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Techne in the *Kentish Hymn*

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Little interest to date[1] has been paid to a special branch of Old English religious verse, which stems from the liturgy as it was used in the tenth century. These are poems which re-create into the vernacular the psalms, hymns, and prayers that formed the nucleus of Benedictine worship then being reestablished by Dunstan, Æthelwold, and Oswald. Consequently, they are assumed to date from the period of the tenth-century monastic Reform, which began with the accession of Edgar in 959. Yet this period in pre-Conquest cultural history is essential to an understanding of Anglo-Saxon literary self-awareness, for the following reason: the Benedictine Reform re-founded monasteries, which were centers of literacy and education, and from the pens of these once-more literate monastics came the four great codices which collected and preserved a substantial body of major Old English poetry composed prior to that period. Both the Vercelli and Exeter books can be dated to the Reform period itself,[2] while the Junius and Beowulf manuscripts are from less than a generation later.[3] All of the four major collections, not to mention a number of miscellanies containing shorter poems, were therefore shaped in the renewal of literacy born in the tenth-century Reform.

So we have the scribes of the Reform-period scriptoria to thank for preserving masterpieces like *Beowulf* or enigmas like *The Wife's Lament*. But why would these monastic writers seek to preserve verse which is not necessarily Christian, not monastic, and in some cases not even particularly fine poetry? What notion of verse creation did these late tenth-century scribes have? Here it is useful to study the original compositions of such dedicated antiquarians; the way they are crafted might tell us whether this generation of scribes considered composing and copying as two parts of the same activity, or as distinctly different undertakings. This leads us back to the body of liturgical poems described a moment ago. Oddly enough, these poems have to date been studied merely as philological curiosities. But if we consider the impulse that created these poems, we may be able to clarify a cultural factor of central importance to our general comprehension of Anglo-Saxon literary philosophy. By blending oral-textual source study and traditional linguistic enquiry, we will be able to open these pieces up for further

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investigation from cultural and social perspectives.

To start with, we use what we can deduce about the oral-textual relationship to explore motives. These liturgical poems, perhaps composed by the same scribes who sought to preserve in text the metrical canons of their ancestors, are far from lacking in literary merit. On the contrary they embody the impulse of their authors to re-encode the Christian liturgy transmitted in Latin, which was a "chirographically-controlled" language, or a language that was the direct result of the ability to read and write.[4] But this "written-text" liturgical material had already been incorporated, as a second stage, into an artificially oral consciousness, because the Rule of St. Benedict urged that monastics learn their liturgy "memoriter" or "ex corde" (by heart),[5] and that they "perform" the readings, psalms, prayers, and hymns as verbal recitation. The impulse to create poetry, which is of interest to us here, flowed beyond this artificially oral stage into what may have been an initially oral poetic composition and then, perhaps even simultaneously, to a re-textualization when the poem was copied into a manuscript.

One must remember that in such a process the creative effort entails a distinct choice (this prayer as opposed to that one) from a body of Latin liturgical material; however, the re-encoding of this selected group of liturgical items was not undertaken into further Latin but into the vernacular Old English tongue. Eighth-century clergy were encouraged to know vernacular versions of liturgical items for the purpose of instructing the laity,[6] but we find no such injunctions set out in the period of the Reform. So at a time when Latin might seem to represent the cultured and Continental monasticism to which the reformers were aspiring, it was a significant creative as well as cultural act to re-encode the

official language of the learned across linguistic family lines7 into the tongue that everybody spoke,8 regardless of class or education. Finally, this impulse to write certain liturgical items in the vernacular chose as its medium not a prose-for-prose version, like psalm-glosses9 or the first fifty psalms in the Paris Psalter,10 nor yet an English imitation of iambic dimeter which formed the Ambrosian meter found in so many Latin Office hymns,11 but instead it selected the alliterative long line, whose form is preliterate and bardic in origin. To summarize it, then, this poetic impulse governed the transformation of the textual Latin prose liturgy, which in turn had become verbalized in the recitation of the Office, into an art form which was in Old English, in alliterative verse-form, and, while perhaps composed orally, was ultimately preserved in writing once more. Because the inclination to create this kind of new native poetry was at work in the same generation of writers who saw fit to preserve the earlier verse monuments of their culture, we ought to be taking a serious look at the original poetic products of that generation.

