþra cýninga cýning & eaþra wealdendra wealdend*, in Vercelli homily 6.²⁰ Individually, the superlative genitive construction, by its repetitive nature, gives emphasis to any such title of God. In doublets, the emphasis is almost great enough to bring the homily to a stop; it is perhaps like a bit of song, a psalm, in the midst of prose.

The construction is not prevalent in the early Christian Latin poetry that would have been best known by the Anglo-Saxons, or in the Latin poetry composed by Anglo-Saxons themselves [see tables 1a and 1b].²¹ Of course, a Latin poet would have to fit a phrase like *rex regum* into a strictly regulated quantitative line. This is not a problem for the Old English poet,

worulda woruld. Wulfstan and the anonymous homilists also frequently end their homilies on (*eaþra*) *worulda woruld*.

17 Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies*, vol. 1, *The First Series: Text*, ed. Peter Clemoes, 178.

18 Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies*, vol. 2, *The Second Series: Text*, ed. Malcolm Godden, 7.

19 George Edwin MacLean, 'Ælfric's Version of *Alcuini interrogationes Sigeuulfi in Genesis*,' *Anglia* 7 (1884): 1–59 at 42–4.

20 *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*, ed. D.G. Scragg, 128.

21 On the Anglo-Saxon curriculum texts, see Michael Lapidge, 'The Anglo-Latin Background,' 5–37, esp. 7. Editions consulted for tables 1a and 1b are Alcuin, *Carmina*, ed. E. Dümmler, 160–351; Aldhelm, *Opera*, ed. R. Ehwald; Arator, *De actibus apostolorum*, ed. A.P. McKinlay; Avitus, *Poematum libri VI*, ed. R. Peiper, 203–74; Æthelwulf, *De abbatibus*, ed. A. Campbell; Bede, *Bedas metrische Vita sancti Cuthberti*, ed. W. Jaeger; Boethius, *Philosophiae consolatio*, ed. L. Bieler; Boniface, *Carmina*, ed. E. Dümmler, 3–19; Eusebius, *Aenigmata*, ed. Fr. Glorie, 211–71; Frithgod monachus, *Breuilloquium uitæ beati Wilfredi*, ed. A. Campbell, 4–62; Juvenius, *Euangeliorum libri quattuor*, ed. J. Huemer; K. Strecker, ed., *Miracula Nynie episcopi*, 943–61; Prosper of Aquitaine, *Epigrammata*, ed. J.-P. Migne, col. 498–532; Prudentius, *Psychomachia*, ed. M.P. Cunningham, CCSL 126, 149–81; Sedulius, *Opera omnia*, ed. J. Huemer, 14–146; Tatwine, *Aenigmata*, ed. Fr. Glorie, 167–208; Wulfstan Cantor [of Winchester], *Narratio metrica de sancto Swithuno*, ed. A. Campbell, 65–177.

Table 1a. Occurrences of the superlative genitive in Latin poetry read by Anglo-Saxons

Author, Work	Occurrences	Total Lines	Frequency
Sedulius, <i>Carmen paschale</i>	2	1753	1:876.5
Prudentius, <i>Psychomachia</i>	1	915	1:915
Avitus, <i>De spiritualis historiae gestis</i>	1	2552	1:2552
Juvenius, <i>Euangelia</i>	1	3134	1:3134
Boethius, <i>Philosophiae consolatio</i>	0	875	...
Arator, <i>De actibus apostolorum</i>	0	2325	...
Prosper of Aquitaine, <i>Epigrammata</i>	0	836	...

Table 1b. Occurrences of the superlative genitive in Anglo-Latin poetry

Author, Work	Occurrences	Total Lines	Frequency
Boniface, <i>Carmina</i>	1	521	1:521
Wulfstan of Winch., <i>Narratio de sancto Swithuno</i>	4	3382	1:845.5
Aldhelm, <i>Carmen de uirginitate</i>	1	2942	1:2942
Alcuin, <i>Carmina</i>	1	6583	1:6583
Aldhelm, other poetry	0	1813	...
Bede, <i>Vita S. Cuthberti</i>	0	979	...
Eusebius, <i>Enigmata</i>	0	282	...
Æthelwulf, <i>De abbatibus</i>	0	819	...
<i>Miracula Nynie episcopi</i>	0	504	...
Tatwine, <i>Enigmata</i>	0	213	...
Frithigod, <i>Breuilloquium Vitae beati Wilfredi</i>	0	1396	...

whose stress-based line would not hinder the use of such a phrase in the same way. Superlative genitive phrases are by their nature alliterative, a fact that makes their incorporation into Old English poetry easier. I have found that Old English poems of all sorts contain various forms of polyptoton and *figuræ etymologiae*, just as Latin poems do, even though it means two of the main stresses of the line fall on a repetition of the same word or root.²² In Old English poetry, superlative genitive phrases form a

22 On this subject in general, see Frank, 'Some Uses of Paronomasia.' All references to Old English poetry refer to *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, ed. Krapp and Dobbie. Following are examples of polyptoton in Old English verse: *bearn after bearne* (*Genesis A*, line 1070a); *cynn æfter cýnne* (*Exodus*, line 351a); *ædele be ædelum* (*Andreas*, line 360a); *stan fram stane* (*Andreas*, line 738a); *ne geald he yfel yfele* (*Elene*, line 493a); *halig is se halga* (*Elene*, line 750a); *weall wið wealle* (*Christ I*, line 11a); *swa þæt leohte leobt* (*Christ II*, line 592a); *frod wiþ frodne* (*Maxims I*, line 19a); *flod wið flode* (*The*

half-line per se, the *a* line in particular, with double alliteration, for example, *dryhtna dryhten* (*Andreas*, line 874a).²³ Owing to these factors the construction is not only possible but actually well suited to Old English verse. These considerations may also help to explain why it is much more prevalent in Old English verse than in Latin verse. The superlative genitive construction, however, is not indigenous to Old English, as far as the extant evidence suggests. Whereas one finds examples of repetition and polyptoton in various kinds of Old English poetry, the superlative genitive construction is exclusive to poems that are learned, Latinate (based on specific Latin sources), and wholly Christian; it does not occur in secular heroic poetry such as *Beowulf*, *Deor*, *Maldon*, *Widsith*, and *Brunanburh*.²⁴ Rather, the use of this construction in Old English verse seems to be an innovation of Christian Old English poets who borrow their syntax not from the Latin of Christian poetry but directly from the Latin of the Bible.

