FROM *WULDRES HYRDE* TO *FOLCES HYRDE*: THE MERITS OF A METAPHORICAL TRANSLATION OF *HIRD*- SUBSTANTIVES IN *BEOWULF*

by

Nicole M. Guertin

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Thesis Committee:

Dr. Ted Sherman, Chair

Dr. Rhonda McDaniel

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ABSTRACT

The Old English substantive *hird-* appears in *Beowulf* 17 times, 16 times in the form of a noun-plus-genitive-noun phrase and once as a compound word. It is used to describe God, conscience, four kings, four monsters, and two men. Though scholars agree that the primary signification of *hird-* is “a keeper of a herd or flock of domestic animals; a herdsman” (*OED*), none of the characters to which the word is applied is an animal herdsman. Further, each one is possessed of power and authority far in excess of that which could derive from a reference to its literal counterpart alone. In their translations of the word in *Beowulf*, particularly since the publication of Klaeber’s edition in 1922, translators have tended to favor transferred senses of the word (“guardian” or “keeper”) over metaphorical ones (“herdsman” or “shepherd”). Using the results of fragmentary searches of all five spellings of the substantive (*hird-*, *hierd-*, *hiord-*, *heord-*, and *hyrd-*) in the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus*, I demonstrate that the use of the word in *Beowulf* is situated within a larger context of dominantly religious figurative use in the corpus and could be evidence of a biblical allusion that spans both the Old and New Testaments. Considering especially the references which occur in texts an Anglo-Saxon lay audience could have encountered, such as homilies, saints’s lives, and religious poetry, I encourage translators to consider the historical and cultural merits of the metaphorical translation of this word.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS: SHORT TITLES OF OLD ENGLISH TEXTS CONTAINING *HIRD*- SUBSTANTIVES[1] DISCUSSED IN THIS STUDY[2]

ÆCHom I, 11[3] B1.1.12[4]

First Sunday in Lent: Clemoes, 1997 266-74; Clemoes, P. A. M. *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The First Series, Text,* EETS s.s. 17 (Oxford).

ÆCHom I, 17 B1.1.19

Second Sunday after Easter: Clemoes, 1997 313-6; Clemoes, P. A. M. *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The First Series, Text,* EETS s.s. 17 (Oxford).

ÆCHom I, 17 (App) B1.1.19.4

Second Sunday after Easter: Clemoes, 1997 535-42; Clemoes, P. A. M. *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The First Series, Text,* EETS s.s. 17 (Oxford).

ÆCHom II, 13 B1.2.15

Fifth Sunday in Lent: Godden, 1979 127-36; Godden, M. *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The Second Series, Text*, EETS s.s. 5 (London).

ÆCHom II, 14.1 B1.2.16

Palm Sunday: Godden, 1979 137-49; Godden, M. *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The Second Series, Text,* EETS s.s. 5 (London).

[1] Nouns or noun phrases indicating an animal herdsman or one who acts figuratively in such a manner
[2] Texts are cited according to the format used in their *Dictionary of Old English* entries (hereafter *DOE*).
[3] Short title assigned by the *DOE*
[4] Cameron number (assigned by Angus Cameron in his catalog of all Old English texts to be included in the *DOE*)

And A2.1

Andreas: Krapp, 1932a 3-51; Krapp, G. P. *The Vercelli Book*, ASPR 2 (New York).

AntGl 4 (Kindschi) D1.4

Latin-Old English Glossaries: Kindschi, 1955 111-89; Kindschi, L. 'The Latin-Old English Glossaries in Plantin-Moretus MS. 32 and British Museum MS. Additional 32246' (Stanford diss.).

Az A3.3

Azarias: Krapp and Dobbie, 1936 88-94; Krapp, G. P. and Dobbie, E. V. K. *The Exeter Book*, ASPR 3 (New York).

Beo A4.1

Beowulf: Dobbie, 1953 3-98; Dobbie, E. V. K. *Beowulf and Judith*, ASPR 4 (New York).

Bo B9.3.2

Boethius, The Consolation of Philosophy: Sedgefield, 1899 7-149; Sedgefield, W. J. *King Alfred's Old English Version of Boethius' De consolatione philosophiae* (Oxford) [repr. Darmstadt 1968].

ChristA,B,C A3.1

Christ: Krapp and Dobbie, 1936 3-49; Krapp, G. P. and Dobbie, E. V. K. *The Exeter Book*, ASPR 3 (New York).

ClGl 2 (Quinn) D8.2

Latin-Old English Glossaries: Quinn, 1956 15-69; Quinn, J. J. 'The Minor Latin-Old English Glossaries in MS. Cotton Cleopatra A.III' (Stanford diss.); with corrections by Voss, 1989 129-30; Voss, Manfred. 'Quinns Edition der kleineren Cleopatraglossare: Corrigenda und Addenda,' *Arbeiten aus Anglistik und Amerikanistik* 14: 127-39.

CP B9.1.3

Gregory the Great, Pastoral Care: Sweet, 1871 24-467; Sweet, H. *King Alfred's West-Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care*, 2 vols., EETS 45, 50 (London) [repr. 1958].

Dan A1.3

Daniel: Krapp, 1931 111-32; Krapp, G. P. *The Junius Manuscript*, ASPR 1 (New York).

DurRitGl 1 (Thomp-Lind) C21.1

Liturgical Texts, Durham Ritual: Thompson and Lindelöf, 1927 1-125; Thompson, A. H. and Lindelöf, U. *Rituale ecclesiae Dunelmensis*, Surtees Society 140 (Durham).

El A2.6

Elene: Krapp 1932a, 66-102; Krapp, G. P. *The Vercelli Book*, ASPR 2 (New York).

Ex A1.2

Exodus: Krapp, 1931, 90-107; Krapp, G. P. *The Junius Manuscript*, ASPR 1 (New York).

Finn A7

The Battle of Finnsburh: Dobbie, 1942 3-4; Dobbie, E. V. K. *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, ASPR 6 (New York).

Gen B8.1.4.1

Genesis (London, British Library, MS. Cotton Claudius B.IV): Crawford, 1922 81-211; Crawford, S. J. *The Old English Version of the Heptateuch*, EETS 160 (London); repr. with additions by N. R. Ker 1969.

GenA,B A1.1

Genesis: Krapp, 1931 1-87; Krapp, G. P. *The Junius Manuscript*, ASPR 1 (New York).

GuthA,B A3.2

Guthlac: Krapp and Dobbie, 1936 49-88; Krapp, G. P. and Dobbie, E. V. K. *The Exeter Book*, ASPR 3 (New York).

HomM 14.2 (Healey) B3.5.14.2

Sawl and ðus cweð, gehyrsta, hearda lichoma?: Healey, 1973 324-40; Healey, A. diPaolo. 'The Vision of St. Paul' (Toronto diss.).

HomS 14 (BlHom 4) B3.2.14

Third Sunday in Lent: Morris, 1874-80 39-53 and 195; Morris, R. *The Blickling Homilies*, 3 vols., EETS 58, 63, 73 (London) [repr. in 1 vol. 1967].

HomS 19 (Schaefer) B3.2.19

Palm Sunday: Dictionary of Old English transcript, edited from Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Bodley 340.

HomS 22 (CenDom 1) B3.2.22

In Cena Domini: Assmann, 1889 151-63; Assmann, B. *Angelsächsische Homilien und Heiligenleben*, Bib. ags. Prosa 3 (Kassel); repr. with intro. by P. Clemoes (Darmstadt 1964).

HomU 9 (ScraggVerc 4) B3.4.9

Scragg 1992, no. 4: Scragg, 1992 90-104; Scragg, Donald. *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*, EETS 300 (Oxford).

HomU 42 (Nap 52) B3.4.42

Napier 1883, no. 52: 'To mæssepreostum': Napier, 1883 275-6; Napier, A. S. *Wulfstan*, Sammlung englischer Denkmäler 4 (Berlin); repr. with appendix by K. Ostheeren, 1967.

HomU 59 (Nap 37) B3.4.59

Napier 1883, 178: Napier, 1883 178.19-79; Napier, A. S. *Wulfstan*, Sammlung englischer Denkmäler 4 (Berlin); repr. with appendix by K. Ostheeren, 1967.

JDay I A3.24

The Judgment Day I: Krapp and Dobbie, 1936 212-5; Krapp, G. P. and Dobbie, E. V. K. *The Exeter Book*, ASPR 3 (New York).

Jud A4.2

Judith: Dobbie, 1953 99-109; Dobbie, E. V. K. *Beowulf and Judith*, ASPR 4 (New York).

Jul A3.5

Juliana: Krapp and Dobbie, 1936 113-33; Krapp, G. P. and Dobbie, E. V. K. *The Exeter Book*, ASPR 3 (New York).

KtPs A26

Psalm 50: Dobbie, 1942 88-94; Dobbie, E. V. K. *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, ASPR 6 (New York).

LS 10.1 (Guth) B3.3.10.1

Saint Guthlac: Gonser, 1909 100-73; Gonser, P. *Das angelsächsische Prosa-Leben des heiligen Guthlac*, Anglistische Forschungen 27 (Heidelberg).

LS 29 (Nicholas) B3.3.29

Saint Nicholas: Treharne, 1997 83-100; Treharne, E. M. *The Old English Life of St. Nicholas with the Old English Life of St. Giles,* Leeds Text and Monographs New Series 15 (Leeds).

LS 32 (Peter & Paul) B3.3.32

Peter and Paul: Morris, 1874-80 171-93; Morris, R. *The Blickling Homilies*, 3 vols., EETS 58, 63, 73 (London) [repr. in 1 vol. 1967].

Mart 5 (Kotzor) B19.5

London, British Library, MS. Cotton Julius A.X: Kotzor, 1981 II, 1-266; Kotzor, G. *Das altenglische Martyrologium*, Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften 88/1 (Munich).

Met A6

The Meters of Boethius: Krapp, 1932b 153-203; Krapp, G. P. *The Paris Psalter and the Meters of Boethius*, ASPR 5 (New York).

Res A3.25

Resignation: Krapp and Dobbie, 1936 215-18; Krapp, G. P. and Dobbie, E. V. K. *The Exeter Book*, ASPR 3 (New York).

Rid 91 A3.34.31

Riddles 91: Krapp and Dobbie, 1936 240-41; Krapp, G. P. and Dobbie, E. V. K. *The Exeter Book*, ASPR 3 (New York).

Seasons A31

The Seasons for Fasting: Dobbie, 1942 98-104; Dobbie, E. V. K. *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, ASPR 6 (New York).

WHom 16b B2.3.4

Ezekiel on Negligent Priests: Bethurum, 1957 240-41; Bethurum, Dorothy. *The Homilies of Wulfstan* (Oxford).

WPol 2.1.2 (Jost) B13.2.1.2

'Institutes of Polity' (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS. 201): Jost, 1959 40-164;

Jost, K. *Die 'Institutes of Polity, Civil and Ecclesiastical*,' Swiss Studies in English 47 (Bern).

CHAPTER I: THE PROBLEM OF TRANSLATION

In his article, "Rewriting *Beowulf*: The Task of Translation," John D. Niles cautions that "readers should be wary of accepting it [a translation] as a record of 'what the text says,' for the text says many things, some of them enigmatically" (859). Further, he stresses that "no language remains stable over time, for (as Tolkien has remarked at some length) shifts in language accord with the changing social matrix in which it is embedded" (863). In the Introduction to his 2000 translation of *Beowulf*, R. M. Liuzza also develops this notion of how changes in time and language affect translation, asserting that "our primary responses to the poem occur only within a framework of expectation given to us by the literary world in which we live and move" (46). "Each translator," he asserts, "tries to satisfy the literary expectations of his or her own time" (46). The goals both to understand what the poem said and meant in its own time and to appreciate it in one's current time can, therefore, seem out of reach.

In *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (hereafter BT), their 1898 "[catalog] of English words preserved in works written before 1100," Joseph Bosworth and T. Northcote Toller include in the Preface a few words of their own on the challenges of glossing Old English:

> [T]hroughout there is the difficulty of realizing the condition of those who used the language and thus of appreciating the significance of the language they used. It is hoped, however, that the numerous citations given under many words, by shewing the actual use of those words, may help to the appreciation of their significance, and so to supplement the

> often necessarily imperfect explanations afforded by the Modern English words that are used as the nearest equivalents to the old forms." (ii)

This study concerns itself with one such word and seeks to illustrate how its usage is connected to cultural factors, the knowledge of which is essential for a more complete appreciation of the way diction cooperates with theme in *Beowulf*. The use of the substantive *hird-* in in the poem is greatly influenced by its "social matrix." Many translators, however, elect to render it simplistically, effectively preventing their audiences from perceiving the rich associations and allusions bound up in the Anglo-Saxon poet's use of the word.

This study begins with an explication of the evidence for the word's primary signification to be understood as indicating one who is an animal herdsman or keeper of animals. It continues with a survey of the citations included in BT to sketch a rough picture of the Old English use of *hird-*. Next, it considers 41 translations to illustrate patterns and a shift in the words used to translate *hird-*. Then, using the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus* to draw on a more exhaustive list of references than those sampled in BT, it further reveals the cultural richness *hird-* brings to the telling of the story of Beowulf. Finally, it argues for the use of the denotations "herd" and "shepherd" as essential metaphors in translations which seek to facilitate their contemporary readers' awareness and appreciation of the world of the poem's earliest audiences.

The Primary Definition of *Hird-*

While it may be impossible to know for certain whether the modern English cognate "herd" is the primary meaning of the forms of *hird-* as they are used in the Old English corpus, several Anglo-Saxon scholars, at least, appear to believe that it is.

A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles was originally a ten-volume collection compiled by Andrew Murray and published between 1888 and 1928. Today, it is more commonly known as the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*). The introduction to the second edition of *The Compact OED* explains that, with the exception of the incorporation of the four-volume *Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary*, its current entries are essentially the same as those in Murray's original volumes (ix).[5] The *OED* online includes two entries for the noun "herd." The first refers to the body of animals and the second, to the person in charge of them, noting which spellings of the *hird-* forms indicate which definitions listed under each entry. The first definition under the entry referring to the person reads, "a keeper of a herd or flock of domestic animals; a herdsman." The current *OED* entry for "herd" is essentially the same as that in Murray's first edition with these minor differences: Murray's use of "Teutonic" has been updated to "Germanic" in the Etymology, a few additional quotations have been included illustrating the use of the word, and some dates of other quotations have been corrected (Murray 234). Murray notes that while it usually included a prefix designating the specific animal, the simple word "herd" was still being used in Scotland and northern England at the time of the volume's publication (1898) to refer specifically to a shepherd (234). Murray lists "a spiritual shepherd; a pastor" as his second definition, designating this use as both figurative and obsolete. Thirdly, he lists "a keeper or guardian," labeling it "*transf.*" which indicates "a transferred sense" and indicating that it is obsolete, as well.

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[5] The *Compact OED* presents on each of its pages nine pages of the full-sized 2nd edition; the corresponding page number from the introduction in the full-sized edition is xi. Except where otherwise noted, for the citations of words from the *OED*, I will use the most recent revision, the 3rd edition online text.

The term “transferred sense” is a lexicographic designation for a word which is used in a figurative way that has derived from its primary signification. In this case, the use of the word “herd” to designate a person who is not literally a herder of animals but merely a “keeper” or “guardian” of someone or something illustrates a derivation of meaning from the associations one would have with the primary signification of a literal herdsman.

Additionally, the *OED* provides extensive etymological information about the word, explaining that the Old English word is the equivalent of the Old Saxon *hirdi* and *herdi*, the Middle Dutch *hirde* and *herde*, the Middle Low German *herde*, the Old High German *hirti*, the Middle High German and modern German *hirte*, the Old Norse *hirðir*, the Swedish *herde*, the Danish *hyrde*, and the Gothic *hairdeis*, all of which are descended from the Old Germanic *herdjoz, < herdâ.

Earlier, in *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, BT listed six definitions of *hirde* in this order: “A herd, shepherd, pastor, guardian, guard, keeper,” including “pastor” as the middle term of their list, similar to Murray’s (and the *OED*’s) later placement. In support of its definition, BT’s entry also offers cognates from Gothic, Old Saxon, Icelandic, Old High German, and Modern German. In his *Altenglisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Ferdinand Holthausen explains that the modern German equivalents of the Old English *hird-* are *Hirt* [herdsman] and *Wächter* [watchman] listing the same cognates as Bosworth-Toller and recommending and additional comparison to the Lithuanian *kẽrdžiu-s*, meaning “herdsmen” or “herders” (159).