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It is my intention to discuss the *Kentish Hymn*, one such product of the tenth century, by concentrating on its being a hymn, instead of taking the more traditional route of its being Kentish. It appears on folios 68v-69v of BL MS Cotton Vespasian D.vi, and is separated from the *Kentish Psalm 50* by a vernacular chronology on the ages of the world. This manuscript appears to be the work of one scribe,12 although it may have been written at intervals. It seems to be a miscellany comprised primarily of Old English glosses to various Latin text-sections which are generally of an ecclesiastical nature, with a Latin life of St. Wilfrid appended at the end, and it dates from approximately the Reform period. That Vespasian D.vi is Kentish in origin is evident from the presence of Kentish forms in the vernacular portions of the manuscript, and from the hymn to St. Augustine of England on folio 77 and the St. Augustine's, Canterbury, press-mark and ex libris on folio 2.13

The *Kentish Hymn* differs from a poem like *The Dream of the Rood* in that it has clear liturgical sources to which it closely adheres. The Benedictine renewal of the tenth-century Reform period set out the Divine Office for official English use and prescribed specific psalms and hymns for specific services.14 The composer of the *Kentish Hymn* draws heavily on at least two of these liturgical hymns, the *Te Deum* and the *Gloria in excelsis*. Significantly, these two hymns would never have been found together in the same service in the tenth century. The *Gloria in excelsis* had, from the sixth century, been strictly reserved for use in high festival or Sunday masses,15 while the *Te Deum* was sung only at the close of the Night Office on feast-days.16 The *Kentish Hymn* may therefore have been composed as an act of private devotion, although the reformed Benedictinism of the tenth century stressed communal over private liturgical activity, and might well have disapproved of individual undertakings. It is more likely that the poet created his piece to share with his community, perhaps inspired by a specific Church festival, where a Night Office, concluding with the *Te Deum*, might be directly followed by a Mass containing the *Gloria in excelsis*. From evidence in the *Regularis Concordia* and the *Rule of St. Benedict*, the only apparent feast which fits this description would be the Nocturns and High Mass of Christmas.17 This is not at all to identify our poem as an occasional composition, but simply a means of exploring liturgical parameters within which we can examine source influence.

The *Kentish Hymn* consists of only forty-three lines, but these may be subdivided into five sections: lines 1-6 clearly use the angelic salutation from Luke's gospel, itself the basis for the *Gloria in excelsis*, as a gateway by which the poet introduces his main themes. Lines 7-14 focus on God the Father. The third and central section, made up of lines 15-31, concentrates on God the Son. The brief fourth section, running

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from lines 32 to 35, consists of a prayer for spiritual wholeness. Line 36 begins a renewed glorification, drawn from the source-hymns but also picking up earlier references to Creed theology, to close the poem on a note of triumph.

The doctrine expressed in our poem is sound and orthodox, even where it emerges from its liturgical sources. Its theological center resides in the Incarnation for the redemption of sinful man, a point to which I will return in detail. This focus lays the groundwork for what appears to be an ecclesiastically cultural theme, since the Incarnation, the bringing of light into darkness, and the Second Coming make up the three great themes of Advent leading to Christmas Day.18