In the corpus of Old English poetry I count fifty-five occurrences of this construction in eighteen different poems (see table 2).²⁵ The most frequently occurring form is *worulda woruld*, a literal rendering of the Latin *saeculum/-a saeculi/-orum*, which constitutes twenty-two of fifty-five occurrences, appearing in seven different poems. The majority of these occurrences (fifteen) are found in the metrical psalms of the *Paris Psalter*.²⁶ *Worulda woruld* in the *Paris Psalter* renders the psalter text's frequently

Order of the World, line 85a); *ecg wið ecge* (*Riddle 3*, line 42a); *feond his feonde* (*Riddle 50*, line 4a); *lað wið lafum* (*Beowulf*, line 440a); *wunder afeor wundre* (*Beowulf*, line 931a); *an afeor anum* (*Beowulf*, line 2461a); *be naman nemnan* (*Judith*, line 81a); *wese of dæge on dæg* (*The Paris Psalter*, line 67.19.2a); *of cynne on cynn* (*The Paris Psalter*, line 84.5.2a); *swelces and swelces* (*The Meters of Boethius*, line 28.50); *wigan wigheardne* (*Maldon*, line 75a); *wigan to wige* (*Maldon*, line 235a); *wigan on gewinne*, *wigend cruncon* (*Maldon*, line 302); *fyrð wið fyrde* (*Maxims II*, line 52a); *lað wið lape* (*Maxims II*, line 53a); *wyrce þæt þu wyrce* (*An Exhortation*, line 16a).

23 See Andy Orchard, 'Artful Alliteration in Anglo-Saxon Song and Story,' 429–63.

24 One might therefore take issue with Seamus Heaney's translation of *Beowulf*, line 78, 'heal-ærna mæst; scop him Heort naman,' as 'the hall of halls. Heorot was the name,' in *Beowulf: A New Verse Translation, Bilingual Edition*, 6–7.

25 See table 2 and the appendix to this essay; there are two occurrences in editions of *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* that are not in the manuscripts and are thus not included in table 2 and the appendix: <*drihtna*> *drihten*, *dema mid unc twih* (*Genesis A*, line 2255a); and <*dryhtna*> *dryhten*; and *gedwolan fylgdon* (*Elene*, line 371a).

26 Occurrences of *worulda woruld* in the metrical *Paris Psalter* (psalm, verse, and line number) are 71.5.3a; 78.14.4a; 83.4.3a; 91.6.6a; 101.25.4a; 102.16.2a; 103.6.3a; 103.29.2a; 105.37.2a; 110.5.4a; 110.8.2a; 118.90.1a; 131.15.2a; 134.13.3a; 148.6.2a. Other superlative genitive phrases in the *Paris Psalter* (each of which renders a Latin superlative genitive title for God) are *ealra godena god* (135.2.2a, 135.28.1a), and *drihtna drihten* (135.3.2a).

Table 2. Old English Poems containing superlative genitive phrases, sorted by frequency

Poem	Occurrences	Total Lines	Frequency
<i>A Prayer</i>	3	79	1:26
<i>A Summons to Prayer</i>	1	31	1:31
<i>The Kentish Hymn</i>	1	43	1:43
<i>The Gloria I</i>	1	57	1:57
<i>The Whale</i>	1	88	1:88
<i>The Judgment Day I</i>	1	119	1:119
<i>Christ II (Cynewulf)</i>	3	427	1:142
<i>Christ I</i>	3	439	1:146
<i>The Judgment Day II</i>	2	306	1:153
<i>Genesis B</i>	1	617	1:167
<i>The Phoenix</i>	4	677	1:169
<i>Christ and Satan</i>	3	729	1:243
<i>The Paris Psalter</i>	19	5040	1:280
<i>Elene (Cynewulf)</i>	4	1321	1:330
<i>Andreas</i>	5	1722	1:344
<i>Juliana (Cynewulf)</i>	2	731	1:365
<i>Guthlac B</i>	1	561	1:561
<i>Guthlac A</i>	1	818	1:818

used *saecula saeculorum*, or a similar repetitive phrase in the psalms' Latin text, to express eternity. Most of the other occurrences of this construction in Old English verse can be grouped according to the narrative situation in which they occur. One such situation, probably derived from the construction's prevalence in the psalms, is the use of the construction in the context of prayers.²⁷ The clearest example of this is in the short poem simply known as *A Prayer*, where it is used three times within twenty-five lines. Another situation where the construction is commonly employed is in homiletic and especially doxological contexts within poems; such usage seems related to the use of the phrase in actual homilies, noted above.²⁸

The most common usage of the construction in Old English poetry outside of the *Paris Psalter* is in descriptions of heaven and specifically in

27 Thus, *A Prayer*, lines 21a, 42a, 44a; *Andreas*, line 1151a; *Juliana*, line 594a; *A Kentish Hymn*, line 15a.

28 Thus, *Andreas*, line 1686a; *Christ and Satan*, lines 203b, 223a; *Christ II*, line 778a; *A Summons to Prayer*, line 19a; *Gloria I*, line 41a.

descriptions of the songs of angels.²⁹ Any Judeo-Christian description of a song of angels would likely be influenced by the vision of the throne of God as described by the prophet Isaiah, where the superlative genitive construction is not used, but *epizeuxis*,³⁰ the simple repetition of a word, is; this device shares the repetitious, religious, and ritualistic effect of superlative genitive constructions:

Vidi Dominum sedentem super solium excelsum et eleuatum et ea quae sub eo erant implebant templum; seraphin stabant super illud ... et clamabant alter ad alterum et dicebat: 'Sanctus sanctus sanctus Dominus exercituum, plena est omnis terra gloria eius.' (Isa. 6:1-3)³¹

[I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and elevated: and his train filled the temple. Upon it stood the seraphim ... And they cried to one another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of hosts, all the earth is full of his glory.]³²

This particular song of angels is widely known as the *Sanctus* of the Mass, where it is also explicitly defined as a song of angels³³ and where the title of God is kept partly in Hebrew (*sabaoth* for the Vulgate's *exercituum*):

29 Thus, *Andreas*, lines 874a, 978a; *Christ and Satan*, line 313a; *Christ I*, lines 136a, 405a; *Christ II*, line 580a; *Guthlac A*, line 17a; *Guthlac B*, line 1103a; *The Phoenix*, lines 628a, 649a, 658a, 662a; *Judgment Day II*, lines 198a (describing hell), 248a.