Finally, in their glossary entry for *hyrde*[6] in *Klaeber's* Beowulf, 4th edition, R. D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork, and John D. Niles include the modern English "herd" in what they call "small capitals" to indicate their belief that "herd" is a "direct modern [reflex]" of the Anglo-Saxon word (402, 343). The suggested translations they provide immediately following this note for the instances of the word in *Beowulf* and *The Fight at Finnsburg*, however, are only two: "guardian" and "keeper" (402). This is a striking difference from the lists in the other dictionaries which, at minimum, list these terms as secondary to "herd" and/or "shepherd." Thus, Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, following the lead of Klaeber himself, whose original 1922 glossary entry is virtually identical to that in the 4th edition of the text (337), assert that there are no literal animal herdsmen referenced by the *hird*- substantives in either *Beowulf* or *The Fight at Finnsburg*. Further, they limit the figurative interpretation of the word to transferred senses, a choice which, I believe, has has had significant impact on subsequent translations of the *hird*- substantives in *Beowulf* as reflected in the survey of translations in chapter II.

The range of definitions illustrated by these dictionaries summarizes the use of the word in the Old English corpus: While *hird*- is a word generally recognized by scholars to refer primarily[7] to an animal herdsman, its usage in the extant corpus is not always so specific. It often shows up in situations in which the referent is not an animal herdsman but a person or force which is providing to another one or more key aspects of the role of a herdsman: protection, guidance, and/or security, for example, aspects which correspond with the dictionaries' suggestions of "guardian" or "keeper." Further, the glossary in

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[6] *Beowulf* demonstrates only the *hyrd*- spelling of the substantive.

[7] I use "primarily" here in its sense of occurring first in order or significance, not as an indication that there are more literal than generalized or figurative instances of *hird*- in the Old English corpus.

Klaeber's Beowulf directs readers to what appears to be the exclusively non-literal, but also not metaphorical, usage of the *hird-* substantive in *Beowulf*.

Bosworth-Toller's Survey of *Hird-* Use

BT lists *hirde* as the primary spelling of the word that appears in *Beowulf* as *hyrde*, noting three further spellings: *hierde*, *heorde*, *hiorde* (i, 537), for a total of five. Its entry which reads "A herd, shepherd, pastor, guardian, guard, keeper," is followed by 13 excerpts from Anglo-Saxon writings that demonstrate these uses.[8] For most of the examples, BT provides its own translations to demonstrate the definitions with which it begins the entry; it illustrates the use of the word to indicate "shepherd," "guardian," and "keeper" in this way. While it does not provide modern English translations of the two examples referring to a literal animal herdsman, it does give the earlier Latin versions of those passages. It provides nothing but the Anglo-Saxon word and citations for the spellings *heorde* and *hiorde*. Though it lists "pastor" in the definition, it does not translate any specific instances of any spellings of *hird-* by using the word "pastor."

BT provides the most examples for the translation "guard" or "guardian." Three come from *The Blickling Homilies*. In "The Dedication of St. Michael's Church" [LS 25 (MichaelMor)],[9] the Archangel Michael says, *Ic eom ðære* ***stowe*** *on sundran scyppend &* ***hyrde***[10] (Morris 210) which BT translates as "I am the guardian of the place" (537). In "The Story of Peter and Paul" [LS 32 (Peter & Paul)], when Peter is trying to convince

[8] When I began this study, only the main entry was available and that in print. Now, the dictionary has been digitized and both the main entry which contains the examples I list here and a supplement which includes many more references are available online. I discuss many of the supplemental references in later chapters based on search results from the *DOE*, but this section is restricted to the interpretation of the word historically using what was available in BT at that time.
[9] Following each text discussed, I provide the *DOE* short title in brackets. See the alphabetical list of short titles in the front matter for more detailed source information.
[10] BT's entry reads *Ic eom ðære* ***stowe hyrde***, omitting several words from the passage (537).

Nero that Simon the Sorcerer is not the son of God, he instructs the emperor to read a letter written by Pilate to Claudius in which Pilate describes the death of Jesus, the true son of God, and the protective measures the Jews took after his burial, saying *hie þa hine on rode ahengan; & þa he bebyrged wæs, settan him* ***hyrdas*** *to*[11] (Morris 177),[12] or in the words of BT, "they set guards over him" (537).The third Blickling example, which is very similar to a poetic instance in *The Vercelli Codex* [And], refers to a passage in "The Legend of St. Andrew" [LS 1.1 (AndrewBright)].[13] Here, Andrew is following Jesus' instructions to free Matthew from prison. When Andrew reaches the cell door, Richard Morris's edition of the Blickling text reads *hie þær gemetton seofon* ***hyrdas*** *standan*, which Morris translates, "there found they seven guards standing" (237-38). John M. Kemble's edition of the Vercelli text reads *fore hlindura /* ***hyrdas*** *standan / seofone ætsomne*, which he translates, "before the doors / watchmen standing, / seven together" (58). In both versions, the guards are struck dead; in Blickling, this is a result of the prayer of Andrew, and in Vercelli, this happens, apparently, by the hand of Andrew, "a hero dropping blood," who then offers a prayer of thanks (58). The fifth example BT offers of the use of *hirde* as "guardian" is drawn from *King Alfred's Anglo-Saxon Version of the Metres of Boethius* [Met].[14] In this passage, Boethius is describing Ulysses, of Greek fame, and Alfred calls him *rices hirde* (Fox 112), which BT translates "the

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[11] BT's entry reads, *hie settan him* ***hyrdas*** *to*, omitting several words from the passage (537).

[12] This portion of the entry is misleading. BT lists the phrase *hie settan him* ***hyrdas*** *to* followed by three citations – two from Robert Morris's translation of *The Blickling Homilies* and one from Kemble's translation of *The Vercelli Codex*; however, only the first citation ("The Story of Peter and Paul") matches the example they list. The remaining two refer to versions of "The Legend of St. Andrew," one in Blickling and one in Vercelli. While all three examples clearly relate to someone being guarded by other men, they are not identically worded as BT's entry would suggest.

[13] The *DOE* provides this reference from Cassidy and Ringler's *Bright's Old English Grammar and Reader*.

[14] The *DOE* provides this reference from Krapp's edition.

guardian of a kingdom, a prince, king" (537). Their final example comes from Benjamin Thorpe's edition of *The Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, volume I. The homilist is recounting the second temptation of Christ in "The First Sunday in Lent" [ÆCHom I, 11][15] when Satan charges Jesus to leap from a height because the angels will not allow him to be hurt. Ælfric comments that God would not only protect Christ in this way (should he jump) but is so benevolent towards all men that *He hæfð geset his englas us to* ***hyrdum***[16] (Thorpe 170-71), which BT translates, "he hath appointed his angels as our guardians" (537).

For the translation "keeper," BT provides three examples of *hird-* in use. The first is found in *King Alfred's Anglo-Saxon Version of the Metres of Boethius* [Met],[17] in the context of an anecdote about a lion which, though tame and fond of the human who cares for her, is certain to become ferocious again at the mere taste of blood and bite *hire agenes* ***huses hirde*** (Fox 55-56), or "the keeper of her own house," as BT translates the phrase (537). Two other examples come from *Cædmon's Metrical Paraphrase of Parts of the Holy Scripture*. Both are found in *Genesis A* [GenA,B][18] The first instance of the *hyrde* spelling it references occurs after Cain's murder of Abel, when God inquires of Cain where his brother is, and Cain replies, *ne ic* ***hyrde*** *wæs broðer mines* (Thorpe 62), or "I was not my brother's keeper," as BT renders it (537). The second example occurs when God informs Abraham that he will have a son, Isaac, and says that Abraham's obedience to the terms of the covenant God is establishing with him will insure that *Ic*

[15] The *DOE* provides this reference from Clemoes's edition.
[16] The BT entry uses the spelling *hæfþ*.
[17] The *DOE* provides this reference from Krapp's edition.
[18] Ibid.

ðæs ***folces*** *beo* ***hyrde*** *and healdend* (Thorpe 139), or "I will be the people's keeper and preserver" (BT 537). BT translates the word as "keeper" twice for men and twice for God.

BT goes on to supply two examples for which it chooses the translation "shepherd," one from *The Blickling Homilies* and one from *The Institutes of Polity*. Both of these refer to figurative shepherds rather than actual animal herdsmen: In the homily, "The Story of Peter and Paul" [LS 32 (Peter & Paul)], Jesus is called *Crist ðu goda* ***hyrde*** (Morris 190-91), "Christ thou good shepherd" (BT 537). From *The Institutes of Polity* [WPol 2.1.2 (Jost)[19]], BT references section two in which Wulfstan states that a king should be *rihtwis* ***hyrde*** *ofer christene heorde* (Thorpe, *Ancient Laws* 304) , or a "righteous shepherd over a Christian flock" as they translate it (537). BT also provides two examples that refer to literal animal herdsmen, both from Anglo-Saxon translations of Latin texts. In the example from King Alfred's translation of Gregory's *Pastoral Care* [CP], Gregory is admonishing rulers to perceive and approach the righteous as their equals and evil-doers as beneath them in much the way that an animal herdsman would perceive himself to be above his flock and would guide and discipline them in their ignorance, for their good. He reminds his audience that *ure ealdan fædras*[20] *wæron* ***ceapes hierdas*** (Sweet 108)[21] [our aged fathers were herders of sheep].[22] BT provides no translation but includes the Latin phrase *antique patres nostril pastores* (537). In the

[19] The *DOE* provides this reference from Jost's edition.
[20] BT uses the spelling *fæderas*.
[21] BT cites this as *Past.*17.2
[22] Unless otherwise noted, all bracketed translations are my own.

example BT provides from the prose Genesis [Gen],[23] Jacob has just arrived in Egypt and is being greeted by Joseph who instructs him to tell Pharoah that he and his sons are *hyrdas*, or “shepherds” who have followed the ways of their fathers and tended animals from their childhood (Gen. 46.32).[24] BT again includes the Latin wording *pastores ovium* but no translation of its own.

BT references Thomas Wright’s *A Volume of Vocabularies* [ClGl 2 (Quinn)][25] to illustrate the form *hierde* as a translation of the Latin *arimentarius*,[26] or “herdsman” (Wright 287). Three dictionaries, including Æelfric’s glosses from the Junius 71 MS, William Somner’s 1659 *Dictionarium Saxonico-Latino-Anglicum*, and Wright’s *Vocabularies* [AntGl 4 (Kindschi)][27] also illustrate the use of *cilda hyrde* as an Old English translation for the Latin *pædagogus* – “teacher” or “school master” (Somner;[28] Wright 46[29]).

To demonstrate the use of the *heorde* spelling, BT references two versions of *The Life of St. Guthlac*: Benjamin Thorpe’s translation of the poetic Life from *Codex Exoniensis* [GuthA,B][30] and Charles Goodwin’s translation of a prose version from the Cotton Vespasian MS [LS 10.1 (Guth)].[31] They do not, however, provide their own

[23] BT does not specify an edition in its “Explanation of References” for this entry labeled only “Gen. 46,32” (vi). The *DOE* provides this reference from Crawford’s edition of *The Old English Heptateuch*.
[24] Unless otherwise noted, all references to the Bible come from the Douay-Rheims 1899 American Edition (DRA).
[25] The *DOE* provides this reference from Quinn’s dissertation “The Minor Latin-Old English Glossaries in MS. Cotton Cleopatra A.III.”
[26] Or *armentarius*, in modern spelling.
[27] The *DOE* provides this reference from Kindschi’s dissertation “The Latin-Old English Glossaries in Plantin-Moretus MS. 32 and British Museum MS. Additional 32246.”
[28] Somner records the word as *cyldra-hyrde.*
[29] Wright shows the word as *cilda-hyrde*.
[30] The *DOE* provides this reference from Krapp and Dobbie’s edition.
[31] The *DOE* provides this reference from Gonser’s *Das angelsächsische Prosa-Leben des heiligen Guthlac*.

translations for the examples of this word. In the poetic version, Guthlac has been carried to a protected and beautiful place of which, Thorpe says, "The green plain stood / in God's safeguard; / the guardian had / who from heaven came / the fiends expel'd" (146-7), translating *heorde* as "guardian," apparently in reference to an angel.[32]

In its choices of when to use which modern word, BT distinguishes between a reference to a pagan king (Ulysses) in the translation of a work by a sixth century philosopher and a reference by a well-known 10th-11th century homilist speaking of the moral and spiritual duties of kings. The former king it chooses to call "guardian," and the latter kings, "shepherd." Its entry concludes with a list of prefixes found in the corpus to form compounds with forms of *hird-*. The one notable prefix listed is "grund-" to yield the word *grundhyrde*, a unique compound occurring only once, in *Beowulf*. BT does not, however, indicate the source of this example or cite any examples from *Beowulf* to illustrate *hird-* usage. This is striking as *Beowulf* not only has the largest concentration of the phrase form of the *hird-* substantive in the Old English corpus but also applies the word to the widest variety of characters, both admirable and villainous.

Hird-* in *Beowulf

The substantive *hird-* appears in *Beowulf* 17 times, and in all but one instance, it is one term of a two-part phrase. Once, it appears as a portion of the compound word

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[32] BT provides only the number 719 in their citation for the prose life but state in the "Explanation of References" that the Goodwin prose *Guthlac* examples are cited by chapter, page, and line (vi). S.A.J. Bradley translates the reference on page 267 in his *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*. Additionally, they provide an example of the use of the spelling *hiorde* from the edition of the metrical version of Psalms 51-150 in Grein's *Bibliothek der Angelsächsischen Poesie*, Göttingen, 1859, but I have been unable to locate this edition or its equivalent example in another edition of the metrical Psalms following BT's citation which reads "Ps. Grn. ii. 279, 101" as they provide no explanation of the numbering system they use for this source.

grundhyrde (line 2136), where it refers to Grendel's mother.[33] The other 16 instances show it as part of what Fred Robinson calls a "noun-plus-genitival-noun collocation" (17). These 16 nominal phrases consist of 11 different combinations: *folces hyrde* (ll. 610, 1832, 1849, 2644, and 2981), *fyrena hyrde* (l. 750), *hordes hyrde* (l. 887), *wuldres hyrde* (l. 931), *huses hyrdas* (l. 1666), *sawele hyrde* (l. 1742), *rices hyrde* (ll. 2027 and 3080), *hringa hyrde* (l. 2245), *beorges hyrde* (l. 2304), *cumbles hyrde* (l. 2505), and *frætwa hyrde* (l. 3133). Of the 17, seven refer to kings: *Folces hyrde* is used twice for Hygelac and once each for Hroðgar, Ongenþeow, and Beowulf; *rices hyrde* is used once each for Hroðgar and Beowulf. Five of the nominal phrases refer to monsters: *fyrena hyrde* to Grendel (l. 750), *huses hyrdas*[34] to Grendel and his mother (l. 1666), *hordes hyrde* to Sigemund's dragon (l. 887), and both *beorges hyrde* and *frætwa hyrde* to Beowulf's dragon (ll. 2304 and 3133, respectively). Two refer to men: *cumbles hyrde* to Dæghrefne (l. 2505) and *hringa hyrde* to the man commonly known as "the last survivor" (l. 2245), he who hides the treasure that comes to be guarded by Beowulf's dragon. One substantive refers to God, *wuldres hyrde* (l. 931), and one to conscience: *sawele hyrde* (l. 1742).[35]

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[33] Unless otherwise noted, all citations from *Beowulf* are taken from *Klaeber's* Beowulf. 4th ed. Ed. R. D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork, and John D. Niles. Toronto: U of Toronto, 2008. Print.

[34] In their commentary in *Klaeber's* Beowulf, the editors note that Klaeber believed the plural construction *huses hyrdas* in line 1666 to be one of a type of "generic plural" since it is "inconsistent with the facts" in its context (211). Beowulf defeats only Grendel's mother in this battle; while he decapitates Grendel, this monster was already dead. The editors postulate that the use of plurals such as this in contexts which clearly call for the singular may have been a type of formula. For more examples of this use of a plural construction in a singular context, see also their note on line 565. For the purposes of this paper, I will maintain the plural as indicated by the grammar.

[35] See note on this line in *Klaeber's* Beowulf, 215; also Liuzza's note, 106. Liuzza also includes the words "reason" and "intellect" as possible translations in addition to "conscience."