Metrically, the *Kentish Hymn* contains a series of complexities interwoven into alliterating half-lines. In a study of

techne or 'poet-craft' like this, metrical typing is less interesting than an exploration of the motives that created the meter, which here seems to be connected with both theme and poetic structure. The complexities are of two kinds: an alliterative "shuttling" which links words at line-ends either forward or backward to alliterating stress-bearers a few lines away,[19] and a series of fluctuating two-word/three-word alliteration patterns,[20] which one could argue are either a literary device of form or more likely an oral rhythmic idiom designed to control the poem's pace. An analysis of these complexities is impossible to provide in this kind of paper, but it is clear that the shuttling, evident in the first two sections only, creates a basketweave effect to establish structural integrity within the first third of the poem. And even where he closely imitates the hymn phrasing in his sources, the poet uses the two-word/three-word fluctuations to reflect thematic content, so that the two-word constructions quicken pace and move attention forward to the more ponderous three-word patterns, where weightier and more important elements are described in slower and more stately meter.

It is important to note that these effects are far more readily apparent to the ear than to the eye. We must therefore question the *Kentish Hymn*'s being originally conceived of as a "text" on a page. Is it perhaps a "transitional" piece, as I suggested earlier, marking the re-encoding of the Latin liturgy from its verbal but ritual performance into a more natural, vernacular form, perhaps oral in its conception, but nevertheless preserved as a manuscript text. How is it preserved? Like virtually all other Old English poetry, the *Kentish Hymn* appears in unbroken lines across its manuscript's writing area, with no evident scribal awareness of its verse form and no attempts made to spatialize it on the page as anything other than prose. But it is copied sloppily: its visual coherence in Vespasian D.vi is broken by simple words split at line-ends, no fewer than ten in-hand scribal corrections, two uncorrected

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copying mistakes, again of simple words, and considerable inappropriately placed pointing. It seems that what we have here is not the original re-textualization of the poem, but a copy, or the copy of a copy, which, with even one recension, would be perceived primarily in terms of written words on a page.

The language of the poem is clearly that of a restricted communal group, and can therefore be defined as exclusive. The common folk might go to church but they would in no way be fluent with these scriptural and liturgical signifiers. The monks, who recited this material aloud on a weekly or even daily basis, would have had a conditioned association-response, and would automatically have connected one word with a whole network of other words, spreading out in many scriptural and liturgical directions, each carrying its own semantic significance. I am intrigued by the way that these semantic values remained in place during the rendering of "Learned Latin"[21] into Old English poetry, and suggest that we need to consider carefully the way in which Anglo-Saxon monastics regarded and used the language of the Church.

Thematically, the poet has constructed his work to begin and end on the same note of glorification, which evidently accounts for the assumption that this piece was intended as a hymn of praise. Yet it is in structure, even more than in tone, that the *Kentish Hymn* most closely resembles the liturgical hymns which stand as source material to it. Like the *Te Deum* and the *Gloria in excelsis*, the *Kentish Hymn* starts and ends by glorifying God, with a softer thematic voice shift in the middle, when the poet-speaker mentions the divine descent to earth. The third section, lines 15-31, with its three identifiable subdivisions,[22] reiterates this shift from glory to earthly humility, with the suffering of the Crucifixion flanked by articulations of praise directed to the Son. Like the *Te Deum*, the *Kentish Hymn* moves out of a prayer for mercy into its cadenza of praise, and like the *Gloria in excelsis*, it closes with an affirmation of faith, drawing like the Latin Office hymns from the Athanasian Creed[23] in lines 40b-41a, but ending with the poet's own version of a hymnal doxology. The poem, then, shows a complexity of structure and theme, which function together to create a piece clearly intended as a work of art and not merely a vernacular exercise in hymn-writing. We find the verb "wuldrian" in the first half-line la, and the noun "wuldre" in the last half-line 43b: these "glorification" words govern the shape of the entire poem, and are reinforced by "sigefest wuldor" in 4b and "wuldordreames" in 10b, and by "sigefest" in 16a, "sigehræmig" in 30a, and "ðrymme" in 40a. To these, we may add the notion of "rulership," found in "walden" 9b, "cyninga cynincg" 15a, "heahsetle heafena rices" 29, "ricsast" 40a, and "hiofena heahcyninc" 42a. Significantly, it is only in lines 22b-28 of the