30 See, for example, Bede, *De schematibus et tropis*, ed. C.B. Kendall, 147: 'Epizeuxis est eiusdem uerbi in eodem uersu sine aliqua dilatione geminatio, ut: "Consolamini, consolamini, populus meus, dicit Dominus uester" [Is. 40:1]. Et iterum: "Eleuare, eleuare, consurge, Hierusalem" [Is. 51:17]. Et iterum: "Viuens, uiuens ipse confitebitur tibi" [Is. 38:19]. Et in psalmo: "Dies diei eructat uerbum" [Ps. 18:3]. Alibi repetitio eiusdem sermonis palilogiae optinet nomen.'

31 All quotations from the Bible are from *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem*, ed. R. Weber, 4th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994).

32 All translations of the Vulgate are from *The Holy Bible: The Douay Rheims Version* (reprint, Rockford, IL: TAN Books, 1971).

33 The most common preface in the Roman Rite reads: 'Vere dignum et iustum est, aequum et salutare nos tibi semper et ubique gratias agere, domine sancte pater omnipotens, aeternae deus, per Christum dominum nostrum. Per quem maiestatem tuam laudant angeli, adorant dominationes, tremunt potestates, caeli caelorumque uirtutes ac beata seraphin socia exultatione concelebrant, cum quibus et nostras uoces ut admitti iubeas deprecamur supplicii confessione dicentes,' Gregor Richter and Albert Schönfelder, eds., *Sacramentarium Fuldense saeculi X*, 1. The second most common preface reads: 'et ideo cum angelis et archangelis. Cum thronis et dominationibus. Cumque omni militia caelestis exercitus ymnium gloriae tuae canimus sine fine dicentes,' Nicholas Orchard, ed., *The Leofric Missal II: Text*, 106. On the preface, see *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York, 1912), s.v.

Sanctus sanctus sanctus dominus deus sabaoth. Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua. Ossana in excelsis.³⁴

[Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Sabaoth. The heavens and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.]

The speech of angels and the superlative genitive construction are also directly linked in the Apocalypse of John:

Et uenit unus de septem angelis qui habebant septem fialas et locutus est mecum dicens '... hii cum agno pugnabant et agnus uincet illos quoniam Dominus dominorum est et rex regum.' (Apocalypse 17:1, 14)

[And there came one of the seven angels, who had the seven vials, and spoke with me, saying '... These shall fight with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, because he is Lord of lords and King of kings.']

It is therefore not surprising that when Old English poets wish to express the language in songs of angels or to describe heaven, they employ the superlative genitive. The construction likely had, as it does for us, a feeling

34 The text is that of Richter and Schönfelder, eds., *Sacramentarium Fuldense*, 1; this text is cited because in the base manuscripts of the standard edition of the 'Hadriatic' Gregorian Sacramentary (Jean Dehusses, ed., *Le Sacramentaire grégorien*, vol. 1, *Le Sacramentaire*), as well as in the manuscripts (and thus the editions) of the earliest complete massbooks from Anglo-Saxon England (the Leofric Missal and the Winchcombe Sacramentary), the text of the *Sanctus* is abbreviated and never written out in full. On the ancient pedigree of the *Sanctus* in the Roman rite and its retention of the Hebrew *sabaoth*, see Joseph A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 2:128-38; see also *Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. 'sanctus.' For a recent study of the history and development of the *Sanctus* in various liturgies, see Bryan D. Spinks, *The Sanctus in the Eucharistic Prayer*. On the liturgy and massbooks of Anglo-Saxon England, see Richard W. Pfaff, 'Liturgy,' and 'Liturgical Books,' in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Michael Lapidge et al., as well as Pfaff's 'Massbooks: Sacramentaries and Missals,' in *The Liturgical Books of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Pfaff, 7-34. For the *Sanctus* in Old English contexts, see, for example, Ælfric's *Letter to Sigeward*, 'We habbað nu gesæd be ðam circlicum bocum on þære ealdan æ & eac on þære niwan: ða synd þa twa gecyðnyssa be Cristes menniscnyssa & be þære halgan þrinnyssa on soðre annysse, swa Isaias geseah on his gastlican gesihðe, hu God sylf gesæt & him sungon abutan duo seraphin, þæt sind twa engla werod: Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth, þæt ys on Englisc: Halig, halig, halig, Drihten weroda God,' S.J. Crawford, ed., *The Old English Version of the Heptateuch*, EETS 160 (1922; reprint with the text of two additional manuscripts transcribed by N.R. Ker, London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 68-9.

of things angelic, biblical, and possibly Hebraic. Thus in *Christ I*, the superlative genitive construction is added to an Old English poetic rendering of the *Sanctus*:

Halig eart þu, halig; heahengla brego,
soð sigores frea, simle þu bist halig,
dryhtna dryhten ... Þu eart weoroda god. (lines 403–5a; 407b)

[Holy are you, holy, prince of high-angels, true lord of victory, ever are you holy, lord of lords ... You are the God of hosts.]