The way in which the *Beowulf* poet uses the term is compelling; it is not restricted to describing a positive entity or individual as one might expect when considering the common associations of "herdsman" with the protective duties of one charged with keeping animals. Rather, it is used almost as frequently to describe those with clearly negative qualities and even those characterized as overtly evil as it is to describe those with desirable attributes. Further, it is always a figurative description; in no case is *hird-* used to describe a literal animal herdsman in the poem. The only situation that approaches the literal is the reference to Grendel and his mother as *huses hyrdas* in line 1666. It is possible to read "herders of that house" to indicate household rather than merely the physical house or cave. In this interpretation, the sea creatures who inhabit the waters above the cave and who attack Beowulf as he descends could be seen as under the protection or keeping of Grendel and his mother, rendering them more literal "herdsmen"; however, there is no suggestion beyond their simple proximity of such a relationship between Grendel and his mother and the other sea monsters that inhabit the waters above their cave.

CHAPTER II: A SURVEY OF TRANSLATORS' CHOICES FOR THE *HIRD*- SUBSTANTIVES IN *BEOWULF*

Scholars have been translating *Beowulf* for over 200 years, and some of the descriptions they have variously given to their engagement with the text and efforts to share the story have included "literal" (Kemble l[1]), "word-for-word" (Thorpe), "imitation" (Ringler vii), "paraphrase" (Ayers), and "new telling" (Nye). They have attempted to recreate the alliterative, four-stress line of the Anglo-Saxon heroic poetry (Gummere, Huppé, Morris, Rebsamen, Trask, Williamson), have transformed it into many different modern verse forms (Conybeare, Thorpe, Wackerbarth), and have turned it into prose (Donaldson, Earle, Fulk, Hall, Hieatt, Pearson, Swanton, Tolkien). They often speak of attempting to share with others an experience with the poem that they have had (Liuzza 9-10). And each decision they make – related to how they will tell the story and what audience they desire to reach and to what end – informs many more decisions about the words they will use to re-present the story to people in their contemporary time and place. It is especially suggestive in light of its multi-faceted application to characters in the poem to observe the ways in which various well-known and many respected translators render the word *hird-*.

19th Century

Sharon Turner (1805) and John Josias Conybeare (1826), the first to publish efforts at English translations of the poem, translate only one passage each of the lines containing *hird-* phrases. Neither elects to use "shepherd." Turner renders *folces hyrde* (l.

[1] This note comes from page l (Roman numeral fifty) of the Postscript to the Preface, though the font here makes it appear to be an Arabic numeral one.

610) as "the guardian of his friends" (176).[2] Conybeare translates *fyrena hyrde* (l. 750) as "that base one," a unique translation for Grendel among those surveyed in this study.

In the first complete English prose translation, John M. Kemble (1837) uses "shepherd" to translate 11 of the 17 *hird-* phrases. In addition to all seven kings, he applies it to Grendel (page 32), conscience (71), and both mentions of Beowulf's dragon (93, 126), selecting "keeper" for all remaining references.

Though Kemble applies the term to other characters, a pattern of using "shepherd" to refer exclusively to the kings is clear among most of the earliest translations in this study. This is consistent through the turn of the century and is especially prominent in the works of A. Diedrich Wackerbarth (1849), the writer of the first complete English verse translation, and John Earle (1892). Wackerbarth and Earle each use "shepherd" for six of the seven kings, omitting one of the phrases in their translations: Wackerbarth omits the first application of *hird-* to Beowulf (l. 2644), and Earle omits its second application to Hroðgar (l. 2027). Similarly, Benjamin Thorpe (1855) and John R. Clark Hall (1901), also use "shepherd" only for the kings. Though they both include all seven *hird-* phrases referring to kings in their translations, they render only five of them as "shepherd."[3] Thorpe's and Clark Hall's choices in lieu of "shepherd" are "guardian" (Thorpe ll. 5282, 6182) and "protector" (Hall 123), the terms which will become translators' most frequent appellations for the kings. Most of the

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[2] I will use Klæber's line numbering to discuss translators' choices except when they employ unique numbering (Tolkien), half-line numbering (Thorpe, Ringler) or, in the case of prose versions, present fitt and/or page numbers in lieu of line numbers. In these cases, I will cite translations parenthetically in the manner the translator uses. Sharon Turner summarizes the poem, inserting what he calls "extracts. . . selected with a view to show the manners [the poem] describes" (169). Only one of these treats a *hird-* phrase and is cited by page number.

[3] Though it was published just after the turn of the 20th century, I discuss Hall's translation here because his choices for *hird-* connect it more closely with the translations that precede it than with those that follow.

earliest translators of the complete poem seem to recognize a difference between the application of the term *hird-* to the kings from its use with all other characters, one which they consistently believe the metaphor "shepherd" best embodies.

William Morris and A. J. Wyatt (1895), however, do not make this distinction. They use some form of "herd" (shepherd, herdsman, herder, herd) for all but one of the *hird-* phrases in the poem: *beorges hyrde* (l. 2304), referring to Beowulf's dragon, which they translate "burg-warden." Their nearly exclusive use of "herd" is rare.

1900-1924

During the first quarter of the 20th century, four translations demonstrate the three-pronged path of *hird-* translation that continues to the present. Clark Hall's (1901), as described above, illustrates the practice employed by Wackerbarth of using some form of "herd" for kings only. Francis Gummere (1909) and William Ellery Leonard (1923) employ "herd" inconsistently to the characters, and Robert K. Gordon (1923) uses no forms of "herd" at all. Gummere uses a version of "herd" for three of the kings: once each for Hroðgar (l. 610), and Beowulf (l. 3080), whom he calls "shepherd" and once for Ongenþeow (l. 2981), whom he calls "herdsman."[4] He also uses "shepherd" for Grendel (l. 750), says that Sigemund's dragon "herded the hoard" (l. 887), and calls Beowulf's dragon "that shepherd of gems" (l. 3133). Leonard's translations are a bit more consistent

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[4] The sentence as Gummere translates it runs thus: "Joyous then was the Jewel-giver, / hoar-haired, war-brave; help awaited / the Bright Danes' prince, from Beowulf hearing, / folk's **good** shepherd, such firm resolve" (608-11, emphasis mine). It is unclear whether Gummere means for the epithet to refer to Hroðgar ("the Jewel-giver") or Beowulf (the source of "help") and intriguing, in light of that ambiguity, that he inserts the word "good" which is not indicated in the Old English and is so tightly connected to the New Testament use of the word "shepherd" for Jesus. Is Hroðgar or Beowulf Gummere's "good shepherd"? Or is he using parallelism and ellipsis to encourage this reading of the last line: "**the** folk's good shepherd, **from** such firm resolve"? Were it not that Gummere fails to use "shepherd" (or even a form of "herd") for either remaining reference to Hroðgar (l. 2027) or Beowulf (l. 2644), it might be possible to discern which of the men he means to describe here and to consider a Christian allusion.

than Gummere's. He chooses a form of "herd" for six of the seven kings, only differing once for Beowulf, whom he calls "fender of his folk" (l. 2644). As Gummere, he also chooses a form of "herd" for Grendel, calling him "that herdsman-over-crimes" (l. 750). While it uses no forms of "herd," Gordon's translation is internally consistent in a different way; he elects to use "protector" only to describe all of the kings and God, with one exception: He uses "ruler" once for Hroðgar (l. 2027).

1925-1949

Six translations are surveyed from the second quarter of the 20th century, with those from the earliest years demonstrating significantly more use of "herd" than those from later in the period.

Though it was not published until 2014, Christopher Tolkien explains that J. R. R. Tolkien's translation was complete by 1926,[5] several years earlier than some chronologies have suggested (vii).[6] Tolkien is the only translator surveyed in this study to use the word "shepherd" exclusively for the seven references to kings. Though both Wackerbarth and Earle use "shepherd" purely for the kings, they each omit one of the *hird-* phrases referring to a king.[7] Tolkien relies on "guardian" or "keeper" for all but two

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[5] Tolkien's translation clearly shares more traits with translations leading up to the 1930's than those since. One must remember, however, that it has not yet had the potential to influence subsequent translation in the ways other versions listed have had. It will be fascinating to observe how its long-awaited publication may affect the future of *Beowulf* translation.

[6] Syd Allan lists the Tolkien translation as "193?" While Hugh Magennis mentions it, he does not date it (18). Neither Chauncey B. Tinker's *The Translations of* Beowulf (1967) nor Robert E. Bjork's *A* Beowulf *Handbook* (1997) mention it.

[7] I have searched Tolkien's Introduction, Notes, and Commentary for insight into the translations that might have influenced him, but I have been unable to find any explicit discussion of that. The only evidence I can find (aside from his introduction to Clark Hall's translation) which may, indeed, speak as loudly as any direct confession, is Wackerbarth's translation of *hringa hyrde* (l. 2245): Lord of the Rings. Tolkien himself uses "Lord" only for God (l. 931) and renders line 2245 "the keeper of the rings." Wackerbarth, Clark Hall, and Tolkien all share the trait of using the specific term "shepherd" only for the kings.

of the remaining *hird-* phrases: He chooses “master” for Grendel (l. 750) and “Lord” for God (l. 931).

D. H. Crawford (1926) elects “shepherd” for five references, twice for Hygelac (ll. 1832 and 1849), and once for each of the remaining kings: Hroðgar (l. 610), Beowulf (l. 2644), and Ongenþeow (l. 2981). He uses “warder” once for Hroðgar (l. 2027) and “guardian” once for Beowulf (l. 3080). He chooses “master” for Grendel (l. 750) and “bearer” for Dæghrefne (l. 2505). Crawford’s remaining eight translations of *hird-* demonstrate forms of “guardian,” “warder,” or “keeper.”

Archibald Strong (1925) uses “shepherd” seven times in his translation. Four of these refer to three of the kings: Hroðgar (l. 610), Hygelac (l. 1832), and Beowulf (ll. 2644 and 3080). He also chooses “shepherd” to refer to Beowulf’s dragon (l. 3133), conscience (l. 1742), and Grendel (l. 750). He uses “herd” once for Hroðgar (l. 2027). Ongenþeow he calls the “monarch who guardeth” (l. 2981), and he changes the reference to “the last survivor” to focus on the hoard itself rather than the keeper of it, rendering that text as “the hoarded rings of the treasure” (l. 887). He appears to omit the *hird-* reference to Dæghrefne (l. 2505). The remaining six instances appear as forms of “keeper,” “warden,” or “guard.” For the two references to Beowulf, Strong combines “shepherd” with a form of “guard,” yielding “the shepherd who guardeth his own” (l. 2644) and “shepherd and guard of his people” (l. 3080), suggesting that he does not intend the words “shepherd” and “guard” in his translation to be understood as interchangeable or synonymous.

A. Wigfall Green (1935) uses a form of “herd” only twice – in the first reference to Hroðgar (l. 610) and in the one to Sigemund’s dragon (l. 887). All but two of the

remaining instances appear as “guardian” with the exception of the reference to Grendel (l. 750), which Green translates “doer of evil,” and to Dæghrefne (l. 2505), whom he calls “keeper of banner.” Notably, Green maintains the grammatical structure of all the references, using genitive phrases for the 16 which appear that way in the Old English and a compound (ground-guardian) for the sole compound form of the word, *grundhyrde* (l. 2136).

Charles W. Kennedy (1940) uses the word “shepherd” only for Grendel (l. 750). Several of his translations of the word for kings employ terms for royalty: He uses “prince” twice for Hygelac (ll. 1832 and 1849) and “king” once for Beowulf (l. 3080). Kennedy appears to omit the reference to Hroðgar (l. 610) and changes *hird-* from a noun to a verb in his use of “that guarded the hoard” for the reference to Sigemund’s dragon (l. 887). Most of his remaining choices use forms of “guard” or “ward” with the exception of “God of glory” (l. 931) and two uncommon translations: “shield of his people” for Beowulf (l. 2644) and “folk-defender” for Ongentheow (l. 2981).

Gordon Hall Gerould (1929) employs no forms of “herd” in his translation of the poem. He uses “king” for Ongentheow (l. 2981) and “lord” once for Beowulf (l. 3080). He translates the reference to God as “God the glorious” (l. 931). His remaining selections are noun forms of “ward,” “guard,” or “keeper” with the exception of the reference to Sigemund’s dragon which Gerould turns into a verb and renders “the dragon that kept the hoard” (l. 887).

1950-1974

The nine translations considered from the third quarter of the 20th century demonstrate primarily the practice of using no forms of “herd” at all in translations:

Edwin Morgan (1952), David Wright (1957), E. Talbot Donaldson (1966), and Constance B. Hieatt (1967) illustrate the dominance of this approach, relying primarily on "guardian," "protector," and "keeper," instead. Burton Raffel (1963), Kevin Crossley-Holland (1968), and Frederick Rebsamen (1971) use "shepherd" once each – for Grendel (l. 750), Hroðgar (l. 610), and Beowulf's dragon (l. 3133), respectively. Michael Alexander (1973) uses "shepherd" to refer to each of the four kings one time (ll. 610, 1849, 2644, 2981). When he first translates the appositive describing Hygelac, he chooses "guide of his flock" for *folces hyrde*, clearly suggesting that the king acts as the herdsman of his people (l. 1832). For the remaining two references to kings, he chooses "keeper" (ll. 2027, 3080).

The use of "king" for *hird-* comes up four times during this period. Both Wright and Hieatt use "king of glory" for God (l. 931), with Wright using lower case letters (42) and Hieatt capitalizing the terms (48). Hieatt also uses it for the second reference to Beowulf (l. 3080) where she translates *rices hyrde* simply as "the king" instead of imitating the genitive structure of the Old English (84). Rebsamen uses "king" for the second reference to Hygelac (l. 1849) and "helm," another frequent metaphor employed in *Beowulf* for a king, as his translation for the second reference to Hroðgar, turning *folces hyrde* in that situation into "the helm of the Danes" (l. 2027).

Lucien Dean Pearson's 1967 translation is strikingly different from most that come before and after his. He uses a form of "herd" for all instances of *hird-* except the second reference to Beowulf's dragon (l. 3133), which he translates "the treasure's guard." He uses "shepherd" for God, conscience, and all but two of the seven references to kings; he also uses "shepherd" for the first reference to Beowulf's dragon (l. 2304) and

for Dæghrefne (l. 2505). His choice to translate all but one of the phrases as a form of "herd" is reminiscent of the practice of Morris and Wyatt (1895).

1975-1999

Of the 10 surveyed translations from the last quarter of the twentieth century, four do not use any form of "herd": Stanley B. Greenfield (1982), Marijane Osborn (1984), Bernard F. Huppé (1987), and Richard M. Trask (1998). As in the prior translations, these predominantly employ forms of "guardian" and "keeper" instead. Huppé's is the most consistent, applying "guardian" to every reference. Osborn's, however, encourages a closer look. She translates the second reference to Hroðgar as "the Shielding's friend and king," drawing the prior half line, *wine Scyldinga* (l. 2027) into her version of *rices hyrde* (l. 2027). Here, it appears that she means to render *hird-* as "king." Later, however, when she uses "king of the Swedes" for Ongenþeow, she may not be drawing "king" so much from her interpretation of *folces hyrde* (l. 2981) as combining that appositive with the direct reference to Ogenþeow as *cyning* in the prior half-line (l. 2980). It is possible that she felt the use of *hird-* as an appositive here to be redundant, but these are the only two of seven *hird-* references to kings that she translates "king," so her connection of *hird-* to the specific word "king" is weak, at best. Her choices for the *hird-* phrases that refer to the remaining kings include "prince" once (l. 1832) and "leader" twice (ll. 610, 1849). The reference to "prince" and the second to "leader" both describe Hygelac, and occur within 17 lines of each other, so it is reasonable to consider that Osborn's wording may be influenced as much by a desire for variety as by any significant distinction she desires to draw between the terms. She uses "protector" only twice, both times for Beowulf (ll. 2644, 3080). Overall, Osborn's choices in translating the *hird-* phrases for

kings stand out from those of other translators in their more frequent emphasis on the hierarchy or position of the person ("king," "prince," "leader") than on his function in society ("guardian," "protector," "keeper," etc.). Though Trask's translations are, on the whole, unremarkable, he does use "leader" for the second reference to both Hroðgar and Hygelac (ll. 1849, 2027)

Three translators from this period use "shepherd" just once: Michael Swanton (1978), Ruth P. M. Lehmann (1988), and George Jack (1994). Both Swanton and Lehmann use it for the first *hird-* reference in the poem, Hroðgar (l. 650). Jack uses it for God (l. 931). Lehmann twice participates in the hierarchical impulse towards kings demonstrated earlier by Osborn, when she calls Hygelac "leader of his people" (l. 1849) and Beowulf "his kingdom's ruler" (l. 3080).

