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Margaret Enid Bridges, *Generic Contrast in Old English Hagiographical Poetry*, Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1984. 276 pp., bibliography.

This work by Margaret Bridges originated as a doctoral thesis that was completed in 1980. In an attempt to define a more adequate mode of critical perception in the design of hagiographical poems (regarded as literary fictions and not as historical documents), Margaret Bridges has created a qualitative model to apply to their individual qualities, as well as to the generic affiliations among them. In so doing, she chooses five poems from the old English hagiographical tradition to demonstrate generic continuity and stylistic contrast: *Juliana*, *Guthlac A*, *Guthlac B*, *Andreas* and *Elene*. These poems fall into three categories of poetic legends with corresponding forms: virgin martyr/*passio*, confessor/*Antonine vita* and the missionary/*acta apostolorum*. She examines two factors in these forms: the sequence of episodes determining the legend's plot and its realization of various models of contrast. This highly-structured study analyses the plot structure of the five poems and devotes at least 20-30 pages to the stylistic contrasts in each one, discussing polarizations and contrasts effects through various motifs.

Bridges compares and contrasts the Old English version of *Juliana* by Cynwulf to the Latin version printed by the Editors of the *Acta Sanctorum* (AASS). Cynwulf emphasizes the antagonism between the Saint and her persecutors. In the AASS version *Juliana's* father is the persecutor while *Juliana* is an assiduous churchgoer. Cynwulf eliminates her conversion and aligns her with the victors. Cynwulf's *dramatis personae* operates within the hagiographical idea but emphasizes the eschatological repercussions of his Saint's *acta* for herself and her audience. *Juliana* is surrounded by martial imagery in both versions, placing her in contrastive collocation with her impotent or defeated enemies. Opposition is a main theme, operating within an allegorical/historical conflict and using motifs of fortitude and protection. Motifs of change, habitat, light and love further serve to polarize the *dramatis personae*. Cynwulf manipulates verbal repetitions and echoes, thematic contrasts and syntactic antitheses and sets them against a didactic backdrop which ultimately reverses the antitheses in the narrative.

Central to Bridges interpretation of *Guthlac A* is Woolf's statement that "*Guthlac A* consists entirely of a description of a Saint's heroic encounters with the devil." Each time the Saint resolves a conflict, he is brought closer to his heavenly reward. The poet has omitted most of the conventional *topoi* associated with death and has focused instead on the ascension and assumption of the dead Saint's soul, emphasizing the theme of heavenly reward. The poem

is permeated with martial imagery throughout and the conflicts are verbal rather than physical. As in the other poems under scrutiny, this poet juxtaposes the language of truth with falsehood by making the Saint's antagonists operate within the same alignments and contrasts with respect to these motifs as do the narrator and protagonist but with opposite referents. The contrastive motifs associated with the allegory of Christian warfare are used frequently in this poem: *jubilatio* (contrasting Christian joy with internal tribulation), *sapience* (contrasting the Saint's wisdom with his adversaries' cunning), light (contrasting celestial *lux* with infernal *tenebrae*) and habitat and change. Bridges points out that the poet achieves polarization through the allegory of Christian warfare, while the devil seeks to reverse the gradational progress of the narrative.

In contrast with *Guthlac A*, the *Guthlac B* poet reverses the ratio of time spent relating the Saint's struggles to his death. In fact, most of the narrative is preoccupied with death. The protagonist is occasionally diametrically opposed to the antagonist, and his suffering is combined with Christian longing for death. There are two main episodes: the Saint's solitary struggles against temptation and his ensuing public miracles. Bridges comments that the poet aligns these two stages through common syntactic features, contrastive characterization and a subservient thematic principle, which underline the diametrical opposition between the Saint and his antagonists. Patterns of grief are set alongside by the patterns of joy. The other *dramatis personae* besides the Saint and the confessor is the traditional attendant witness (associated with the Antoine convention) to whom the exemplary confessor stands in a gradational relationship. However, since the witness fails to imitate his Saint's exemplary elevation, *Guthlac B* fails to satisfy the generic expectations of its model more so than any of the other hagiographical poems discussed here. The motifs that prevail are: *sapience*, *jubilatio*, separation and reunion. Polarization is achieved through personifying illness and death.