Another use of the construction in *Christ I* further suggests the connection between this type of diction and the speech of angels, the Old Testament, and specifically the Hebrew language. The Hebraic nature of the superlative genitive is highlighted in this case by its being bracketed by the Hebrew names *Emmanuel* and *Melchisedech* (lines 132a, 138b) in the context of an explicit reference to the Hebrew language (line 133a):

Eala gæsta god, hu þu gleawlice 130
mid noman ryhte nemned wære
Emmanuhel, swa hit engel gecwæð
ærest on Ebresc! Þæt is eft gereht,
rume bi gerynum: 'Nu is rodera weard,
god sylfa mid us.' Swa þæt gomele gefyrn 135
ealra cyninga cyning ond þone clænan eac
sacerd soðlice sægdon toweard,
swa se mæra iu, Melchisedech,
gleaw in gæste godþrym onwrah
eces alwaldan. (lines 130–40a) 140

[O God of spirits, how wisely you were named with the right name, Emmanuel, as the angel said first in Hebrew. That is often interpreted broadly according to mysteries, 'Now is the guardian of the heavens, God himself with us.' Thus the old men of yore foretold the king of all kings and truly also the pure priest; so the great one of old, Melchisedech, wise in spirit, revealed the divine majesty of the eternal all-ruler.]

The distribution of the narrative use of these phrases suggests awareness among Old English poets of the biblical origin of the construction. Such awareness need not have been necessarily conscious; perhaps the

superlative genitive construction had a certain biblical, archaic feel as I believe it does in modern English. A particularly striking use of the construction can be found in Cynewulf's *Elene*, where he seems to use it as a means of distinguishing the language of the Jewish, Hebrew-speaking characters from that of the Roman, Latin-speaking characters.

Elene tells the story of the discovery of the true cross in the holy land by Helena, mother of the Roman emperor Constantine. The substance of the poem is a poetic rendering of a Latin text known variously as the *Inventio Sanctae Crucis* or the *Acta Cyriaci*.³⁵ The narrative core of the poem (lines 276–801), and the part with which I am primarily concerned, tells of Elene's verbal battles with the Jews and in particular with their spokesman Judas in her attempts to discover the location of the cross. When Elene arrives in Jerusalem, she has the Jews gathered and rebukes them for their lack of belief in Jesus Christ in a rather insulting speech with quotations from three Old Testament prophets.³⁶

35 On the source of *Elene*, see Susan Rosser, 'The Sources of Cynewulf's *Elene* (Cameron A.2.6),' and especially Gordon Whatley, 'The Figure of Constantine the Great in Cynewulf's *Elene*,' 161–202; Whatley notes, 'because Cynewulf treats the *Inventio* so freely, it will probably never be possible to determine on which manuscript of the legend he based his poem ... one can say with some confidence, however, that he was working from a text which could have differed only in minor ways from those surviving today,' 161. Texts of the *Inventio* can be found in a number of sources: Alfred Holder, ed., *Inventio sancta crucis*; B. Mombritius, ed., *Sanctuarium seu Vitae Sanctorum*, vol. 1, 376–9; Ángel Fábrega Grau, ed., *Passinario Hispánico*, vol. 2, 260–6; Stephan Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross Was Found*, 201–302. My references are to Borgehammar's 'Inventio Crucis A' text; although he provides a composite text, his critical apparatus gives variants from up to twenty Latin manuscripts. Translations of the Latin *Inventio* are also now readily available: Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross Was Found*, 154–61; E. Gordon Whatley, ed. and trans., 'Constantine the Great, the Empress Helena, and the Relics of the Holy Cross,' 77–95; Jan Willem Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*, 165–71; Michael J.B. Allen and Daniel G. Calder, trans., *Sources and Analogues of Old English Poetry*, 60–8.

36 Lines 332–95; within this speech, *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* text contains a superlative genitive phrase, *dryhtna dryhten*, (line 371), where the manuscript simply has *dryhten*, leaving the line metrically deficient (see note 25 above); supplying *dryhtna* is a common and reasonable emendation, but this possible use of a superlative genitive phrase is not considered here because it lacks manuscript authority. Other emendations are obviously possible, which do not necessarily have to alliterate. F. Holthausen, *Cynewulf's Elene (Kreuzauffindung) mit Einleitung, Glossar, Anmerkungen und der lateinischen Quelle*, following Sievers, supplies *duguda*; the collocation *duguda dryhten* does occur, even within this same poem (see *Elene*, line 81a; *Andreas*, line 698a; *Christ II*, line 782a; and *Phoenix*, line 494a). Since the collocation occurs in a quotation attributed in the text to Moses, the reading *dryhtna dryhten* would not contradict my argument which follows.

After Elene's speech the Jews are sent into council to produce the information that Elene wants, namely the location of the cross. At this council Judas is first introduced. The Jews are depicted as genuinely confused, not knowing what Elene expects from them (lines 411–16). Judas explains to his countrymen that his grandfather and father have passed on to him the full record of the life, death, and identity of Jesus Christ. It is within this speech, which Cynewulf presents to us as direct speech within the direct speech of Judas, that Cynewulf first employs in the poem the superlative genitive construction.³⁷ Judas explains that his father had told him that when men who love Christ come looking for the cross, this will signal the beginning of the end for the Jewish people:

'Ne mæg æfre ofer þæt Ebreā þeod
rædþeantende rice healdan,
duguðum wealdan, ac þara dom leofað
ond hira dryhtscipe,
in woruld weorulda willum gefylled,
ðe þone ahangnan cyning heriaþ ond lofað.' (lines 448–53)

[‘Beyond that point never will the Hebrew people, deliberating, control the kingdom, command hosts, but *their* fame shall be praised, and *their* mastery, into the age of ages *their* desires fulfilled, those who worship and praise the crucified king.’] (italics added)

This follows the Latin rather closely, although Cynewulf makes the subtle change of transferring the eternal reign (which in the Latin refers to Christ) to Christians generally:

Iam autem amplius Hebraeorum genus non regnabit, sed regnum eorum erit, qui crucifixum adorant. Ipse autem regnabit in saecula saeculorum.³⁸

[Now the race of the Hebrews will reign no longer, but rule will be theirs, who love the crucified one. He himself will reign into the ages of ages.]

Judas's father then explains in greater detail who Jesus was and how the Jews had condemned him (and later his follower Stephen) to death. In this

37 Lines 419a–535, the longest speech in the poem; cf. his prayer at lines 725–801, the second longest speech in the poem, which also contains direct speech within direct speech.