S. A. J. Bradley (1982) and Marc Hudson (1990) both choose to translate *hird-* as "shepherd" twice. Bradley uses it for the first reference to Hroðgar (l. 610) and for God (l. 931). Bradley's other translations rely primarily on "protector," "keeper," or "guardian." He refers to the "last survivor" as "custodian" (l. 2245), calls Grendel "master" (l. 750), and describes Beowulf's dragon as a "hoarder" (l. 3133). Hudson uses "shepherd" in reference to Ongentheow (l. 2981) and Beowulf (l. 3080). His other choices are typical, relying on "keeper" and "protector" for most references and "bearer" for Dæghrefne. He uses "leader" twice – both times for Hygelac (ll. 1832, 1849).

Finally, Howell D. Chickering (1977) is the exclusive practitioner of any significant use of "shepherd" in the translations surveyed from this time period. He selects the word a total of six times, once each for the four kings (ll. 610, 1832, 2644,

2981), for Grendel (l. 750), and for conscience (l. 1742), making his use of "shepherd" for the kings strikingly similar to that of Michael Alexander (1973) a few years earlier.

2000-Present

Five translations are included in the survey of the 21st century. Two of these, Dick Ringler's (2007) and Craig Williamson's (2011), use no forms of "herd" in their work. Ringler refers to Beowulf once as "king of the country" (l. 5285)[8] and Williamson translates the same reference "leader" (l. 2644). Seamus Heaney (2000) and R. D. Fulk (2010) each use a form of "herd" three times. Heaney uses "shepherd" for God (l. 931), Beowulf (l. 2644), and Ongenþeow (l. 2981), and Fulk uses "herder" for Grendel (l. 750) and God (l. 931) and "shepherd" for Hygelac (l. 1849).

R. M. Liuzza (2000)[9] uses the word "shepherd" by far the most frequently during this time period – 12 times. He selects the word for all seven references to kings as well as for Grendel (l. 750), God (l. 931), Grendel and his mother (l. 1666), conscience (l. 1742), and the first reference to Beowulf's dragon (l. 2304). Liuzza's approach is strongly reminiscent of Kemble's (1837) and differs in its use of the specific "shepherd" only twice from that earliest complete translation.

There are no examples of a translator who employs forms of "herd" exclusively for the kings during this time period.

The Role of Alliteration

Considering the lines in which the word appears, only three of them rely on alliteration of the "h," possibly influencing the selection of *hird-* over other words that

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[8] Ringler numbers his translation by half-lines.

[9] The translations of the *hird-* phrases in the revised edition (2013) are identical to those of the first edition.

would evoke the sense of guardianship or protection most translators seem to prefer. The references to Sigemund's Dragon, Grendel and his mother, and the "last survivor" each occur in lines where the alliterating sound is "h":

> ***h****ordes* ***h****yrde. He under* ***h****arne stan* (l. 887)
>
> ***h****uses* ***h****yrdas. Þa þæt* ***h****ildebil* (l. 1666)
>
> ***h****ringa* ***h****yrde* ***h****(o)rdwyrđne dæl* (l. 2245, emphasis mine).

On first look, these lines may raise the question of whether the specific word *hird-* was driven by the need to alliterate with the *h* sound; however, as Stockwell and Minkova explain, it is the first foot of the off verse, or b-verse, that determines the alliteration, and the first foot of the on verse, or a-verse, is the only one that must alliterate with it. The second foot of the on verse may alliterate, but the second foot of the off verse may not (67). To illustrate with the first example above, the ***h****arne* in the second half of the line drives the alliteration, and the ***h****ordes* of the first half of the line must alliterate with it. ***H****yrde* may but does not have to alliterate, and *stan* may not alliterate. A close look at the remaining seven examples of *hird-* occurrence in the on verse reveals that *hird-* appears exclusively in the second foot and does not alliterate. The dominant practice of the *Beowulf* poet is not to alliterate using this foot in the *hird-* lines. Further, considering the seven examples of *hird-* that occur in the off verse, all but one, the compound *grundhyrde*, occur in the second foot which does not alliterate. The use of *hird-* in the poem, then, is clearly not driven by alliteration.

Syllables and Synonyms

Hird- is not the only option for a word that conveys the idea of protection or guardianship. Nor is it the only two syllable option available to the poet. In its section on

protection and safekeeping, *A Thesaurus of Old English* lists the following words for "a protector, defender" that could fill the place of *hird-* in the metrical line: *friþa, helm, hleo,* and *þeccend,* noting that *friþa* is found very infrequently (531). Its entry for "watchful care, keeping guard" includes the word *weard* for "a guard, sentry"; the words *giemend, hand,* and *weard,* for "a keeper, guardian, watchman" (533). Further, in each of its entries for the following ideas – a day watchman, guardian at night, bodyguard, guardian of the shore, guardian of a harbor, a steward, a guardian of treasure, guardian of the hall, and guardian of the sea – it lists a phrase involving the word *weard* (533). Thus, the poet clearly had plenty of other words from which to choose to convey the idea of guarding, protecting, and keeping, and while it is impossible to say with certainty what determined the poet's selection of *hird-* in each instance, it is possible to consider how each *hird-* phrase functions in its context to help sketch a picture of its effect and possible purpose within the poem.

***Hird-* as Appositive**

Fourteen of the 17 "hyrde" constructions in *Beowulf* function as appositives; only the three references to Grendel and/or his mother do not. In Beowulf *and the Appositive Style*, Fred C. Robinson explains that for a word or phrase to be a true appositive, it must function as the same part of speech as its parallel word or phrase and have no explanation of its connection to the former phrase (3). For example, he explains, while "Beowulf, king of the Geatas" is an appositive construction, "Beowulf was king of the Geatas" is not because the verb "was" explains the connection between the noun and the nominal phrase (3). Robinson further asserts that this essential parataxis of apposition has a "logically open, implicit quality" that helps to "create a reticent [. . .] style which is

intimately cooperative with the tone and theme of the poem" (5-6). Robinson offers several examples to illustrate the inferential nature of the appositive style, one of which includes the substantive *rices hyrde* in reference to Beowulf in this passage: *Ne meahton we gelæran leofne þeoden, / rices hyrde ræd ænigne, / þæt he ne grette goldweard þone* (3079-81) [We could not persuade our dear prince, / in any way counsel the shepherd of the kingdom / that he not attack the guardian of the gold].

Robinson points out that by laying the phrases *leofne þeoden* and *rices hyrde* side-by-side or in parallel structure without explanation, the poet suggests connections between the actions of the people and their prince but leaves the audience to flesh out specific conclusions for themselves. A possible interpretation he suggests in this case is as follows: "Because the prince was beloved to us, we begged him not to fight the dragon, but since he was a conscientious guardian of his kingdom, he insisted on doing so" (4). Another, less approving reading of the Witan's commentary on Beowulf's actions might emphasize more Beowulf's hard-headedness than Robinson's interpretation of the council's affectionate indulgence of Beowulf's unilateral action. Robinson believes that the suggestive rather than prescriptive nature of the appositive cooperates with the poet's central purpose: to invite his audience from their perspective as Christians to admire what is honorable in the pagans of an earlier period of time rather than merely dismissing their ancestors to oblivion because of a belief in their predecessors' spiritually lost state (13-14). In this way, Beowulf's admirable qualities as a skillful and willing protector are seen to earn him not only the love of his people but also their respect and can, perhaps, lead to the emulation of his positive actions in a Christian context by members of later generations who hear of his life and deeds.

Though Beowulf's decision to fight the dragon ultimately leads to the destruction of the Geats, this end of his peaceful reign cooperates with the poet's consistent message: Human leadership, peace, and even life itself are, at best, temporary states. Beowulf's failure to be a perfect or a perpetual shepherd for his people is not only unsurprising in the world of the poem, it is essential to the contrast the poet is sketching between God as Shepherd and man as shepherd.

Metaphor

It is difficult to discern how the diction of a text would have affected its contemporary audience who likely heard it sung and had to rely almost entirely upon their imaginations. In any case, then as now, the words cooperated with the experiences of the listeners in the world in which they lived and, as Liuzza says, adhered to "the demands of a framework of expectation" provided by that "literary world" (46). Study of the presence of *hird-* substantives in the extant Old English corpus shows that the associations accompanying *hird-* in its social and literary context must have included a strong metaphorical component supplied by use of the word to indicate one of the most famous religious symbols in the Bible – that of the shepherd. Translating select *hird-* phrases as "herd" or "shepherd" emphasizes a powerful element of Anglo-Saxon culture – its Christian influences – that, perhaps, is not as apparent or does not resonate so completely in modern times and with modern audiences.

The power of the shepherd as biblical symbol did resonate, however, with Old English poets who, as Dorothy Whitelock explains in *The Audience of* Beowulf, probably became familiar with such Christian imagery more because of the images' appearance in the homilies than as a result of any direct familiarity with Biblical sources (8). The

poem's audience was also likely, Whitelock asserts, to be "familiar with the stock metaphors of the homiletic tradition, [. . .] often of biblical origin" (7). Whitelock further asserts that she believes the audience of *Beowulf* "was [. . .] accustomed to listen to Christian poetry" (8).

In its use in *Beowulf*, *hird-* points to a tension between its contemporary audience's experience and its hope, an audience which was likely Christian and familiar enough with religious imagery to hear in the word a definite biblical allusion. To translate instances of *hird-* indifferently as "guardian," "keeper," "protector," or some other oversimplified transferred rendering is to water down a central theme of the poem that a metaphorical translation of "herd," herdsman," or particularly "shepherd" preserves and emphasizes: the difference between the painful and essential temporality of the present life for its people, even the most powerful, and the eternity of perfect protection, providence, and leadership that they saw as available with the Christian God.

CHAPTER III: CONTEXTUALIZING AND INTERPRETING *HIRD-* USE IN *BEOWULF*

The use of the word *hird-* in *Beowulf* is not restricted to a sense of simple protection or keeping. It carries with it clear associations of power and authority that are not present in the uses of the word from secular culture alone. Herdsmen in Anglo-Saxon England were not men of influence; they were not socially formidable. The qualities of the 17 figurative herdsmen found in *Beowulf* and the relationships among them are, however, exemplified in other extant Old English texts, the majority of which are religious in nature.

The image of the leader as shepherd in the Bible is quite prevalent. In the Old Testament, the concept of a shepherd is connected very closely with power, authority, and protection (Jer. 25.34-6). People without a leader are "sheep without a shepherd" (Num. 27.17). And though the term is mostly positively connoted, there are certainly bad shepherds in the form of leaders who take advantage of their people, fail to protect them, lead the people away from God, or stand against God (Isa. 56.10-12; Jer. 50.6, 44; Ezek. 34). Many of the Old Testament prophets liken God to a shepherd (Ezek. 34; Zech. 9.16; Isa. 40.11). In the New Testament, the metaphorical use of the term "shepherd" continues with its sense of leadership and authority. Jesus refers to himself as the "good shepherd" (Jn. 10.11, 14), emphasizing the familiarity the sheep have with their shepherd and the power the shepherd demonstrates. Additionally, he asserts the willingness of the shepherd to put himself in danger, indeed, even to sacrifice himself for the protection of his sheep (Jn. 10.1-18). Finally, when reconciling Peter to himself after the apostle's denial of him, Jesus questions Peter three times: "Simon, son of John, lovest thou me?" (John 21.17). In

response to each of Peter's affirmative replies, Jesus tells him, "Feed my lambs" (v. 15-16) or "Feed my sheep" (v. 17). The general progression of the idea of the shepherd in the Bible is from the literal herder of animals to the metaphorical shepherd as a leader of and provider for people, to God as the perfect embodiment of those qualities, Jesus as the "good shepherd," and the apostles as "shepherding" the Christian "flock" (Acts 20.28,[1] 1 Pet. 5.2-4[2]). The use of the *hird-* substantive in the Old English corpus to designate figurative shepherds draws heavily on this foundation as demonstrated in the number of examples which occur in religious contexts.

In this chapter, I discuss three elements which contribute to an understanding of how the *hird-* phrase functions in *Beowulf* and illustrate how the *Beowulf* usage reflects patterns demonstrated in the rest of the corpus. These are the occurrence of *Beowulf*-phrase forms in other texts, the use of different *hird-* forms in the corpus to refer to characters similar to those which carry the *hird-* appellation in *Beowulf*, and the use of *hird-* forms in the corpus in situations similar to those in which they occur in *Beowulf*.

I begin by considering phrase references to God and Jesus in the corpus to contextualize the characterization of God in *Beowulf*. The use of the *hird-* phrase for God in *Beowulf* provides a model against which to evaluate all other characters in the poem for whom the phrase is used. Next, I look at the monsters and the ways their characterization using *hird-* phrases is both reminiscent of that of other characters in the

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[1] Here, the Vulgate substitutes the word *regere* [to rule] for the verb "to be shepherding" which appears in the Greek (transliterated *poimainein*) but keeps the word "flock," essentially preserving the image, as he who "rules" the "flock" would be the herdsman (*Greek Interlinear Bible*).
[2] The Vulgate removes the direct reference to the apostles as shepherds that the Greek indicates through three forms of *poimainein* found in verses 2 and 3. In verse 4, the Douay-Rheims renders the Vulgate's *pastorum* as "pastors." Notably, in verse 4, God is referred to in the transliteration as the *archipoimenos*, or "chief shepherd" (*Greek Interlinear Bible*). The Douay-Rheims translates this "prince of pastors."

corpus and demonstrative of a relationship with good shepherds typical of those possessed by other evil shepherds in the corpus. Then, I consider the references to men and to conscience and discuss how these also suggest a type of relationship that commonly appears in the corpus – that of the ineffective or unfaithful shepherd towards his flock and/or towards his God. Finally, I consider the kings and the ways in which the use of *hird-* phrases help to characterize them. These examples illustrate correspondences among the commonly accepted qualities of the *god cyning* [good king] and *god hyrde* [good shepherd] and expand upon the concept of faithfulness and the consequences of unfaithfulness in the *hird-*.

The Model Shepherd

As explained in chapter I, 16 of the 17 instances of the *hird-* substantive in *Beowulf* demonstrate the genitive-noun-plus-noun structure. The *hird-* phrase in the corpus is considerably directed toward characterizing the deity. The Old English extant corpus contains 88 noun-plus-genitive-noun *hird-* phrase instances. Twenty-two, or a quarter of them, refer to God or Jesus. Such references demonstrate 15, or just under half, of the 35 different forms the *hird-* phrase takes.

Eleven poetic texts use *hird-* phrases for God or Jesus.[3] In *Beowulf*, God is called *wuldres hyrde* (l. 931) [shepherd of glory]. Four prose texts also use *hird-* phrases for

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[3] *Azarias* [Az] (*ASPR* 3.92.121, 129 and 3.92.150); *Resignation* [Res] (*ASPR* 3.215.8 and 3.215.10); *Psalm 50* [KtPs] (*ASPR* 6.92.101 and 6.92.107); *Genesis* [GenA,B] (*ASPR* 1.7.164, 1.7.171-72, and 1.69.2316-17); *Daniel* [Dan] (1.116.199); *Andreas* [And] (*ASPR* 2.25.807); *Judith* [Jud] (*ASPR* 4.100.60); *Juliana* [Jul] (*ASPR* 3.121.280); *Elene* [El] (*ASPR* 2.75.348 and 2.90.858); and *The Judgment Day I* [JDay I] (*ASPR* 3.214.86). Cited by volume, page, and line number according to the edition.

God or Jesus.[4] *Beowulf* is the only non-religious text in which the *hird-* phrase is used for God.

The two most common forms of the *hird-* phrase, *rices hyrde* and *folces hyrde*, are each used once to designate God or Jesus in the corpus: In *Andreas* [And] Jesus is called *rices hyrde* (*ASPR* 2.25.807), and in *Genesis* [GenA,B], God is called *folces [. . .] hyrde* (*ASPR* 1.69.2316-17). Eight of the 15 phrasal *hird-* substantives mentioned above appear exclusively in reference to God or Jesus: *ðeoda hyrde, dugoða hyrde, gasta hyrde, heofona hyrde, hierde eallra gesceafta, þrymmes hyrde, tungla hyrde,* and *wuldres hyrde*. These eight examples make up a quarter of all phrase forms of the *hird-* substantive and approximately 10% of the total number of instances of the phrase form present in the corpus.