According to Bridges, *Andreas*, a romantic conversion legend in the apocryphal, is set apart from the *acta apostolorum* tradition in the hagiographical corpus because his successive episodes lack the narrative coherence typical of the *vita*; the hagiographer's focus on the successive exemplary deeds of the one converted protagonist reveals that many episodes digress. This *acta* model consists of a sequence of episodes narrating the adventures of proselytizing heroes among barbaric, exotic pagans, which use Greek romances, and the *vita* and the *passio*. *Juliana*, *Guthlac* and *Andreas* have the *topos* of divine retribution in common. Peculiar to *Andreas*, however, is the diametrical contrast of mood between the Saint and his sympathetic followers and the subsequent gradational elevation of the privileged witnesses into glory. Like the *vita* and *passio*, all episodes can be reduced to antagonism and public miracles (the

Saint's *dramatis personae* separates into damned and blessed, thus elevating his audience). The sapiential motif prevails in *Andreas*; however, *Andreas* is not only wise, but also identifies with the *didaskalos* (teacher). He imparts his wisdom through a series of epithets, aligning himself as the traditional protagonist. Even though exile is a traditional hagiographical motif, *Andreas* evokes the theme of exile in a different context, making it unique to *Andreas* alone. Polarization is achieved through the voice of complaint and the voice of *jubilatio*. The manner in which the poet polarizes the motifs in this poem, using alignments and contrasts which are sometimes ironic, is also peculiar to the genre.

Elene contains the *passio* and the conversion legend (*acta apostolorum*) and, most pervasively, the *vita*. The entire *dramatis personae* confront one another to gain or prevent the possession of the relics. The thematic contrasts are primarily salvific, sapiential, emotive and visual. The conversion reflects sinful man's progression towards salvation, causing the unambiguous contrastive Saint and devil, so prominent in most hagiographical forms, to recede into the internal confines of the protagonists and their enemies. All the converts, including the antagonists, follow a pattern of progression based upon gradational opposition, whereas the Saint's antagonists, in converting, follow a pattern of reversal, based upon diametrical opposition. Polarization becomes more hagiographical in the last episode. The common motifs are those of knowledge, captivity, light and mood. The sapiential motif is a gradational contrast of progression from an imperfect state of knowledge to that of an enlightened convert who is filled with the wisdom of divine revelation. The poem's numerous converts will emerge from a state of anguish and enter into a state of rejoicing which reflects angelic *jubilatio* and prefigures the eternal bliss that awaits them in paradise.

Bridges concludes that the considerable number of contrastive motifs in these five poems is also related to the conventional stages of hagiography, strife, mood, wisdom and light. The plot structure of the *passio*, even though not uniform, invites the agonistic motifs of strife and of torture, polarizing the *dramatis personae* in terms of active persecution and passive suffering. Occasionally, sub-motifs such as courage and cowardice, invulnerability and impotence, reward and punishment are developed to support the agonistic antithesis. The difference in the agonistic motifs and *passio* may lie in narrative perspective, with the *passio* narrative unfolding itself in a dual, paradoxical perspective. The triumphs of the agonistic hermit over his tempers parallels his eschatological achievement of the victor's reward.

Diction used in *Guthlac A* and *B* reveals the difference between these versions: the narrator of *Guthlac A* dwells on the period of the Saint's tempta-

tions; the narrator of *Guthlac B* reveals a personal vision of this ultimate struggle in a greater strife. Its martial images serve a tragic world view in which the warrior's failure in the battle waged with illness and death receives greater emphasis. The *Elene* poem, of course, is marked by antagonism, characterizing the *dramatis personae* as heroic rather than hagiographical in pattern, and lacks polarization. Both Andreas and Elene are blessed victims of their apparently damned antagonists through the greater part of the narrative until the conversions they effect convert them into historical victors that can then defeat their opponents. All these works except *Guthlac A*, culminate in an evocation of the didactic activity of the Saint. All five poems have in common the motifs of combat, mood, *sapientia* and light. Flyting followed by complaint rather than conversion is also common in all these poems.

Bridges admits that she does not always include a systematic analysis of the four motifs mentioned, thus limiting herself to the predominant motifs in each individual work. However, not only has she analyzed these works in terms of images and motifs, she also has analyzed them in terms of syntactic patterns and figures of speech since these contribute to the polarization of character and to the relevant diametrical and gradational contrasts.

This study is marked by the style and approach of a dissertation, and it is thus best suited to the needs of Old English hagiographical experts. It is probably too specialized for students who are merely interested in hagiography. The non-specialist is hampered by the fact that a number of terms, such as diametrical and gradational contrasts are not defined. An index of Latin phrases would also have been helpful. However, on the whole, this study is an excellent foundation for the in-depth study of hagiography from the point of view other than allegory, which gives the scholar a precise foundation for the exploration of other motifs. It is therefore, an excellent and long-called-for contribution to the scholarly literature on hagiography.

Fran Nichol is currently in the Ph.D. English program at the University of Maryland, specializing in Medieval and Renaissance Studies; her major fields of interest include the Eighteenth Century Shakespeare criticism, the Renaissance lyric and epyllia, Queen Elizabeth's image as reflected in her speeches, Spencer's lyrics, English hagiography, and the prose of Foxe, Roper and Cavendish on the lives of the saints.