38 Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross Was Found*, 261.

section Cynewulf elaborates his source; his narrative details are from the Latin, but he chooses particular phrases that are additions to the Latin:

Pa siððan wæs
of rode ahæfen rodera wealdend,
eallra þrymma þrym, þreo niht siððan
in byrgenne bidende wæs
under þeosterlocan, ond þa þy þridan dæg
ealles leohtes leoht lifgende aras,
ðeoden engla, ond his þegnum hine,
soð sigora frea, seolfne geywde,
beorht on blæde. (lines 481b–9a)

[Then afterward the ruler of the heavens, the power of all powers, was taken from the rood, and he waited for three nights in the dark enclosure, and on the third day the light of every light arose alive, the prince of angels, and he revealed himself to his servants, the true lord of victories, bright in his glory.]

The Latin is less detailed and contains no superlative genitive phrases:

Ipse autem sepultus, post tertia die resurgens, manifestavit se suis discipulis.³⁹

[He, however, having been buried, rising after three days, revealed himself to his disciples.]

It might also be noted that Cynewulf's *ealles leohtes leoht*, with its genitive element in the singular, is an example of the less common form of the construction, which is restricted within the Latin Bible to the Old Testament.

Immediately following this, Cynewulf continues to elaborate his source with biblical language in describing the martyrdom of Stephen. The Latin *Inventio* reads:

Et tollentes eum multitudo lapidauerunt eum. Sed beatus ille, cum traderet animam, expandens manus ad caelum orabat dicens: 'Ne statuas illis ad peccatum, Domine.'⁴⁰

39 Ibid., 262.

40 Ibid.

[And bearing him away, the crowd stoned him. But that blessed man, when he surrendered his soul, raising his hands toward heaven, prayed, saying: 'Oh Lord, set this not as a sin for them.']

Stephen's cry to heaven is a quotation from the story in Acts 7:59. Cynewulf here paraphrases Stephen's words, but before doing so, he includes a different biblical quotation, which is not found in the Latin:

Pa for lufan dryhtnes

Stephanus wæs stanum worpod;
ne geald he yfel yfele, ac his ealdfeondum
þingode þrohtherd, bæd þrymcýning
þæt he him þa weaðæd to wræce ne sette,
þæt hie for æfstum unscyldigne,
synna leasne, Sawles larum
feore beræddon, swa he þurh feondscipe
to cwale monige Cristes folces
demde to deaþe. (lines 491b–500a)

[Then, for the love of the Lord, Stephen was pelted with stones; he did not repay evil with evil, but, enduring, interceded for his old enemies, asked the king of glory that he (God) not set vengeance on them for that woeful deed, that they, because of malice, deprived of life a man not guilty, free of sins, following Saul's teaching, just as he (Saul), by his enmity, condemned to slaughter and death many of Christ's people.]

Ne geald he yfel yfele renders Paul's epistle to the Romans 12:17, *nulli malum pro malo reddentes*, which is especially fitting here as Cynewulf, following his source, first introduces the character of Saul and then, elaborating on his source, describes the virtues of Paul after his conversion and name change (*Elene*, lines 500b–10). It is also noteworthy as an addition of polyptoton to his source, which would perhaps stand out aurally as a special type of discourse, in this case specifically biblical, following closely upon the three successive superlative genitive constructions.

It is important to keep in mind that this is a story told by a Hebrew to a group of Hebrew wise men about the wisdom of his father; the imagined language of discourse here must be Hebrew. The use of the superlative genitives is Cynewulf's way of showing this. Cynewulf, I believe, is doing what Fred Robinson has argued that the *Battle of Maldon* poet does with the speech of the Viking messenger, namely distinguishing it as different

from that of the other characters by the use of special language and syntax.⁴¹ Cynewulf is not simply amplifying the language of his source to make it fit into Old English verse; he is amplifying it in a specific and apt way, by putting language reminiscent of the Old Testament into the mouth of an ancient Hebrew. Such a reading is partly informed by the explicit interest that Cynewulf expresses in the language of the Jews, especially insofar as it is different. Hence, almost every time the noun *Ebreas* (the Hebrews) or the adjective *ebreisc* (Hebrew or Hebraic) is used within this poem, it is within the context of language or discourse, as the following examples illustrate:

Ongan þa leoflic wif
weras *Ebreas* wordum negan ... (lines 286b–7)

Hie þa anmode ondsweredon:
'Hwæt, we *Ebreisce* æ leornedon ...' (lines 396–7)

Pa sio cwen ongan
weras *Ebresce* wordum negan,
fricggan fyrhðwerige ymb fyrngewritu ... (lines 558b–60)

Word stunde ahof
elnes oncyðig, ond on *Ebrisc* spræc. (lines 723b–4)

[The dear woman began to address the Hebrew men with words ... They, all of one mind, answered, 'Lo, we Hebrews have learned the law' ... Then that queen began to address the Hebrew men with words, to ask those heart-weary ones about the old writings ... He forthwith took up words, not knowing of courage, and spoke in Hebrew.]

The only other occurrence of the root *ebrea-* in *Elene* is at line 448, cited above, in the first line of direct speech by Judas's father, immediately preceding the first use of a superlative genitive phrase in the poem. In that instance I would suggest there is an implied reference to speech; the father's language draws attention to itself through the superlative genitive phrase, as he draws attention to himself and his people as Hebrews. After Judas tells his countrymen the information he learned from his father, he