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central address to the Son, and the prayer for mercy in lines 32-35 which constitute section 4, that we find no

glorification or rulership words. Here, where the poet's voice has modulated to embody the Incarnation of the redeeming Son of God, we find the theme of redemption informing the language of the poem, with "generedes" 25b and "nergend" 35a, "towurpe" 24b, "biode gebohtest" 26a, and "ales" 33a. Finally, in section 5, these elements of glory and suffering, hitherto held and felt to be distinct, are joined together in "Crist nergende / forðan ðu on ðrymme ricsast" (39b-40a). This phrase brings together those formerly opposed elements of redemption in humility and glorious rulership, which between them created the structure of the poem to begin with.

On looking even more closely at the shape and balance of those forty-three lines of verse, we find standing at the exact center of the poem the line "ð eart heofenlic lioht and ðæt halige lamb" (22). This statement functions as both the structural and thematic keystone of the *Kentish Hymn*. It marks the change in voice from glorification of the Most High to the contemplation of the lowly infant, and heralds the second, more major voice shift of section 4, where earthly creation entreats celestial Creator. The balance of "heofenlic lioht" and "halige lamb"--which significantly creates the only double alliteration within the poem--contains within itself the patterned movement from rulership to redemption, from heaven to earth, creating resonances through still other elements of the piece. Even the vowel height present in "heofenlic lioht," with *heo*- perhaps raised in oral Kentish to *hio*- as we find it elsewhere in the poem, falls to the low back *a*'s of "halige" and "lamb," imitating phonologically the descent from glory to redemption once again.

This movement from heaven to earth, implicit in structure, word, and even sound, stands as the core of the poem, setting up a duality which is always ranked "higher-lower," and is encountered again and again. God is addressed as "hiofenrices weard" (higher) and "lifes agend" (lower) in lines 2b and 3b; thus He is the ruler of both heaven and life on earth as we understand it. This duality amplifies *weorada* in lb, since the hosts of which God is the Lord are the angelic and the mortal, the higher and the lower. The heavenly is invariably mentioned before the earthly, as we see in God's peace extending "uppe mid ænglum and on eorðan" in line 5: this is of course drawn from the angelic *Gloria* in Luke,[23] and reinforces our Christmas motif again. Those "ænglum" of 5a, and the "gumena" of 6a are therefore the constituent elements that make up the "weorada" in the poem's first line, so this interwoven repetition of a higher-lower duality predicts the structural movement of the poem itself and creates internal integrity within the first verse section.

Section 2 again preserves the presence of this duality, in describing God's power as encompassing "hiofen and eorðan" in line 13. The

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subject "we" of "heriað," "blætsiað," and "þanciað" in lines 7, 8, and 9 is originally borrowed from liturgical phrasing in the *Gloria in excelsis*, but is here expanded to include the higher realm of creation as well. Therefore, that all-inclusive "hiofen and eorðan" tints the "we" with angelic hue, so that the "halgum sternum" (71)) with which praise is rendered may also be celestial voices, and the "hlioðorcwidum" of line 2a may as likely be the angelic salutation from Luke as hymn-poems from a mortal poets pen.