In *Beowulf*, the *hird-* reference to God occurs the morning following Beowulf's defeat of Grendel in Heorot. Hroðgar addresses Danes and Geats alike from the steps of the hall as the warriors return from the mere into which Grendel has disappeared. The poet describes how the men have praised Beowulf's *mærðo* (l. 857) [glory] on the journey and how a poet has begun to sing about Beowulf's deeds on the ride back, immediately likening Beowulf to Sigemund, a man of *dom unlytel* (l. 885) [no little fame] who is *mærost / ofer werþeode* (ll. 898-99) [most famous among all people] in his defeat of the dragon. It is following this description of the warriors' immediate and extravagant praise of Beowulf that Hroðgar, standing in view of Grendel's arm, says:

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[4] Pope Gregory's *Pastoral Care* [CP] (43.8); "In Cena Domini" [HomS 22 (CenDom 1)] (153.50-51); "Saint Nicholas" [LS 29 (Nicholas)] (87.139-40); and *The Durham Ritual* [DurRitGl 1 (Thomp-Lind)] (27.18). Cited by page and line numbers according to their editions.

Ðisse ansyne	*alwealdan þanc*
lungre gelimpe.	*Fela ic laþes gebad,*
grynna æt Grendle;	*a mæg God wyrcan*
wunder æfter wundre,	***wuldres hyrde***. (ll. 928-31)

[Let us quickly give thanks to the Almighty for this sight. I have experienced great hostilities, afflictions from Grendel; God is always able to work wonder after wonder, the shepherd of glory.]

Hroðgar may not have heard the song of the poet on the ride back from the mere, but for the Anglo-Saxon listener, his words contrast with the impulses of those who have begun to credit Beowulf completely with the victory. Instead, Hroðgar calls upon the men of both nations to acknowledge the role of God. His words create a sense of urgency to identify God as the ultimate source not only of Beowulf's accomplishment but of all fame or glory on earth. In this way, Hroðgar demonstrates the role of the *hird*- as a spiritual leader and teacher of the people which is a significant facet of the use of the word in the corpus that I discuss further in the sections on conscience and kings below. Hroðgar, identified as a *hird*- himself 300 lines earlier, admonishes the people to credit the ultimate *hird*- with Beowulf's success.

Following Hroðgar's lead, Beowulf also credits God with the outcome of the battle and says that Grendel only escaped because *þa metod nolde* (l. 967) [the Creator did not wish] Beowulf to prevent him. Beowulf acknowledges that his power, and therefore his glory, is limited by the will of God. The relationship of modeling and instruction that is revealed here between Hroðgar as the Dane's *folces hyrde* (l. 610) [shepherd of the people] and the younger Beowulf who will later become the *folces hyrde*

(l. 2644) of the Geats is a common one in the corpus and is discussed further in the sections on conscience and kings below.

While he acknowledges, indeed stresses, his personal losses and prior despair, Hroðgar's characterization of God in this episode contains nothing but expressions of power: God is always able to act. God is not limited by a finite number of interventions at his disposal. God is the keeper, protector, and controller of glory, the one who determines where fame will go and how long it will remain. Conversely, Hroðgar understands and describes in detail his own limitations:

> *Ðæt wæs ungeara, þæt ic ænigra me*
> *weana ne wende to widan feore*
> *bote gebidan, þonne blode fah*
> *husa selest heorodreorig stod,*
> *wea widscofen witena gehwylcum,*
> *ðara þe ne wendon, þæt hie wideferhð*
> *leoda landgeweorc laþum beweredon*
> *scuccum ond scinnum.* (ll. 932-39a)
>
> [It was not long ago that I did not expect ever in my life of miseries to experience relief when, blood decorated, the best of houses blood-stained stood, the far-reaching woe of every wise man, they who did not think that they could ever defend the stronghold of the people against the hostile ones, demons, and evil spirits.]

He confesses that he and his councilors had given in to despair and expresses that he now believes God has brought hope through Beowulf: *Nu scealc hafað / þurh drihtnes miht /*

dæd gefremede / ðe we ealle ær ne meahton / snyttrum besyrwan. (939b-42a) [Now a man has, through the lord's might, done a deed which before we all were unable with our wisdom to accomplish]. This portrayal of God as a *hird-* who possesses the ability to restore hope differs from the uses of *hird-* for all other characters in the poem. All others described as *hird*-s will meet defeat in *Beowulf*. God alone is unlimited in his abilities to exercise power and to rule. Several texts demonstrate patterns of usage of *hird-* phrases for God that are similar to these.

In *Judith* [Jud], Judith calls God *þrymmes hyrde* (*ASPR* 4.100.60) [shepherd of the multitude] as she prays for protection from Holofernes in his drunken lust.[5] While in *Beowulf*, it is Hroðgar who insures that the people know to whom the ultimate glory is due, in *Judith*, the maiden herself proclaims this as she displays to her people the severed head of Holofernes, the symbol of her triumph over him through the power of God.

In *Juliana* [Jul], the eponymous heroine calls upon God as *þrymmes hyrde* (*ASPR* 3.121.280) [shepherd of hosts] in a prayer requesting that God reveal to her the identity of the demon masquerading as an angel, who is trying to convince her to give in to the heathen governor, Eleusius, worship his gods, and marry him.[6] God not only grants her request but also protects her from suffering in the subsequent tortures decreed by Eleusius and sanctioned by her own father for her disobedience. Even when she is placed into a vat of molten lead, the faithful maiden does not suffer, and she survives all the torments until her head is finally struck from her body. She is immediately and painlessly delivered to peace and rest in heaven, and the final lines of the poem describe how since

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[5] For assistance with context, I have consulted Bradley's *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*.
[6] Ibid.

that time, the people of that nation have praised God. Though the maiden is faithful, it is the *hird*- who provides her the strength who rightfully receives the praise and worship. This situation is discussed further below in the section on the use of the phrase form for kings in the corpus. In this poem, the pagan governor, Eleusius, is called *rices hyrde* (3.115.66) [shepherd of the kingdom]. This characterization illustrates a common type of battle between a good and an evil *hird*- of the sort that appears in *Beowulf* and that I develop further in the discussions of the monsters and the kings below.

The use of the *hird*- phrase for God in *Judith*, *Juliana*, and *Beowulf* directs attention to him as the leader of a multitude or host of warriors, the source of a hero's success and, therefore, of his or her fame or glory.

In *Azarias* [Az], the youths, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael, twice call God *leohtes hyrde* (*ASPR* 3.92.121, 129) [shepherd of light] as they praise him for their deliverance from the flames of the furnace into which they have been thrown (Thorpe 193).[7] They celebrate his awesome power and call on all of creation to bless God for his mighty deeds as the *ðeoda hyrde* (*ASPR* 3.92.150) [shepherd of the nations]. The context of a general call to praise God for his deliverance is strikingly similar to Hroðgar's admonition to the crowd gathered to see the evidence of Beowulf's defeat of Grendel. The *Azarias* poet refers to God twice as *wuldor-cyning* (3.190.29, 3.192.22) [glory-king] in this context and also uses a different noun-plus-genitive-noun phrase, *wuldres waldend* (3.188.19) [king of glory] that brings together the emphasis on glory with his use of the *hird*- phrase in a way that is reminiscent of Hroðgar's use of *wuldres hyrde* for God in

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[7] For assistance with context, I have consulted Thorpe's edition of *Codex Exoniensis*.

Beowulf. The speakers are encouraging their respective nations to praise God for the deliverance of the people through the defeat of the enemy. Though human men carried out the victorious deeds, both poems emphasize that the resulting glory belongs first to God.

Each of these examples shows people using a *hird-* phrase to praise God for delivering themselves or another from a destructive force. They characterize God in a way that emphasizes the Biblical and homiletic trope of the shepherd who chases away the wolf and thus, protects the sheep as illustrated in the extensive use discussed below of the *hird*- substantive in Ælfric's "Homily for the Second Sunday after Easter" [ÆCHom I, 17; ÆCHom I, 17 (App)] and particularly, through its reference to Ezekiel 34.10, in which God says he has delivered his flock from the hands of negligent shepherds. The use of *hird-* for God in *Beowulf* echoes its use in the rest of the corpus in characterizing God as the model for the faithful shepherd.

Evil Shepherds

Four monsters in *Beowulf* are described with six *hird-* phrases. Grendel is called the *fyrena hyrde* (l. 750) [shepherd of crimes]. Grendel and his mother are together referred to as *huses hyrdas* (l. 1666) [shepherds of that house]. His mother is called the *grundhyrde* (l. 2136) [the abyss-shepherd]. Sigemund's dragon is said to be the *hordes hyrde* (l. 887) [shepherd of the hoard]. Beowulf's dragon is described first as the *beorges hyrde* (l. 2304) [shepherd of the barrow] and later as the *frætwa hyrde* (l. 3133) [shepherd of the treasures]. Though two of the Beowulfian forms used for monsters appear in other

texts, neither of these contributes to the understanding of the role of the monsters in *Beowulf*.[8]

Three of the *hird-* references in *Beowulf* characterize dragons. In addition to the plentiful references in the poem to good kings as generous treasure-givers which provide a strong contrast to the actions of both evil kings who are stingy with their resources and dragons who hoard wealth, two other *hird-* phrases in the corpus shed light on the use of the terms for the dragons in *Beowulf*, one of which is a an example of the "Christian poetry" Whitelock believes an Anglo-Saxon audience would have been accustomed to hearing.[9] *Genesis* [GenA,B] characterizes Melchizedek, King of Salem, figuratively as *sinces hyrde* (*ASPR* 1.63.2200) [shepherd of the treasure] rather than using a word that would more literally indicate his royalty.[10] Hearing of the capture of his nephew, Lot, Abraham rescues him by defeating and plundering the kings who had previously defeated the king of Sodom where Lot was living.[11] The king of Sodom approaches Abraham requesting the return of the women who were captured, and *[h]im ferede mid Solomia* ***sinces hyrde****; þæt wæs se mæra Melchisedec, leoda bisceop* (63.2100-2103) [he brought with him the shepherd of the treasure of Salem, that was the great Melchizedek, bishop of the people]. Melchizedek brings with him gifts to honor Abraham's accomplishment, praising God for fighting on Abraham's side. In the end, however, it is Abraham who gives to the bishop a tenth of all the plunder. The women and the remainder of the

[8] "Riddle 91" [Rid 91] (*ASPR* 3.241.11); *The Meters of Boethius* [Met] (*ASPR* 5.160.7.20 and 5.72.3.31). References to *Meters* are cited by volume, page, meter, and line number.
[9] The second comes from *De Consolatione Philosophiae* [Bo] (Sedgefield 27.64.13). Cited by chapter, page, and line number.
[10] This is in contrast to the Vulgate which calls him directly *rex Salem* and the Douay-Rheims which calls him "king of Salem."
[11] For assistance with context, I have consulted Mason's Genesis A: *Translated from the Old English*.

plunder, with the exception of the portions of a few men, Abraham returns to the King of Sodom saying he wants to insure that credit for his future wealth and success goes to no one but God. The *hird-* phrase here emphasizes the purpose of treasure and the role of a *hird-* in relationship to it: to reward faithful servants for their actions. Melchizedek as Salem's *sinces hyrde* expects to distribute that treasure and so honor the worthy. In the faithful execution of his duty, he is also rewarded. The *hird-*s who are dragons in *Beowulf* act otherwise, demonstrating their corruption.

Sigemund's dragon is called *hordes hyrde* (l. 887) [shepherd of the hoard] in the context of the scop's retelling of Beowulf's defeat of Grendel. The bard uses the reference to Sigemund's dragon primarily to characterize Beowulf. He likens Beowulf to that legendary hero and desires to illustrate by comparison with Sigemund the extraordinary nature of Beowulf's feat. He does not speak at all of the nature of the dragon's actions or of its character, but the connections of dragons with hoarded treasures would have been well-known to his audience. The presence of the dragon in the story firmly situates it on the side of evil, opposed to Sigemund, and by extension, Beowulf, on the side of good.

Later, the poet describes Beowulf's dragon as guarding the *hæðen gold* (l. 2276) [heathen gold] for *þreohund windra* (l. 2278) [three hundred winters] though *ne byð him wihte ðy sel* (l. 2277) [it is not to him in any way better]. In this way, he also illustrates the key reason why the actions of the dragon are evil: they are wasteful. They prevent treasures from accomplishing their purposes as gifts and payment by a king to his faithful subjects. The dragon neither benefits nor allows others to benefit from the possession of the treasure. The first use of the *hird-* phrase with Beowulf's dragon, *beorges hyrde* (l.

2304) [shepherd of the barrow], is in the context of the dragon's search for the disturber of its hoard and its increasing fury as night falls and it begins attacking the Geats (ll. 2302-2314a). The poet emphasizes the fiercely destructive nature of the greed that drives the dragon by describing first the devastation of Beowulf's great hall: *his sylfes ham, / bolda selest, brynewylmum mealt, / gifstol Geata* (ll. 2325-27) [his own home, best of buildings, melted in surges of fire, gift-seat of the Geats]. The evil effects of greed as exemplified through the dragon's hoarding and defense of his hoard are reflected through the destruction of this symbol of the relationship between the *god cyning* [good king] and his loyal thanes, for the hall, and the *gifstol* within it, was a primary setting for the dispensing of treasure.

The latter reference to this creature, *frætwa hyrde* (l. 3133) [shepherd of the treasures], occurs when the men push the slain dragon from a cliff into the sea, before they participate in Beowulf's funeral rites (ll. 3131-3136). The first mention certainly emphasizes the ability of the fearsome antagonist to protect its hoard well and its willingness to defend its treasure and to carry out vengeance on the thief and his entire society. The second reference, however, seems more focused on an opposite impression of the dragon – the idea that it is not omnipotent.

Unlike the dragons, Grendel and his mother, are not simply fearsome beasts or creatures of legend in the poem. Their nature is complicated by references to Grendel's mother as an *aglæcwif* (l. 1259) [monster-woman] and to Grendel as a *wonsæli wer* (l. 105) [unfortunate man]. Their characterization is distinctive from that of the dragons whose gender is not emphasized. Though *wif* and *wer* can indicate simply "female" and "male," the pointing out of these monsters' genders in the absence of such attentions to

the dragons suggests that they are more closely related to humans. Grendel's character as an evil *hird-* is connected as well to his lineage. He is described as a *feonde on helle* (l. 101) [fiend from hell], one *forscrifen [. . .] / in Caines cynne* (ll. 106-7) [condemned . . . among the kin of Cain], and a *[w]iht unhælo* (l. 120) [unholy being] who *wið rihte wan* (l. 144) [labored against right]. However corrupted by evil, Grendel and his mother are descended from humans and appear to retain some human qualities. While there is just one *hird-* phrase referring specifically to evil creatures in the corpus, several indicate evil humans who actively oppose God and those faithful to him. Though they may not literally consume the bodies of their victims as does Grendel, they actively seek to kill or destroy the representatives of God against which they set themselves.

The first example appears in an "Address of the Soul to the Body" that accompanies *The Vision of St. Paul* [HomM 14.2 (Healey)] as edited by Antonette diPaolo Healey in her dissertation by the same title. Healey explains that the text consists of the beginning portion of a pair of monologues delivered first by a doomed soul and second by a rewarded soul to the body which determined its fate. For this passage, "the setting is some unspecified time after death" (23) at which the soul destined for torment says to the body, *þu eart deofles hus, forðan ðu deofles willen worhtest, þu wære* ***yrres hyrde*** *and oferhydig* (324.284-5)[12] [You are the house of the devil because you work the will of the devil. You were the shepherd of anger and arrogant]. This soul characterizes its former body as evil and because of that, its antagonist. The second "address" is by the soul destined for heaven who calls its body, in contrast, the house of God (Healey 96).

[12] Cited by page and line number according to Healey's edition of the text.

The application of the *hird-* term in this generalized way extends the concept of the evil shepherd to any person who would facilitate evil and oppose good. It further emphasizes an internal tension that both Hroðgar and Beowulf demonstrate as discussed below in the section on kings: the difficulty of being vigilant to pursue good and eschew evil.