41 See Fred C. Robinson, 'Some Aspects of the *Maldon* Poet's Artistry,' 25–40, esp. 25–8.

becomes the spokesman of the Jews and refuses to reveal anything to Elene. He uses his skill with words (*wordes cræftig* [line 419]) to try to deceive her. Only after torture does he reveal his knowledge to her. He takes Elene to Calvary, but he does not know the exact location of the buried cross. He then begins a prayer, which comprises the second longest speech in the poem (lines 725–801).⁴² This prayer is not the prayer of a converted man; it is the prayer of a man desperately searching for something specific. He is not yet a Christian, but he is still Jewish and doubtful; his prayer, though bold and eloquent, is a specific petition, and it is presented in a Hebrew mode. The speech is introduced by the final occurrence of the root *ebrea-* in the poem, as quoted above: ‘Word stunde ahof / elnes oncyðig, ond on Ebrisc spræc’ (lines 723b–4). Cynewulf here follows the Latin source in specifying that Judas prays in Hebrew (‘leuauit uocem suam ad Dominum Hebraica lingua et dixit’).⁴³ In fact, in many of the manuscripts of the Latin source, this sentence is followed by a string of ‘pseudo-Hebrew’ beginning ‘*Ai. acraac. rabri. milas. filo. nabonac.*’⁴⁴ Following this is a ‘translation,’ beginning ‘Quod interpretatur: “Deus, Deus, qui fecisti caelum et terram,”’ and ending ‘in saecula saeculorum.’ In *Elene*, the beginning of Judas’s prayer closely follows the Latin source, which begins with praise of God as creator and moves to a description of the hosts of angels surrounding the throne of God, leading up to a conflation of the scene from Isaiah 6:1–3 cited above and the *Sanctus* of the Mass:

Para sint IIII þe on flihte a
 þa þegnunge þrymme beweotigaþ
 fore onsyne eces deman,
 singallice singaþ in wuldre
 hædrum stefnum heofoncinges lof,
 woða wlitegaste, ond þas word cweðaþ
 clænum stefnum, (þam is ceruphin nama):
 ‘Halig is se halga heahengla god,
 weoroda wealdend! Is ðæs wuldres ful
 heofun ond eorðe ond eall heahmægen,

⁴² See note 37, above.

⁴³ Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross Was Found*, 265.

⁴⁴ Borgehammar conveniently provides a synopsis of the variant versions of the Hebrew prayer (*How the Holy Cross Was Found*, 273–8); Whatley, ‘Constantine the Great,’ has noted that this prayer contains ‘some phrases of recognizably Hebrew origin,’ including, for example, *baruc. ata. adonai* and the Hebrew names *Israel, David*, and *Iesu*, 94.

tire getacnod.’ Syndon tu on þam,
 sigorcynn on swegle, þe man seraphin
 be naman hateð. (lines 743–55a)

[There are four of them, who ever in flight perform their service in glory before the sight of the eternal judge; they sing praise of the king of heaven continually in wonder with clear voices, the most beautiful of melodies, and speak these words in pure voices (they have the name cherubim): ‘Holy is the holy God of high-angels, ruler of hosts! Heaven and earth are of full of his glory and his high-might is revealed with glory.’ There are two among them, the victory-race in heaven, who are called seraphim by name.]

Although Cynewulf is following his source, the subtle changes he makes are noteworthy.⁴⁵ Cynewulf carefully rearranges the Hebrew loanwords, the names of the orders of angels, to bracket the *Sanctus*. He also expands the Latin’s simple *sanctus, sanctus, sanctus* to a paraphrase of the *Sanctus*, including *weoroda wealdend*, which renders *Dominus Deus exercituum* of Isaiah 6:3, or the macaronic *Dominus Deus Sabaoth* of the *Sanctus* of the Mass. Cynewulf again expands the biblical and specifically Hebraic feel of the language that he puts into the mouth of Judas.

In the Latin version Judas’s prayer now refers to God’s casting the rebellious angels into hell.⁴⁶ Cynewulf renders this passage⁴⁷ and then again augments it with original details and specific language:

He þinum wiðsoc
 aldordome. Þæs he in ermðum sceal,
 ealra fula ful, fah þrowian,

⁴⁵ Cf. Latin: ‘Et ipsa sunt uolatilia in aeris cursibus, in lucem immensam, ubi humana natura transpire non potest, quia tu es, qui fecisti ea ad ministerium tuum, sex animalia, quae habent senas alas; quattor quidem ex ipsis quae uolant ministrantia et incessabili uoce dicentia: “Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus.” Cherubin uocantur; duo autem ex ipsis posuisti in Paradiso custodire lignum uitae, quae uocatur Seraphin’ (Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross Was Found*, 265–6).

⁴⁶ ‘Tu autem dominaris omnium, quia tua factura sumus, qui incredibiles angelos profundo tradidisti tartaro, et ipsi sunt sub fundo abyssi a draconum foetore cruciandi, et tuo praecepto contradicere non possunt’ (Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross Was Found*, 266).

⁴⁷ ‘Þæs ðu, god dryhten, / wealdest widan fyrhð, ond þu womfulle / scyldwyrcente sceaðan of radorum / awurpe wonhydige. Þa sio werge sceolu / under heolstorhofu hreosan sceolde / in wita forwyrð, þær hie in wylme nu / dreogaþ deaðcwale in dracan fæðme, / þeostrum forþylmed’ (lines 759b–66a).

þeownd þolian. Pær he þin ne mæg
word aweorpan, is in witurum fæst,
ealre synne fruma, susle gebunden. (lines 766b–71)

[He rejected your authority. For this he, hostile, shall suffer in miseries, full of every foulness/the foulness of every foulness, endure bondage. There he cannot reject your words; he is fast in punishments, the source of all sins, bound in torment.]

Cynewulf calls Satan either ‘full of every foulness’ or the ‘foulness of every foulness.’⁴⁸ Either way, Cynewulf creates a phrase that is aurally identical to a superlative genitive construction. Significantly, he uses this phrase to refer to Satan. Cynewulf here again follows the language of the Old Testament specifically as opposed to the general Judeo-Christian tradition that had taken up use of the superlative genitive.