The first subdivision of section 3 draws our eyes upward to God the Son as "cyninga cynincg cwicera gehwilces," dwelling in "ðære upplican æðelan ceastre" (19). However, He is also "sigefest sunu" in line 16a and "efeneadig beam agenum fæder" in line 21; here, the introduction of the filial-paternal relationship between the first two Persons of God in line 21 prepares us for the Son's move from coeternal Lord to incarnate So of God, again enforcing the descent from heaven to earth, from angels to mankind, from glorious rule to redemptive suffering for the sake of the lower realm. This brings us once more to the center of the poem, line 22, whose first element "hiofenlic lioht" carries with it all of the "high," "glorification," "rulership," and "spirit-realm" associations of the poem thus far. The very term "lioht" recalls John's identification[25] of the Son as "lux hominem," the true light which came into the world from the eternal realm at the moment of the Incarnation. The second half-line element "halige lamb" leads us down into the very heart of redemption theology, where the Son is the perfect, innocent, accepted sacrifice, foreshadowed in Isaiah as "sicut ovis ad occisionem ducetur,"[26] and identified as "agnus dei" by the Baptist.[27] Here again we have the Christmas motif of light coming into darkness, as well as the advent of the Lamb of God to all mankind, including the shepherds who heard the first *Gloria in excelsis*. But the linkage of "heofenlic lioht" and "halige lamb" in a single line may have been inspired by Revelation 21:23, in which the glory of God lights up the new Jerusalem, and we find the phrase "lucerna eius est agnus" (its light is the Lamb). This suggestion of the eternal City of God comes at the moment when the poetic voice modulates for the thematic shift from high heaven to the earthly stable, and reinforces the movement from higher

to lower again.

From lines 23a to 27b, the redemption words carry the poem forward in place of the glorification words, but significantly, the Crucifixion account in lines 26-28 holds a single echo of height once more. It occurs in line 27 with the word "ahofe" in the first half-line, which takes the stress together with "halige" in 27b: here the sins of humanity are raised with the Son on the cross. Yet, through that act of rising onto the cross to die, the Son dies to rise, and the redemption for which He descended is made complete in the Resurrection; in the poem itself, our

eyes are drawn again upward in the very next line, "þæt ðu on hæahsetle heafena rices." The complexity of tonal and linguistic rising and falling, together with their doctrinal counterparts, reminds me of John Donne's *Good Friday 1613: Riding Westward*.

By contrast to this dramatized ascent, the poet places himself with sinful mankind, both "qiofan gesceft" and yet still the sinful "niða" who must remain on earth while yet in the flesh. From earth, therefore, he looks upward to address his Redeemer and Creator. The duality of heaven and earth underlined in the poem therefore still remains, but a division between the two realms28 no longer constitutes a barrier, because of the redemption by the Son of the lower realm.

However this Redeemer, called "Crist nergende" in line 39b, is also "eallra dema cwucra ge deadra" in lines 38b-39a. Here in the last section of the poem, we find yet another echo of our Christmas motif, as Christ's Second Coming will be to judge the living and the dead. This, then, creates a second duality, appearing within the lower realm of creation which the Son redeemed. In line 31, the risen Son is called "gasta gemindig" (mindful of spirits). Since the "gasta" of which the Son is mindful are not angels, they must be the dead spoken of eight lines later. Indeed, in line 39 we find the line stress falling on "cwucra" and not "deadra," as though the dead have already been mentioned elsewhere, while focus must now fall on the living. So once again we have a duality of creation, this time within that realm which was redeemed by the Son's descent from heaven to earth. The dead are already safely in the "mindfulness" of the Son, and therefore are on a "higher" level than the living. The "cwucra" of line 39, then, are the very specific temporal human contingent of those "hosts" in the very first line, and serve to bring the poem back into mortal perspective, so that it rounds out with praise being offered to "hiofena heahcyninc" by the living, earthbound, and hence "lower" aspect of humanity. Humanity in turn forms the lower half of the duality of "angla and manna," which make up what the poet calls "ealle gesceft." Over all these carefully delineated hierarchical realms, the Lord Himself remains "heahcyninc," and so this poem enacts in its very structure the divisions of the cosmos as they were understood by Anglo-Saxon monastics, with "wuldor" informing the mood of the poem--a mood of awe at the glory of God the Creator, in and above creation.

I have hoped to show here that the *Kentish Hymn* conveys this note of awe, not just in the reworking of liturgical material that happens to glorify God but in the voice and sound and movements of a finely crafted piece of poetry. Moreover, it seems to be a poem whose power owes something to the release of an Old English voice from Latin texts, and the embodiment of that voice in a new text all its own. The

imaginative stature of one small composition29 like the *Kentish Hymn* is not enough to show the poetic impulse that existed during the Reform period, but the process of encountering such pieces as not only liturgical re-creations but elegantly crafted poems will bring to light a rich new field of Anglo-Saxon literary treasure.