Another *hird-* phrase which indicates a powerful man who acts in evil and destructive ways appears in *Juliana* [Jul]. In that poem, the pagan governor, Eleusius, called *rices hyrde* (*ASPR* 3.115.66) [shepherd of the kingdom], devises many brutal tortures for Juliana when she refuses to marry him.[13] Though this particular *hird-* phrase, the second most common in the corpus, tends to be positively connoted, referring most often to admirable, if not godly leaders, here it is used of one who has immovably set himself to cause suffering to one whom God favors. Eleusius's connection with evil is emphasized by the presence of the disguised demon who attempts to persuade Juliana to relinquish her resistance. Unsuccessful, the demon is returned to Hell where he undergoes humiliation in addition to torment for his failure. Though the pagan governor succeeds in killing Juliana, he ultimately loses the battle with God, the *þrymmes hyrde* [shepherd of hosts]: Eleusius's torturous efforts are not only thwarted, but he and his entire crew are drowned at sea following Juliana's death.

Two simplex examples also designate evil characters in the form of human beings who are shown as monstrous because of their opposition to godly people. In the portion of the poem *Christ* [ChristA,B,C] subtitled "The Ascension," kings called *hæþenra hyrda* (*ASPR* 3.22.705) [shepherds of the heathen] are described as persecuting the church after

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[13] For assistance with context, I have consulted Bradley's *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*.

Jesus's ascension[14] when they *godes tempel bræcan ond bærndon, blodgyte worhtan, feodan ond fyldon* (22.707-9) [destroyed and burned the temple of God, wrought bloodshed, persecuted and slaughtered]. The contextual emphasis is not on something the heathen leaders are protecting as *hird*-s but on their attack of the church and attempts to destroy it. The text goes on to assure the listener that God will prevail and will punish those evil men along with any who are unfaithful to him.

With the exception of the six examples found in *Beowulf*, only one *hird-* phrase in the corpus refers directly to monstrous creatures: In *Guthlac* [GuthA,B], the demons which attack the saint are called *synna hyrdas* (*ASPR* 3.65.550) [shepherds of sins]. The poem, which probably dates from the late eighth century, tells the story of a portion of the life of an English soldier turned monk who lived from 673-714 (Bradley 248-49). In it, Guthlac establishes a hermitage in a territory which is occupied by a host of demons who are unhappy to be displaced.[15] They attempt to scare him away through threats and tortures, finally carrying him bodily to the very gate of Hell where they attempt to drive him to despair so that he will enter. God sends a messenger, Saint Bartholomew, to deliver him, however, and though he must endure many painful trials from the demons, Guthlac is not overcome by them.

Several similarities exist between this episode and that of Beowulf's battle with Grendel's mother. Both protagonists are called *hird*- and are described as *cempa* borne by monsters to the bottom of an abyss. Beowulf is the *Geata cempa* (l. 1551) [Geatish champion] and Guthlac is the *cempan wuldres* (*ASPR* 3.65.558) [champion of glory].

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[14] For assistance with context, I have consulted Bradley's *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*.
[15] Ibid.

Beowulf begins his journey by seeking Grendel's mother to avenge the murder of Æschere, but part way down into the depths of the mere, Grendel's mother *guðrinc gefeng / atolan clommum* (ll. 1501-2) [seized the warrior in terrible grips] and *[b]ær þa seo brimwul[f], þa heo to botme come to hofe sinum* (ll. 1506-7) [then the she-wolf of the water bore him, she came to the bottom to her house]. In *Guthlac*, though God has protected the saint from succumbing to the demons' prior attacks, *Hwæðre hine gebrohton bolgenmode, / wraðe wræcmæcgas, wuldres cempan, / halig husulbearn, æt heldore* (*ASPR* 3.65.557-59) [nevertheless enraged the furious exiles carried him, champion of glory, holy communicant, to the hell-door].

In both poems, God is credited with providing the hero's escape. When he returns bearing the severed head of Grendel, Beowulf tells Hroðgar that *ætrihte wæs / guð getwæfed, nymðe mec God scylde* (ll. 1657-58) [the battle would have been ended immediately unless God protected me]. He continues, *me geuðe ylda waldend / þæt ic on wage geseah wlitig hangian / ealdsweord eacen* (ll. 1661-63) [the Ruler of Men granted me that I saw hanging on the wall a great, beautiful ancient sword]. In *Guthlac*, Saint Bartholomew appears to the demons, demands they return Guthlac to the surface, forbids them to harm him further, and commands they heal all his wounds. The episode ends with the use of a *hird-* simplex for both Saint Bartholemew and Jesus. Saint Bartholemew *hæfde se* ***heorde****, se þe of heofonum cwom, / feondas afyrde* (*ASPR* 3.70.747-48) [the shepherd had, he who came from heaven, the fiends expelled]. Finally, angels delivered Guthlac to heaven where Jesus, the poem asserts, *Is him bearn godes / milde mundbora, meahtig dryhten, / halig* ***hyrde****, heofonrices weard* (3.72.787-89) [the Son of God is to him the mild protector, mighty Lord, holy shepherd, guardian of the heavenly kingdom].

Finally, the plural construction is used for both antagonists. In *Guthlac*, though they shower the saint with terrifying threats, *No hy hine to deaðe deman moston, /* ***synna hyrdas*** (*ASPR* 3.65.549-50) [they, the shepherds of sins, were not allowed to sentence him to death]. In *Beowulf*, though Grendel is already dead and Beowulf kills only Grendel's mother in this episode, Beowulf tells Hroðgar that, using the sword God had showed him, *Ofsloh ða æt þære sæcce, þa me sæl ageald, /* ***huses hyrdas*** (ll. 1665-66) [then in that battle, when I had the opportunity, I slew the shepherds of the house]. In chapter I, I noted Fulk, Bjork, and Niles's translation of the grammatical plural as what he considered to be a generic singular in this instance. Two other proximal plurals shed some different light on how the construction may be functioning here. In line 1619, as he ascends to the surface with Grendel's head after killing Grendel's mother, Beowulf is described as having outlived *wighryre wraðre* [the defeat of enemies]. In line 1669, he announces that he has brought back the hilt of the sword *feondum* [from the fiends]. In both of these situations, if one only considers the immediate context of his slaying of Grendel's mother, the plurals appear to be mistakes, or as Klaeber's editors suggest, "generic plurals" that may even have been types of formulas (153.565, 181.1074, 211.1666).[16] It is possible to hear in a broader context, however, that Beowulf uses the plurals since the battles were so close together and against related antagonists. He has killed both enemies and survived, and since Beowulf retrieves the sword from the home of the second antagonist who is described as the mother of the first, it is logical to consider both of them as having been in possession of the sword. The issue of when

[16] Cited by page and note number according to *Klaeber's* Beowulf, 4th edition.

Beowulf kills Grendel is not of primary importance here. One further idea is that *ofsloh* (l. 1665) can mean “destroyed” as well as “slew.” Though Grendel was already dead, Beowulf certainly destroyed his body when decapitating it.

The grammatical and situational similarities with *Guthlac* raise the question of whether the *huses hyrdas* defeated in *Beowulf* could be intended to remind its audience of the *synna hyrdas* overcome in *Guthlac*, thereby allusively characterizing Beowulf as a hero not unlike the saint who is victorious over the powers of evil through the help of God. This similar wording further emphasizes Grendel’s and his mother’s evil nature as like that of Guthlac’s demons. Plural noun-plus-genitive-noun *hird*- phrases appear 12 times in the corpus. Only twice, however, do they refer to evil figures, once in *Beowulf* and once in *Guthlac*.

Later, in his recitation of this episode to Hygelac, Beowulf uses the only compound form of *hird*- in the poem to refer to Grendel’s mother. Beowulf explains how that *wif unhyre* (l. 2120) [monstrous woman], a *grimne gryrelicne* ***grundhyrde*** (l. 2136) [grim, horrible abyss-shepherd] prevents Æschere’s burial by carrying him away to her underground lair *feondes fæð(mum)* (l. 2128) [in the outstretched arms of the fiend]. Though she is characterized as evil using words similar to those used for demons in the corpus, Beowulf explains how her actions are incited by his murder of Grendel and her desire for vengeance.

Grendel is an exception to the other *hird*-s in *Beowulf* who are characterized as evil but whose violent deeds in the story are primarily specific defensive reactions to the actions of individuals. Grendel is first called ***fyrena hyrde*** (l. 750) [shepherd of crimes] in the context of his night raid on Heorot after Beowulf arrives. Grendel has just finished

devouring Hondscioh, a feast the poet describes in grisly detail, emphasizing the cruel nature of this monster (ll. 740-45). There has been only a brief indication in the poem of a reason Grendel would have for attacking the Danes, and it is not based in personal retribution as much as generalized suffering as an outcast from Heorot, unlike the specific motivation his mother will soon display. Nor is he operating in the role of protector when he attacks. His power beyond that expected of a herdsman is clear, indeed, in what it is he is *hird-* of: violence, sins, or evil. Grendel acts to preserve the existence of evil by fulfilling his violent impulses through gruesome indulgence of them. He is not merely a guardian of crime but a skilled and horrifying practitioner of it, thereby insuring its continuance.

The characterization of Grendel as a destructive force of evil is quite similar to that of Holofernes in *Judith* [Jud]. Though the word *hird-* is not used of this human antagonist, Holofernes is described as one *nergende lað* (*ASPR* 4.100.45) [loathed by the savior] and a *laðna leodhatan* (101.72) [hateful persecutor] as he prepares to violate Judith.[17] These attributes associate him with one such as Grendel who rejoices in violence. Though different in focus (rape as opposed to murder), the violent lusts of both Holofernes and Grendel are similar in the ways they manifest themselves: both characters seek to attack their victims at night and wait until any possible defenders are in a drunken sleep. Both manifest profound confidence and single-mindedness of purpose as they approach their victims, though the text foreshadows the defeat of each antagonist. Both are unprepared for what they meet and receive fatal wounds from their intended victims.

[17] For assistance with context, I have consulted Bradley's *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*.

Both are ultimately beheaded, though, unlike Judith, Beowulf accomplishes this later, not in the initial moment of Grendel's defeat in the hall. Both defeats are followed, as discussed earlier, by public announcements that it was with God's help the hero triumphed over the enemy. The similarities in the qualities of the villains and of their defeats combined with the use of *hird-* phrases to refer to God in the context of those defeats link Grendel and Holofernes as related types of antagonists – evil forces which oppose good and are subsequently destroyed through the power of God. Interestingly, these texts featuring such similarly characterized antagonists are found side-by-side in the Nowell Codex.

Each of the monsters in *Beowulf* is described as an evil being who opposes a good one. For Sigemund and his dragon, this characterization is tacit as the anecdote appears in the context of the hero Beowulf's defeat of the enemy Grendel. The remaining monsters all fight battles with the same hero, and in at least two of these situations, the poet describes God's intervention as essential to the monsters' undoing. This pattern of the faithful hero willing to face the evil antagonist alone only to receive indispensable aid from God is a key motif in saints' lives. The prominent use of *hird-* phrases in similar situations in *Guthlac*, *Judith*, and *Juliana* underscores the similarities between these stories of a good hero's defeat of evil and those of Beowulf's defeats of the monsters he faces.

Ineffective and Unfaithful Shepherds

Three figures in *Beowulf* exemplify another type of *hird-* that appears throughout the corpus: the ineffective or unfaithful shepherd. This is one who is in an authoritative position of guardianship or protection but who fails his charge in some way. Dæghrefne,

whom Beowulf kills in hand-to-hand combat, is referred to as the *cumbles hyrde* (l. 2505) [shepherd of the standard]. The "last survivor" who hides the gold which Beowulf's dragon comes to guard is called the *hringa hyrde* (l. 2245) [shepherd of the rings]. Finally, in what many refer to as his "sermon," Hroðgar says that conscience is the *sawele hyrde* (l. 1742) [shepherd of the soul].

Dæghrefne

Dæghrefne is described as the *cumbles hyrde* (l. 2505) [shepherd of the standard] and the *Huga cempan* (l. 2502) [champion of the Hugas] who, because of Beowulf, was *nalles [. . .] ða frætwa Frescyning[e],*[18] */ breostweorðung bringan moste* (ll. 2503-4) [not at all . . . allowed to bring the treasure, the breast ornament, to the Frisian king]. In spite of Dæghrefne's status as an *æþeling on elne* (l. 2506) [prince in his strength or courage], Beowulf describes how he *for dugeðum Dæghrefne wearð / to handbonan* (ll. 2501-2) [became Dæghrefne's slayer by hand in front of the body of noble retainers]. Dæghrefne's strength, courage, and reputation among his people are not enough to make him victorious against Beowulf, and he falls to the power of another who will later be named a *hird*- and who is previously described as having been an instrument of God's glory.

The reference illustrates Beowulf's exceptional prowess in hand-to-hand combat as he prepares for battle with the dragon, but it carries a tone of lament because this man who was formerly able to crush the life from Dæghrefne with the force of his arms alone will need to use a weapon now against the dragon. The emphasis on Dæghrefne's

[18] *[e]* is an editorial addition in Klaeber's text.

strength combined with the reference to him as a *hird-* and the absence of any suggestion of his character as specifically evil beyond that of the general association with an enemy with which Beowulf was at war, shows Dæghrefne to be a type of *hird-* who appears at least three times in the corpus including once in a homily – a *hird-* who sincerely attempts to discharge the duty he has been given but who is unsuccessful.

In "Fifth Sunday in Lent" [ÆCHom II, 13] from his second series, Ælfric uses *hird-* to describe both Christ and the men serving as city watchmen.[19] He says of Christ who had been accused of being a Samaritan who was possessed by demons by those who hated him that while Christ refuted the accusation of demon possession, he did not challenge their calling him a Samaritan because *samaritanisc is gecweden* ***hyrde****. and he is se soða* ***hyrde*** (130.103)[20] [Samaritan is translated shepherd, and he is the true shepherd]. A few lines verses later, the homilist continues with a paraphrase of Psalm 127: *Buton drihten ða burh gehealde. on ydel waciað ða* ***hyrdas*** *þe hi healdað* (130.105) [Unless the lord guards the town, in vain watch the shepherds who guard it]. While the basic function of guarding could be extrapolated from the secular role of the shepherd in Anglo-Saxon society, the pairing of the Lord and the word *hird-* used to name the human guards in this passage draws on the *god hyrde* image from John 10 without directly referring to it. The implication is that the Lord is the Good Shepherd without whom the actions of lower, human shepherds are fruitless.

[19] For assistance with context, I have consulted Thorpe's 1844 edition of *The Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, vol. II.
[20] Cited by page and line number according to Godden's 1979 edition of *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The Second Series*.

Dæghrefne, one who is not specifically characterized as evil, is proven unable to discharge the duties of a *hird*- though he is called by that name, and it is one who will come to be known as a more powerful *hird*- who thwarts the efforts of this ineffective one.

The "Last Survivor"

The man who hides the treasure which Beowulf's dragon comes to guard, often called the "last survivor," is referred to as the *hringa hyrde* (l. 2245) [shepherd of the rings]. Though he is also not characterized as innately evil, the use of this particular phrase links him closely with the dragons discussed earlier: the *hordes hyrde*, *beorges hyrde*, and *frætwa hyrde* (ll. 887, 2245, 3133) [shepherd of the hoard, shepherd of the barrow, shepherd of the treasure]. The use of the word *hring* is also strongly connected to kingship in the poem lending complexity to this epithet. Though good kings are generous ring-givers, no king's *hird*- phrase in the poem includes a term that refers to treasure. They may be ring-givers, but what they shepherd are the *rice* [kingdom] and the *folce* [people]. The wealth is more a tool by which they provide and protect than the ultimate focus of their labors, but even then, the treasures cannot prevent death and destruction as the "last survivor" illustrates when he describes the death of all his people in spite of the existence of the gold he alone ends up possessing. The "last survivor" and both dragons are described as shepherds of a treasure hoard. This connection negatively characterizes the man. He may have the potential to be a ring-giver, but without a people to serve, the wealth is of no use to him, and because he collects and buries it, the treasure tempts a dragon. Further, because it is not used to help others, the treasure itself becomes evil.

While the actions of "the last survivor" leads to the destruction of others, the man himself is not characterized as innately evil, unlike the monsters and dragons. He could have chosen to act otherwise and elected to curse rather than bless others with his wealth. He resembles the unfaithful and negligent shepherds above and those condemned in Ezekiel and spoken of in the homilies of Ælfric and Wulfstan (discussed below) who feed themselves but not those in their charge. A third *Beowulf* example further illustrates this type of *hird*-.