In the Old Testament, superlative genitives are used to express both positive notions, such as God and eternity, and superlative negatives, such as *uanitas uanitatum* (Ecclesiastes 1:1) or *maledictus Chanaan, seruus seruorum erit fratribus suis* (Genesis 3:25). In the New Testament, however, the use of the superlative genitive is restricted to positives, in titles for God (*rex regum*) and the expression of eternity (*in saecula saeculorum*). On the whole, Old English usage of the construction seems generally influenced by the New Testament; thus, in extant Old English poetry, superlative genitive phrases are used only to refer to God, heaven, or eternity, apart from Cynewulf’s use under consideration. In the extant corpus of all

48 The *Dictionary of Old English* prefers the former; see *Dictionary of Old English on CD-ROM, A–F*, s.v., *ful*, noun sense 3; this is the reading preferred by a majority of editors and translators: thus Krapp and Dobbie, eds., *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, vol. 2, 144; R.V. Gordon, *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, 249; Albert S. Cook, ed., *The Old English Elene, Phoenix, and Physiologus*, 93; Holthausen, *Cynewulf’s Elene*, 29; S.A.J. Bradley, trans., *Old English Poetry*, 184. Three editors who support the reading ‘foulness of every foulness’ are Julius Zupitza, ed., *Cynewulf’s Elene mit ein Glossar*, 28; Charles W. Kent, ed., *Elene*, 47; and P.O.E. Gradon, *Cynewulf’s Elene*, who notes, ‘ealra fula ful: an extension of such phrases as “eallra þrymma þrym.” These are probably an imitation of the biblical use of an intensive genitive,’ 55. A construction of the type ‘full of every foulness,’ with two words that are near homonyms used in a non-superlative genitive phrase, does occur elsewhere. There are a number of occurrences in the *Paris Psalter* of *goda god*, which must, for metre, mean ‘good God,’ although that does not keep a hearer or reader from thinking ‘God of gods’ (thus *Paris Psalter* 67.19.3a, 105.36.2a, 117.2.2a, 117.4.3a, 117.28.2a.); also cf. the metrical *Solomon and Saturn*, line 79a, *scyldigra scyld* (shield of sinners), referring to the Word of God.

Old English I have only discovered one negative use of the superlative genitive, and that is in Ælfric’s rendering of Genesis 3:25 cited above as *awyrgeð is Channan, 7 he byð ðeowena ðeowa his gebroðrum*. Thus, I suggest that this is another instance of Cynewulf creating a specifically Old Testament, Hebraic voice for Judas, a Jewish, Hebrew-speaking character.

Cynewulf’s source text itself invites such a reading. In both the speech concerning Judas’s father and here, the narrative context is explicitly Hebraic. The first case was a speech within a speech told by a Jewish man about his Jewish father to a group of Jewish men. In this later instance, we are told explicitly, both in the Latin source and in the Old English, that Judas offers a prayer *in Hebrew*. Both his source and *Elene* contain Hebrew loanwords in this speech (*seraphim* and *cherubim*); after the passage quoted above, Cynewulf also includes his source’s allusion to the rabbinic tradition of the story of Moses finding Joseph’s bones by means of sweet-smelling smoke.⁴⁹ Judas’s speech, in the source and in *Elene*, ends with a profession of his faith in Christ, but still in Jewish, Hebraic terms:

‘Ic gelyfe þe sel
ond þy fæstlicor ferhð staðelige,
hyht untreowndne, on þone ahangnan Crist,
þæt he sie soðlice sawla nergend,
ece ælmihtig, Israhela cining,
walde widan ferhð wuldres on heofenum,
a butan ende e cra gestealda.’ (lines 795b–801)

[‘I shall believe the better, and the more firmly establish my heart, my undoubting hope, in the crucified Christ, that he truly is the saviour of souls, eternal almighty, king of Israel, who forever controls the eternal dwellings of glory on heaven without end.’]

The narrative context of this scene is thoroughly Jewish. In addition, Cynewulf may have had a version of the *Inuentio* legend containing what alleged to be Hebrew writing. These factors suggest that we accept *ealra fula ful* as it sounds, that is, as a superlative genitive phrase, used by Cynewulf as one among other elements to create a speech that could sound Hebrew to a learned Old English audience.

49 See Whatley, ‘Constantine the Great,’ 32; Oliver Farrar Emerson, ‘The Legend of Joseph’s Bones in Old and Middle English,’ 331–4.

Cynewulf, I would suggest, contrary to an anti-Jewish reading of this poem, evinces a keen interest in the Hebrew language, together with a certain amount of sympathy for the Jewish characters.⁵⁰ This interest in Hebrew, a language only minimally accessible to Anglo-Saxons, is not unique to Cynewulf. Ælfric, another author whose anti-Judaism has recently been examined, also demonstrates interest in knowing what little he could about the Hebrew language, and he transmits this information in his homilies.⁵¹ Considerations of strains of anti-Judaism in Anglo-Saxon England need to be considered in the light of the fundamental importance of the Old Testament – the Hebrew scripture – in Anglo-Saxon England. From such a standpoint we can better understand Cynewulf's subtle use of the superlative genitive construction. While it had obviously become a fully integrated part of Latin Christian discourse, a careful reader and author like Cynewulf could see the construction's Old Testament origin and use it to enrich his already linguistically rich poetry, in particular giving a fitting voice to his Hebrew characters.⁵²

APPENDIX

Occurrences of the Superlative Genitive Construction in Old English Poetry

	<u>Line</u>
<i>Genesis B</i>	
drihtna drihten, <i>deaðbeames ofet</i>	638a
<i>Christ and Satan</i>	
ceosan us eard in wuldre mid ealra cyninga cyninge, se is Crist genemned	203b
geond ealra worulda woruld mid wuldorcyninge	223a
agan dreama dream mid drihtne gode	313a
<i>Andreas</i>	
dryhtna dryhten. Dream wæs on hyhte	874a
eallra cyninga cining, þone clænan ham	978a
dryhtan dryhtne, þæs ðe he dom gifeð	1151a
þær þe cyninga cining clamme belegde	1192a
in woruld worulda wuldorgestealda	1686a
<i>Elene (Cynewulf)</i>	
in worulda weorulda willum gefylled	452a
eallra þrymma þrym, þreo niht siððan	483a
eallra leohtes leoht lifgende aras	486a
ealra fula ful, fah þrowian	786a
<i>Christ I</i>	
ealra cyninga cyning ond þone clænan eac	136a
ealra cyninga cyning, Crist ælmihtig	215a
dryhtna dryhten. A þin dom wuniað	405a
<i>Christ II (Cynewulf)</i>	
in dreama dream, ðe he on deolum genom	580a
ealra þrymma þrym. Was se þridda blyp	726a
þurh woruld worulda, wuldor on heofnum	778a
<i>Guthlac A</i>	
ealra cyninga cyning ceastrum wealded	17a
<i>Guthlac B</i>	
ealra þrymma þrym, ðraeta mæstne	1103a
<i>The Phoenix</i>	
ealra þrymma þrym, þines wuldres	628a
in lifes lif, leomum gepungan	649a
in dreama dream, þær hi dryhtne to giefe	658a
þurh woruld worulda, ond wuldres blæd	662a