Notes

A much more complex and technical version of this material will appear in a forthcoming critical edition of Kentish liturgical poetry, co-authored with Patricia Hollahan of the University of Illinois Press.

1. The *Kentish Hymn* was last edited by E. Dobbie in *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records VI (New York, 1942), 87-88. From his bibliography (p. clxviii), we can see that it has been either included as an "example" in collections or examined in terms of its dialect. Apart from a two-page note which identifies but does not expand upon some of the more immediate liturgical sources (Geoffrey Shepherd, "The Sources of the Old English *Kentish Hymn*," *MLN*, 67 [1952], 395-97), there has to date been no literary or critical edition attempted of either the *Kentish Hymn* or the *Kentish Psalm 50*.

2. G. E Krapp (*The Vercelli Book*, ASPR II [1932]) discusses the late tenth-century dating of Vercelli on p. xvi; N. R. Ker (*Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* [Oxford, 1957]) dates it "s. X2" on p. 460. Krapp and Dobbie (*The Exeter Book*, ASPR III [1936]) discuss the hand which compiled the poetry on pp. xiii-xiv, concluding with Keller and Flower that it could be "about the same date as the Vercelli Book, that is, about 960-980" (p. xiv); Ker dates it, like the Vercelli Book, "s.X2" (p. 153).

3. Krapp (*The Junius Manuscript*, ASPR I [1931]) identifies the four hands of Junius 11 as dating from 1000, and "less than a generation later" (p. x); in like fashion, Ker designates the Junius manuscript as "s.X/XI, XI1" (p. 406), doubtless accounting like Krapp for the different scribal hands. Dobbie (*Beowulf and Judith*, ASPR IV [1953]) notes that this part of Cotton Vitellius A.xv was written "by two scribes, at about the end of the tenth century" (p. ix); E Klaeber (*Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, 3rd ed. [Lexington, Mass., 1950]) dates it "about the end of the tenth century (p. xcvi), and Ker also designates it "s.X/XI" (p. 281).

4. Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London, 1982), pp. 112-14.

5. H. Logeman, ed., *The Rule of St. Benet* (London, 1888), pp. 39, 42, 43, and passim.

6. Canon 10 of the Council of Clofesho in 747 provides that clergy "must know the vernacular translations of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and of the offices of mass and baptism, so that they may expound them to the laity" (trans. G. G. Willis, *Further Essays in Early Roman Liturgy* [London,

1968], p. 231). We should also remember Alfred's interest in translating Latin texts into Old English (set out in his preface to the *Liber Regulae Pastoralis*), which may well echo the acts of Clofesho, as do other proposals in this letter (Whitelock, in *Sweet' s Anglo-Saxon Reader in Prose and Verse*, 15th ed., cited by E G. Cassidy and R. N. Ringler, *Bright's Old English Grammar and Reader*, 3rd ed. [New York, 1971], p. 181).

7. The transition from an Italic to a Germanic member of the Indo-European language family would constitute a far greater shifting of phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics than would a translation within a single family member, as in Latin to Norman French.

8. In *The Presence of the Word* (New Haven, 1967), Walter J. Ong discusses the use, restricted to the educated (usually male) class, of Latin as opposed to the vernaculars which were common to all, and the relationship between these two forms of "word' on pp. 57-63, 76-79, and 241-52.

9. These are preserved either as partial or complete translations above the Latin psalm-texts in glossed psalters A-M; a complete list of these sigla, derived from A. S. Cook (*Biblical Quotations in Old English Prose Writers* [London, 1898]) and Uno Lindelöf (*Studien zu altenglischen Psalterglossen* [Bonn, 1914]) can be found on p. xi of Sarah Larratt Keefer, *The Old English Metrical Psalter* (New York, 1979).