Conscience

Hroðgar uses *sawele hyrde* (l. 1742) [shepherd of the soul] to designate the poem's only inanimate referent for the phrase: conscience. After Beowulf has presented him Grendel's head and the sword hilt, Hroðgar notes the history of the weapon engraved on the hilt and becomes reflective, delivering what many describe as his "sermon." *[S]e wisa* (l. 1698) [The wise one], as the poet calls Hroðgar here, cautions Beowulf that when God allows many blessings and extended peace to accompany the life of a king, pride can cause him to become complacent and *þonne se weard swefeð, /* ***sawele hyrde****; bið se slæp to fæst, / bisgum gebunden, bona swiðe neah, / se þe of flanbogan fyrenum sceoteð* (ll. 1741-1744) [then the guardian sleeps, / shepherd of the soul, that sleep is too secure, / bound with cares, the murderer very near, / he who shoots flames from a bow]. Hroðgar explains that this enemy, enabled to penetrate the weak defenses of the king, transforms his former generosity into greed and reservation, causing the king to withhold gifts and treasures from his people. The king dies, he says, and his place is taken by a new one who fulfills the role of gift-giver. In the wake of the defeat of Grendel's mother, the aging

king warns Beowulf against the spiritual dangers of the pride that often accompanies great success such as the young warrior is likely to continue to have.

Similarly, the charging of priests as *hird*-s to be vigilant against spiritual attack and the discussion of the consequences should they fail are prevalent in several extant homilies. The first of which is Ælfric's "Homily for the Second Sunday after Easter" [ÆCHom I, 17; ÆCHom I, 17 (App)]. Combined, the two sections of this homily contain 46 simplex examples and four phrase examples of the use of the *hird*- substantive to refer to priests and bishops.

The homily begins by stating that it is written to follow a reading of the Good Shepherd portion of the Gospel of John summarized at the beginning of this chapter in which Jesus refers to himself as the *god hyrde*.[21] The speaker then summarizes John 10.11-14 in which Jesus contrasts the good shepherd who is willing to die to protect the sheep with the hired man who deserts the flock when he sees the wolf approach. He then applies the ideas to other spiritual leaders: *God* ***hyrde*** *wæs petrus. & god wæs paulus. & gode wæron þa apostoli þe heora lif sealdon for godes folce. & for rihtum geleafan ac heora godnys wæs of ðam heafde þæt is crist þe is heora heafod. & hi sind his lima* (313.18-22)[22] [A good shepherd was Peter. And good was Paul. And good were the apostles who gave their life for the people of God and for right beliefs, but their goodness was of that head which is Christ who is their head, and they are his limbs]. The homilist stresses that these human "shepherds" are "good" because they follow the example of the

[21] For assistance with context, I have consulted Thorpe's 1844 translation of *The Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church: The First Part, Containing the Sermones Catholici, or Homiles of Ælfric*, Vol. I.
[22] Cited by page and line number according to Clemoes' 1997 edition of *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The First Series, Text*.

original "good" heavenly "shepherd." Their actions are significant because of the way they point back to the originator of such deeds.

Ælfric continues, *Ælc biscop & ælc lareow is to* ***hyrde*** *geset godes folce: þæt hi sceolon þæt folc wið þam wulfe gescyldan* (Clemoes 314.23-4) [Each bishop and each teacher is set as a shepherd of the people of God: that they should shield that people against the wolf]. Then, he contrasts these with the man who deserts the sheep at a sign of danger from the wolf, saying, *Se his hyra & na* ***hyrde*** (314.37) [He is a hireling and not a shepherd]. To support his distinction between shepherds who protect the flock and hired men who do not, the homilist references the words of Ezekiel. Ezekiel calls these negligent men shepherds rather than hired men: *Ge.* ***hyrdas*** *gehyrað godes word. Mine sceap sind tostencte þurh eowre gimeleaste: & sind abitene* (315.60-1) [You shepherds, hear the word of God. My sheep are scattered through your carelessness and are devoured]. In this way, Ælfric emphasizes that the term shepherd is not exclusively used to designate one who faithfully executes the duties of his office.

The appended lines in Homily I, 17 (App) continue to develop the idea of the potential for failure among spiritual shepherds such as priests and bishops who do not faithfully care for the sheep entrusted to them, going as far as to call them *yfele* ***hyrdas*** (Clemoes 535.4) [evil shepherds]. This portion of the homily quotes more extensively from Ezekiel 34 and demonstrates the application of the noun-plus-genitive-noun structure to the spiritual leaders of a specific nation in a unique phrase: *Wa* ***israhela hyrdum*** *þe feddon hi sylfe. & ne feddon mine eowde* (535.8-9) [Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves and do not feed my flock]. Later in the passage, Ælfric explains, *Soðlice þeos witegung wæs gewitegod þurh god be biscopum & mæssepreostum*

þe synd ***manna hyrdas*** *& be cristenum folce* (536.31) [Truly this prophecy was prophesied through God about bishops and masspriests, who are the shepherds of men, and about the Christian people].

The last example of a *hird-* phrase in the appended portion of the homily occurs in two identically worded passages. These represent two of three instances of a particular phrase form. Ælfric states twice what God says in Ezekiel 34:10, *[I]c mine eowde alyse of heora muðum & mine scep ne beoð soðlice him to mete. & ic gedo þæt hi geswicað þæt hi syððan ne beoð minra* ***sceapa hyrdas*** *ne hi sylfe ne fedað* (Clemoes 535.18-20) [I release my flock out of their mouths and my sheep are not truly to be meat for them and I cause that they depart, that they hereafter are not my herders of sheep nor themselves feed not]. God is pledging to right the wrongs of the false shepherds who had fed themselves rather than the flock and who had even devoured the flock itself. He will remove the flock from the unfaithful shepherds and prevent the latter from even feeding themselves any longer. The homily as a whole emphasizes the great responsibility of spiritual shepherds and the penalties for failing at their duties. It demonstrates the potential variety of the application of phrasal *hird-* constructions in a prose context likely to be heard by lay audiences.

One description of the unfaithful shepherd in this homily is especially reminiscent of Hroðgar's caution against pride. Of the false shepherd who flees when the enemy approaches, the homily says, *He cepð þara sceatta. & blissað on ðam wurðmynte. & hæfð his mede for ðysum life* (Clemoes 314.39-41) [He takes heed of the treasures and exults in the glory and has his reward during this life]. Hroðgar warns Beowulf against

allowing his conscience to become such a false shepherd which fails to protect him in the face of pride resulting from his worldly accomplishments and honor.

Two other homilies which focus on the duties of priests and bishops but which Joyce Lionarons says also contains material addressed to lay audience members are "Ezekiel on Negligent Priests" [WHom 16b] and "Be biscophadum"[23] [HomU 59 (Nap 37)]. Lionarons believes the latter draws from the former, and both treat the subject of the *hird*- who fails to protect the sheep. Both texts urge similarly, as recorded in the text of "Be biscophadum," that *don þa* ***hyrdas*** *eac, swa swa hit þearf is, clypian gelome and warnian georne manna gehwylcne* (37.179.1-3)[24] [each of the shepherds do, as it is necessary, cry out constantly and warn eagerly each man]. This contrasts pointedly with Hroðgar's description of the complacency resulting from pride due to a king's success. In the face of pride, he warns, the king's conscience fails in its role as *sawele hyrde* and falls into a deep sleep, leading to the ruin of his people.

Another powerful similarity to Hroðgar's sermon appears in "Homily IV" [HomU 9 (ScraggVercelli 4)] from *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*.[25] Rather than focusing specifically on the duties of the clergy as in the prior examples, this homily addresses all Christians by describing a picture of the judgment which includes what Donald Scragg describes as "one of the most dramatic and successful of all addresses of the soul to the body in Old English literature" (88). In the closing lines of this text, the

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[23] Lionarons also refers to this homily as "Lectio secundum Lucam" as that title appears first in the text, preceding a reading from Luke 2 that opens the homily (111).

[24] Cited by sermon, page, and line number according to Napier's edition of *Wulfstan: Sammlung der ihm zugeschriebenen Homilien nebst Untersuchungen über ihre Echtheit*.

[25] For assistance with context, I have consulted Clough's translation of "Vercelli Homily IV (fols. 16r – 24r)."

homilist uses the *hird-* metaphor to speak of two competing shepherds which vie daily for the souls of men. The second, he says, is an angel who brings with him the shields which will protect against the weapons of the first who is *þam awyrgdan diofle, þe of þære stylenan helle cymð mid his scearpum strælum us mid to scotianne* (4.104.41-42)[26] [that cursed devil, who comes from the steel hell with his sharp arrows to shoot into us]. Hroðgar warns of the soul's enemy attacking, *se þe of flanbogan fyrenum sceoteð* (l. 1744) [he who shoots flames from a bow] when conscience, the *sawele hyrde* [shepherd of the soul] (l. 1742) falls asleep in similar fashion. In *Beowulf*, as in these homilies, attentiveness, humility, and self-control are defensive weapons in a spiritual battle that, if lost, can end in the destruction of the soul. Hroðgar appears to be familiar with this internal struggle and wishes to equip Beowulf for victory over it as well.

Kings

In *Beowulf*, the *hird-* phrases most frequently refer to kings. The connection of the word to power and authority is clearest in these references; a king is the embodiment of such attributes for his people. *Hird-* is used seven times to describe four different kings, representing the three nations which are the poem's main focus: it twice describes Hroðgar of the Danes, twice each Hygelac and Beowulf of the Geats, and once Ongenþeow of the Swedes. In none of these examples is the use of *hird-* determined by alliteration. Further, in each case the *hird-* phrase is used appositively.

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[26] Cited by sermon, page, and line number according to Scragg's edition of *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*.

Though eleven of the translators surveyed[27] render at least one of the *hird* substantives in *Beowulf* baldly as “king” or “monarch,” the use of the specific appositives *rices hyrde* [shepherd of the kingdom] and *folces hyrde* [shepherd of the people] to describe these men is not essential to establishing that the men are, in fact, kings. Their function is more to point to qualities of the king or the nature of his kingship than to establish the fact of his rule. Hroðgar is identified as the king of the Danes very early in the poem, in lines 64-73, so references to him as both *folces hyrde* (l. 610) and *rices hyrde* (l. 2027) are not essential to establishing his social role. Hygelac is identified as the King of the Geats as Beowulf declares to the Danish shore-guard his purpose in coming, in lines 260-61, so the two references to Hygelac as *folces hyrde* (ll. 1832, 1849) when Beowulf takes leave of Hroðgar do not serve a primary purpose of establishing the audience’s understanding of Hygelac’s kingship. Beowulf’s own ascension to the throne and 50-year reign is described in lines 2207-10, long before he is called *folces hyrde* (l. 2644) and *rices hyrde* (l. 3080). Only with Ongenþeow, King of the Swedes, is the epithet in close proximity to his identification as king. He is called king in line 2963 and less than 20 lines later, he is referred to as *folces hyrde* (l. 2981). The use of *hird-* phrases appositively, after calling these men kings, reveals a connection between the concept of the shepherd and the reality of human power and authority that is both inconsistent with the role of the lowly animal herdsman in Anglo-Saxon society and representative of the figurative use of the word in the Old English corpus.

[27] Wackerbarth, Clark Hall, Leonard, Gerould, Kennedy, Wright, Rebsamen, and Ringler all use “king” to translate one of the substantives. Hieatt and Osborn choose “king” twice, and Strong uses “monarch” once.

The phrase *rices hird-*, used for both Hroðgar and Beowulf, appears seven additional times in the corpus in seven different texts. With the exception of *Beowulf* and *The Meters of Boethius* which contain two examples each, all instances of this phrase appear in biblical or religious poetry. In *Genesis* [GenA,B],[28] God promises Abraham that Isaac's descendants will be ***rices hyrdas****, woruldcyningas wide mære* (*ASPR* 1.70.2336-7) [shepherds of the kingdom, widely famous world-kings]. In *Exodus* [Ex], Moses is characterized as *hildecalla* (1.98.252) [war-herald], *beohata* (1.98.253) [prince], *folctogan* (1.98.254) [chieftan], and *rices hyrde* (1.98.256) [shepherd of the kingdom] as he addresses the Israelite army before they go into battle against Pharaoh's forces.[29] He assures the warriors that *Him eallum wile / mihtig drihten þurh mine hand / to dæge þissum dædlean gyfan* (1.98.261-3) [The mighty lord wills to give all of them their recompense by my hand this day]. In *Andreas* [And], the poet calls Jesus *rices hyrde* when admonishing listeners to trust in Christ's miraculous power. Another *rices hyrde* (discussed above in the section on evil shepherds) is the pagan governor who torments the virgin in *Juliana* [Jul]. In *The Seasons for Fasting* [Seasons],[30] the poet admonishes his audience to follow no one's directives about fasting but those of the *rices hyrde, Gregoriæ, gumena papa* (*ASPR* 6.100.93-4) [shepherd of the kingdom, Gregory, pope of men]. Finally, in *The Meters of Boethius* [Met], the poet uses the phrase twice when recalling the stories of Ulysses's participation in the Trojan War and his journey home.[31]

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[28] For assistance with context, I have consulted Mason's translation.
[29] For assistance with context, I have consulted Johnson's translation and Bradley's *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*.
[30] For assistance with context, I have consulted Hilton's dissertation *An Edition and Study of the Old English* Seasons for Fasting.
[31] For assistance with context, I have consulted Fox's translation.

The second *hird-* phrase used of kings in *Beowulf*, *folces hyrde*, appears eight additional times in the corpus, in seven different works. With the exception of one instance in *The Battle of Finnsburh* [Finn] and one in *The Meters of Boethius* [Met], each of these examples also occurs in a religious text.

In *Genesis* [GenA,B], as noted above, God uses the epithet for himself when he tells Abraham that if he and his people will obey God,[32] *Ic þæs* ***folces*** *beo* ***hyrde*** *and healdend* (*ASPR* 1.69.2316-17) [I of that people shall be shepherd and ruler]. This example immediately precedes the reference to Isaac's descendants as *rices hyrdas* discussed above. Together, these references illustrate several motifs in the corpus: kings who are referred to as shepherds, shepherds who provide directly for the needs of other shepherds, and shepherds who provide people to be shepherds to those in need. These types of relationships between *hird*-s are demonstrated in *Beowulf* among God, Hroðgar, and Beowulf.

In his *Institutes of Polity* [WPol 2.1.1 (Jost)], Wulfstan twice uses the phrase to refer to reeves, cautioning those in such positions against using unjust means of gaining wealth or oppressing those they have been appointed to defend.[33] Wulfstan asserts that some reeves *syndon ryperas, þe sceoldan beon* ***hyrdas*** *cristenes* ***folces*** (12.320)[34] [are robbers, who ought to be shepherds of the Christian people]. He asserts that this is in spite of the fact that *ceas wislice þa men on þeode* ***folce*** *to* ***hyrdum*** (12.320) [these men were chosen wisely in the nation as shepherds of the people]. He concludes with the

[32] For assistance with the context, I have consulted Lawrence Mason's 1915 translation of the poem.
[33] For assistance with context, I have consulted Thorpe's translation in *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England*, vol. 2.
[34] Cited by section and page number according to Thorpe's edition in *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England*, vol. 2.

warning that such men who fail to honor the trust they have been given are in danger of God's wrath unless they repent of these misdeeds. Joyce Lionarons explains that Archbishop Wulfstan drew heavily from his law codes and *Institutes of Polity* to create his homilies so that his extensive use of *hird*- for a number of authority figures in the former is reflected in texts which would have been familiar to a lay audience (6-7, 164).

In the homily "Third Sunday in Lent" [HomS 14 (BlHom4)], the homilist says that bishops who do not do their duty in teaching priests and setting an example for lay believers will suffer punishment in eternity.[35] He appears to be quoting Wulfstan when he says, *Swa se æþela lareow sægde, þæt se cyning & se biscop sceoldan beon Cristenra* ***folca hyrdas*** (45)[36] [As the noble teacher said, that the king and the bishop must be shepherds of the Christian people]. Wulfstan was not the only homilist to incorporate into his homilies the powerful image from his *Institutes of Polity*, applying the *hird*- metaphor to the king.