50 Readings of this poem that construe it as quite anti-Jewish can be found in Andrew P. Scheil, *The Footsteps of Israel*, 219–28, and Heide Estes, 'Lives in Translation,' 33–45, 176–82; critics who find Cynewulf's treatment of the Jews far more sympathetic include John Gardner, 'Cynewulf's *Elene*,' 65–76, esp. 70; Catharine A. Regan, 'Evangelicism as the Informing Principle of Cynewulf's *Elene*,' 27–52, esp. 32–7; Gordon Whatley, 'Cynewulf and Troy,' 203–5, esp. 204; Thomas D. Hill, 'Bread and Stone, Again,' 252–7, esp. 257.

51 See Andrew P. Scheil, 'Anti-Judaism in Ælfric's *Lives of the Saints*,' 65–86. The present article is part of a larger project of mine concerning Anglo-Saxon attitudes towards and perceptions of the Hebrew language.

52 For an excellent review of Cynewulf's particular skill in executing *Elene*, see Samantha Zacher, 'Cynewulf at the Interface of Literacy and Orality,' 346–87.

<i>Juliana (Cynewulf)</i>		
ealra cyninga cyning	<i>to cwale syllan</i>	289a
dryhtna dryhtne.	<i>Pa se dema wearð</i>	594a
<i>The Whale</i>		
dryhtna dryhtne,	<i>ond a deolflum wiðsace</i>	83a
<i>The Judgment Day I</i>		
ealra cyninga cyning.	<i>Forþon cwicra gehwylc</i>	95a
<i>The Judgment Day II</i>		
on worulda woruld	<i>wendað þær inne</i>	198a
and on worulda woruld	<i>wihta gesæligost</i>	248a
<i>A Summons to Prayer</i>		
ealra cyninga cyningc,	<i>casta uiuendo</i>	19a
<i>The Gloria I</i>		
et in secula seculorum		
And on worulda woruld	<i>wunað and rixað</i>	41a
<i>The Kentish Hymn</i>		
Du eart cyninga cyningc	<i>cwicera gehwilces</i>	15a
<i>A Prayer</i>		
Æla, leohtes leoht!	<i>Æla, lyfes wynn!</i>	21a
ealra kyninga kyning.	<i>Crist lifende</i>	42a
ealra dugeða duguð,	<i>drihten hælend</i>	44a
<i>The Paris Psalter</i>		
þurh ealra worulda woruld	<i>wunað him ece</i>	71.5.3a
and þe on worulda woruld	<i>wordum heriað</i>	78.14.4a
and þe on worulda woruld,	<i>wealdend, heriað</i>	83.4.3a
on worulda woruld	<i>and to widan feore</i>	91.6.6a
on worulda woruld	<i>well gerehtest</i>	101.25.4a
þurh ealra worulda woruld	<i>wislic standeð</i>	102.16.2a
on worulda woruld	<i>weorðeð ahlded</i>	103.6.3a
ond on worulda woruld	<i>wnie syððan</i>	103.29.2a
on worulda woruld,	<i>wealdend drihten</i>	105.37.2a
on ealra weorulda weoruld	<i>wurdan soðfæste</i>	110.5.4a
on worulda woruld	<i>wynnum standan</i>	110.8.2a
And on worulda woruld	<i>wunað ece forð</i>	118.90.1a
And þu þinra bearna	<i>bearn sceawige</i>	127.7.1
on worulda woruld	<i>wunian þence</i>	131.15.2a
on ealra worulda woruld	<i>wynnum standeð</i>	134.13.3a
ealra godena god,	<i>forðon ic hine godne wat</i>	135.2.2a
drihtna drihten	<i>dædum spedigast</i>	135.3.2a
And ge ealra godena god	<i>geara andettað</i>	135.28.1a
and on worulda woruld	<i>wolde healdan</i>	148.6.2a

The City as Speaker of the Old Testament in *Andreas*

ROBIN WAUGH

In a volume that depicts the books of the Old Testament in the Anglo-Saxon age as works subject to and deeply involved in radically transformative processes such as translating, glossing, versifying, and genre reclassifying, it should not be surprising to encounter an argument that deals with a particular Anglo-Saxon *representation* of part of the Old Testament – in this case, a city. In fact, one may readily interpret many of the cities described in Old English poetry as ‘textual’ cities. In *Elene*, for instance, Rome and Jerusalem do not work as typical settings; instead, they involve themselves intimately in the poem’s process of establishing God’s authority over speech, scriptures, laws, and judgments. No wonder, then, that researchers such as Andrew Scheil and Nicholas Howe have recently pursued projects that further detail the remarkably active roles of cities in Anglo-Saxon literature by examining the textual traditions of cities such as Babylon and Rome,¹ while the Old English *Andreas* would seem to provide particularly fruitful ground for this kind of examination. In this poem, cities participate in the action so much that one might even designate them as characters. For instance, a part of the ancient Jewish temple comes alive and speaks, upon God’s command that it do so:

ac of wealle ahleop,
frod fyrngeweorc, þæt he on foldan stod,

1 See Andrew Scheil, ‘Babylon and Anglo-Saxon England,’ 37–58, and Nicholas Howe, ‘Rome: Capital of Anglo-Saxon England,’ 147–72. For Old English poems other than *Andreas*, I use George Philip Krapp and Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie, eds., *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*. This article is based in part on papers that I read at the 2002 MLA Annual Convention and the 2002 Conference of the Association of Canadian College and University Teachers of English.