10 Paris Bibliothèque Nationale MS Fonds Latin 8824, edited by G. E Krapp (*The Paris Psalter and the Meters of Boethius*, ASPR V [1932]).

11. Described in F. J. E. Raby, *Christian-Latin Poetry* (Oxford, 1953), pp. 33-34; H. Gneuss, *Hymnar und Hymnen* (T¨bingen, 1968), pp. 15 and 30-40; and most recently by Gernot Wieland, *The Canterbury Hymnal* (Toronto, 1982), pp. 10-12.

12. Ker, p. 269.

13. Ker, pp. 268-69.

14. This is evident throughout the *Regularis Concordia* (ed. and trans. Dom Thomas Symons [New York, 1953]) and *The Rule of St. Benet*.

15. Dom Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London, 1945), p. 457; and Pierre Battifol, *Histoire du breviare romain* (translated as *History of the Roman Breviary* by A. M. Y. Baylay [London, 1912]), p. 186.

16. See Gneuss, p. 14, and Battifol, in Baylay, p. 184. The placing of the *Te Deum* is evident both in Logeman (p. 41) and in a more modern version, *The Rule of St. Benedict*, translated by Richard Crotty (Nedlands, Australia, 1963), p. 29.

17. The *Te Deum* is said at the Christmas Nocturns (*Reg. Conc.*, p. 28); because the *Gloria in excelsis* "is said at Mass ... between the feast of the Innocents and the Octave of Christmas" (*Reg. Conc.*, p. 29), we can assume that it too was said at Mass for Christmas Day.

18. "Advent," *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. E L. Cross (London, 1974), p. 20.

19. The following is a single example of lines showing "shuttling":

in lines 2-6, the last word of each line picks up or anticipates the alliteration of a line nearby: "weard" (2b) reflects the *w*-alliteration of line 1; "agend" (3b) predicts the vowel alliteration of line 5; "wuldor" (4b) refers back to 1b again, as does "willan" (6b); and "sibb" (5b) takes up the *s*-alliteration in line 4.

20. The following is a single example of "fluctuation": starting from the central line 22, where we find the poem's only double alliteration, lines 23 and 24 have only two stressed words; these lines "generalize" about the Son's redeeming activities. Lines 25-26 each contain three stress-bearers, as the poet slows to take a closer look at what the Son did to redeem humanity.

21. Ong, *Presence of the Word*, pp. 78-79.

22. Three distinct thematic subsections in the central division of the poem (11. 15-31) run from lines 15-21, 22-28, and 29-31.

23. The evident influential verses are 3 ("ut unum deum in trinitate, et trinitatem in unitate veneremur") and 27 ("et trinitas in unitate et unitas in trinitate veneranda sit"), here taken from D, the glossed psalter most likely to be contemporary with the Reform period (E Roeder, ed., *Der Altenglische Regius-Psalter* [Halle, 1904, reprinted Tübingen, 1973], pp. 297, 299).

24. Luke 2:14. All biblical references are to Robert Weber, ed., *Biblia Sacra Vulgata*

(Stuttgart, 1983). 25. John 1:4. 26. Isaiah 53:7.
27. *This expression, which ultimately derives from John 2:36, also appears in the Gloria in excelsis.*
28. *This notion of two realms, formerly in strife but reconciled by the Incarnation, also appears in the "weall wið wealle" section of the Christ I poem(Exeter Book, p. 4), and is discussed by A. S. Cook in The Christ of Cynewulf (Boston, 1900), p. 75. Other similarities of theme and language between the Kentish Hymn and the Christ I poems will be examined in a future study.*
29. *I see the Kentish Psalm 50, the Old English Metrical Psalter fragments, and the Creed, Gloria, and Pater Noster poems as all contributing to a further understanding of Reform-period poetic philosophy, and certainly some of these as being valuable and skilled examples of poetic techne in themselves.*