The use of the *hird*- substantive for kings and other leaders is well attested in the Old English corpus, primarily in religious texts, several of which are homilies and religious poems with which an Anglo-Saxon lay audience could be familiar. In *Beowulf*, the application of the metaphor illustrates several motifs established by its presence in religious contexts.

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[35] For assistance with context, I have consulted Morris's translation in *The Blickling Homilies of the Tenth Century*.

[36] Cited by page number according to Morris's 1880 edition of *The Blickling Homilies of the Tenth Century*.

Hroðgar and Hygelac

The first *hird*- reference in the poem is to Hroðgar. Beowulf has just concluded the tale of his swimming contest with Breca, correcting Unferð's unflattering summary of the event and describing how he survived the attacks of the sea monsters, and has promised to make short work of Grendel. The poet describes Hroðgar's response: *Þa wæs on salum sinces brytta / gamolfeax ond guðrof; geoce gelyfde / brego Beorht-Dena; gehyrde on Beowulfe /* ***folces hyrde*** *fæstrædne geþoht* (ll. 607-610) [Then was the dispenser of treasure happy, gray-haired and battle-brave; the Bright-Dane's ruler trusted the help; the shepherd of the people confirmed the steadfast resolution of Beowulf]. The use of *hird*- to describe Hroðgar even though he is currently unable to protect his people from Grendel's ravages, is not unlike the use of the metaphor to describe Guthlac. Though overcome by the demons he has displaced and in need of assistance to defeat them, the poet refers to Guthlac as a *hird*- when he says that the territory formerly inhabited by those very demons had *bad bisæce betran* ***hyrdes*** (*ASPR* 3.55.217) [awaited the visit of a better shepherd] until Guthlac arrived. Just as God provides Beowulf to deliver Hroðgar, so he provides St. Bartholemew for Guthlac. In both instances, the Shepherd provides a shepherd for the shepherd. Additionally, Peter himself provides such an example of an imperfect human *hird*- when he denies Jesus as discussed in the homily entitled "Palm Sunday" [ÆCHom II, 14.1]. After describing Peter's betrayal, Æfric questions *Hwi wolde æfre geðafian. se ælmihtiga wealdend. þæt his gecorena ðegen. þe he eallum gesette. geleaffullum leodum. lareow and* ***hyrde***. þæt he hine for yrcðe. swa oft

wiðsoce? (142.139-142)[37] [Why would the Almighty Lord ever permit that his chosen disciple, whom he set (over) all believing men, teacher and shepherd that he because of cowardice so often deny him?]. The homilist explains that this shepherd's imperfect attention to his duty in this moment is what enables him to serve the people all the better through his empathy for their struggles.

The motif of shepherds providing instruction for their flocks and help for other shepherds is further illustrated through the description of many *hird*-s in the corpus as teachers and spiritual guides. Hroðgar fulfills this understood role in his relationship with Beowulf. When all men's impulses are to credit Beowulf fully for the defeat of Grendel, Hroðgar demonstrates the instructive role of the *hird*- by directing them to acknowledge that Beowulf could not have done it without God's help. Later, in a cautionary speech to the young hero, Hroðgar describes conscience as a *hird*- (as discussed above in the section on ineffective and unfaithful shepherds). Hroðgar is very much characterized as a shepherd guiding Beowulf, a shepherd-to-be, in this passage that many refer to as his "sermon." An Anglo-Saxon audience's familiarity with church hierarchy, with the concept of God as shepherd of the shepherds, and with the plentiful examples of authoritative figures of all kinds referred to as *hird*-s in homilies and in religious poetry would have made the moment readily recognizable as one of an elder and more experienced shepherd instructing another would-be shepherd on how to carry out his duties faithfully. Hroðgar's words of caution and foresight would have echoed words they themselves had heard spoken by their priests and knew their priests to have heard

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[37] Cited by page and line number according to Godden's 1979 edition of *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The Second Series, Text.*

from bishops, words that described a primary duty of a shepherd to be warning his flock eagerly and constantly through his teaching as Archbishop Wulfstan admonishes in the homilies "Ezekiel on Negligent Priests" [WHom 16b] and "Be biscophadum" [HomU 59 (Nap 37)] described above.

The morning following Hroðgar's cautionary sermon, as the Geats prepare to take their leave of the Danes, Beowulf uses the *hird-* metaphor to speak of his uncle, Hygelac, king of the Geats. He attests to the king's character when he assures Hroðgar *þeah ðe he geong sy, /* ***folces hyrde****, þæt he mec fremman wile / wordum ond worcum* (ll. 1831-33) [though he is young, shepherd of the people, that he will support me in words and actions] to return and fight for Hroðgar should it ever be necessary. Beowulf affirms that Hygelac faithfully discharges his duty as a shepherd. This pledge of aid prompts Hroðgar to declare that he sees in Beowulf the wisdom necessary to be a good successor to Hygelac when the young king succumbs to the inevitable, and Hroðgar himself refers to Hygelac as *folces hyrde* (l. 1849) in his grim list of the most likely sources of the eventual death and destruction of the current king of the Geats. The dual references to Hygelac as *hird-* here serve more to characterize Beowulf, Hroðgar, and the relationship between them than to characterize the king of the Geats himself. Beowulf's use demonstrates that he understands the protective obligations of a faithful *hird-*. Hroðgar's use emphasizes that he sees in Beowulf the potential to be a powerful *hird-* and, further, that Hroðgar understands deeply and wishes to communicate to Beowulf once again the limitations and realities of being a *hird-*. As Beowulf praises his king, Hroðgar reminds Beowulf that all earthly power comes to an end, tempering his prophecy about Beowulf's succession to

the throne after Hygelac's death with the condition *ond þu þin feorh hafast* (l. 1849) [if you possess your life].

Upon his return home, when he recounts his adventures to Hygelac, Beowulf uses the appellation *rices hyrde* (l. 2027) to indicate Hroðgar. Beowulf describes how the Danish king has pledged his daughter Freawaru to *suna Frodan* (l. 2025) [the son of Froda] of the Heaðobards in an effort to re-establish peace between the two nations. This testimony of the king's actions to provide for and protect his people is immediately followed by the admission that *Oft seldan hwær / æfter leodhryre lytle hwile / bongar bugeð, þeah seo bryd duge* (ll. 2029-2031) [Seldom anywhere, as a rule, after the fall of a people (does) the deadly spear rest a little while, though the bride be good]. Beowulf's reflection on the limited efficacy of the peace-weaver as a tool of diplomacy sounds much like the sobering realism of his teacher's parting words to him: No matter how powerful the human *hird*-, he dies, and no matter how well-intended the efforts of the *hird*-, blood feuds persevere.

Beowulf and Ongenþeow

Beowulf does, in fact, become the powerful king Hroðgar predicted he could be, and the last three *hird*- references to kings in the poem are centered on the hero's final acts and defeat. Beowulf is first called *hird*- by Wiglaf as the lone faithful thane attempts to persuade the 10 who have fled to return and help Beowulf fight the dragon *þeah ðe hlaford us / þis ellenweorc ana aðohte / to gefremmanne,* ***folces hyrde*** */ forðam he manna mæst mærða gefremede, / dæda dollicra* (ll. 2642-46) [though our lord for us intended to accomplish this courageous deed alone, shepherd of the people, since he had achieved of glory, of audacious deeds, the most of men]. Unsuccessful, Wiglaf rejoins Beowulf alone

and helps him kill the dragon in the wake of Beowulf's own fatal wounding. Though Beowulf dies, the dragon, twice referred to as a *hird*- as discussed earlier, is also destroyed. This illustrates the motif of the defeat of an evil *hird*- by a good one as demonstrated in *Guthlac* [GuthA,B], *Juliana* [Jul], and *Christ* [ChristA,B,C].

The reference to Ongenþeow as a *hird*- occurs as the Geats begin to process the likely consequences of Beowulf's death. Commissioned by Wiglaf to deliver the news of Beowulf's death to his people, an unnamed man warns that long-overdue retribution by the Swedes is inevitable once their enemies learn of Beowulf's death. He recalls the death of Ongenþeow at the hands of Eofor, at that time Hygelac's future son-in-law, describing how *se goda* (l. 2949) [that good one], the *folces hyrde* (l. 2981) [shepherd of the people], fled to his stronghold where Eofor pursued and killed him. The reference to Ongenþeow primarily serves to remind the audience of the effect of the loss of the shepherd on the flock. The Geats expect now to be attacked by their enemies. The anonymous speaker imagines the horrors his people will face: *Forðon sceall gar wesan / monigh morgenceald mundum bewunden, / hæfen on handa, nalles hearpan sweg / wigend weccean* (ll. 3021-3024) [For the spear shall many a cold morning be grasped by hands, raised in hands, no music of the harp at all to rouse the warriors]. The losses of warmth, safety, and communal activities and the emphasis on the need to defend oneself evoke the motif of the sheep being scattered following the death of the shepherd as described in Ælfric's "Palm Sunday" [ÆCHom II, 14.1] and "Palm Sunday" from Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Bodley 340 [HomS 19 (Schaefer)]. A third homily, Napier 41 [WHom 16b], entitled *VERBA EZECHIEL PROPHETE DE PIGRIS AUT TIMIDIS VEL NEGLIGENTIBUS PASTORIBUS* [Words of the Prophet Ezekiel on the Lazy or Timid

and Negligent Shepherds], includes a description of the wolf biting and devouring the unprotected flock when it has been deserted by its shepherd.

In his dissertation *An Edition of Five Old English Homilies for Palm Sunday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday*, Kenneth Gordon Schaefer discusses an example from the second of two homilies he discusses. He calls this text "a second unique translation or adaptation" of Matthew chapters 26 and 27 (45). The homily includes an example of *hird-* use which is a reference to chapter 10 of the Gospel of John. In the homily, the author accuses the disciples who desert Jesus when he is arrested of being like the man who deserts the sheep when the wolf attacks (73). The text reads, *Ealle his gingran hie hine farflugon & forleton, swa þæt* ***sceapheorde*** *deð þonne him wulf on becimð* (57.115-16)[38] [All his disciples they fled and abandoned him, as that shepherd did when the wolf comes upon him]. Though the Gospel of John specifies that the man who deserts the sheep is either a hired man or a non-shepherd (10.12), the description of him here as a cowardly shepherd, while not strictly accurate, cooperates with other references in the corpus which also use the word to indicate men who are unfaithful or ineffective guardians of their flocks and the resulting destruction.

Schaefer also points out what he calls a "curious resemblance" between the descriptions of Jesus and Beowulf before they die (36). In a note, Schaefer records that Jesus says, *Fus is min flæsc & untrum* (22.62)[39] [ready is my body and weak]. Similarly, the poet says of Beowulf as he sits and speaks to his thanes before facing the dragon, *Him wæs geomor sefa, / wæfre ond wælfus* (l. 2420-21) [In him was a troubled heart, restless

[38] Cited by page and line number according to Schaefer's edition.
[39] Ibid.

and ready for death]. The similarity of these descriptions is but one of several between the deaths of Jesus and Beowulf. Ten of Beowulf's thanes desert him just as 10 of the apostles desert Jesus. A single supporter remains with each for a time: Wiglaf follows Beowulf and tries to help, injuring the dragon in the fight, and John is the only one of the 12 present at Jesus's death. Both the dragon and Beowulf die in the poem, and while Jesus dies only temporarily, his actions defeat Satan. If these passages in *Beowulf* are intended to bring to the mind of the audience another *hird*- who died to save his people, they emphasize how, despite his best efforts, the human *hird*- is intended only to point to the model *hird*-, not to replace him. True and lasting glory belongs to God alone, and it is the ultimate imperfection of the human *hird*- that the final use of the substantive in the poem emphasizes.

Beowulf is called *hird*- again in Wiglaf's revelation that the king refused to listen to those who begged him not to fight the dragon: *Ne meahton we gelæran leofne þeoden, / **rices hyrde** ræd ænigne, / þæt he ne grette goldweard þone* (3079-81) [We could not persuade our dear prince, in any way counsel the shepherd of the kingdom, that he not attack the guardian of the gold]. Though Beowulf's actions in one light seem brave – seeking out and destroying a monstrous threat to his people – Wiglaf's words here suggest that Beowulf does not have to approach the enemy in this manner. By doing so, the king may actually fail to fulfill what is expected of the faithful shepherd in remaining with his sheep when the wolf attacks as described, for example, in Ælfric's "Homily for the Second Sunday after Easter" [ÆCHom I, 17; ÆCHom I, 17 (App)] and "Palm Sunday" from Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Bodley 340 [HomS 19 (Schaefer)] discussed above. Instead, Wiglaf argues, Beowulf's actions contribute to the ultimate

harm of his people. He laments: *Oft sceall eorl monigh anes willan / wræc adreogan, swa us geworden is* (ll. 3077-78) [Often must many men endure misery of the will of one, as to us is come to pass]. Wiglaf characterizes Beowulf as deserting the sheep in their time of need for the sake of his own headstrong pursuit of fame. In this way, Beowulf appears to have fallen victim to the dangers of pride about which Hroðgar tried to warn him, and in the process, has exposed both himself and his people to the terror of the one *þe of flanbogan fyrenum sceoteð* (l. 1744) [who shoots flames from a bow].

Ironically, Beowulf reveals that he understands well the judgment awaiting the unfaithful shepherd when he first hears of the dragon's destruction of his home: *wende se wisa þæt he wealdende / ofer ealde riht, ecean dryhtne / bitre gebulge* (ll. 2329-2331) [the wise one thought that he had bitterly provoked God, the eternal Lord, against all that is right]. Beowulf assumes that he is being punished for some failure as the shepherd of his people. His reaction reflects strongly the many warnings in the corpus that the unfaithful shepherd is subject to the judgment and punishment of God, including those in Wulfstan's *Institutes of Polity* [WPol 2.1.1 (Jost)] and the homilies he drew from it, the homily "Third Sunday in Lent" [HomS 14 (BlHom4)], Ælfric's "Homily for the Second Sunday after Easter" [ÆCHom I, 17; ÆCHom I, 17 (App)], and the poem *Juliana* [Jul]. In spite of his clear knowledge of the consequences of a shepherd's failure, however, Beowulf succumbs to the human temptation to pursue further glory.

Conclusion

Many translators rely on transferred senses to render the *hird-* substantives in *Beowulf*, choosing words such as "protector," "guardian," or "keeper" which gesture toward some features of the role of an animal herdsman towards his flock. However, the

use of the word in *Beowulf* reflects a more specific context of dominantly religious use in the Old English corpus grounded in the biblical appropriation of the word as a figure of speech to indicate those in positions of power and authority. Likening the work of these individuals to that of animal herdsmen, the biblical references establish the use of the shepherd image for God, Jesus, patriarchs, kings, apostles, and other leaders, both good and evil.

The use of the *hird-* phrase in *Beowulf* is consistent with religious themes established by this figurative application of the word throughout the corpus, particularly in homilies and religious poetry: God is characterized as the model shepherd and the provider of other shepherds to care for his people. Kings are characterized as shepherds. God provides shepherds to deliver other shepherds. Good and evil shepherds are at war. Evil shepherds are defeated through the power of God as the ultimate shepherd. Human shepherds are often tempted to be unfaithful. Human shepherds are susceptible to weaknesses which render them ineffective. Weak and unfaithful shepherds have detrimental effects on the well-being of their flocks. The loss of the shepherd invites predators to attack and destroy the flock. Human shepherds are accountable to God. Negligent shepherds are judged and punished. Ultimately, all shepherds are defeated and die except God.

In *Beowulf*, all but one of the characters to whom the *hird* phrase is applied meets defeat and/or death in the course of the story. The only instance in which the phrase is applied to someone or something that is not in a condition of current or impending defeat or loss is when the poet uses it to describe God. Throughout the poem, God is consistently honored as a generous giver of all good gifts. Hroðgar's use of *hird-* for God

echoes the extensive characterization of him throughout the Old English corpus, connecting the God of Hroðgar, Wealthow, Hygelac, and Beowulf with that of Abraham, Isaac, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah, Andrew, Guthlac, Juliana, Judith, and Elene.

Considering this extensive religious context for the *hird*- substantive, translators should consider forms of "herd" or "herdsman," or the specific and biblically allusive "shepherd" in their translations of the *hird*- substantives in *Beowulf*. This metaphorical interpretation emphasizes the reality of an interplay between the extant heroic and religious literature that is reflected in other poetic texts throughout the Old English extant corpus.

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