

The Phoenix and the Rebirth of Earlier Old English Verse

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Patterns of shared diction link several of the longer poems that open the Exeter Book. This paper suggests that *The Phoenix*, long associated with the signed poems of Cynewulf, also has important links with the *Guthlac*-poems that appear before *The Phoenix* in the same manuscript. In particular, the second part of *The Phoenix*, when it departs from its primary Latin poetic source, seems mainly to rely on echoes from *Guthlac B*, while the first part of the poem, drawn primarily from Latin verse, supplements that material with shared phrasing mainly from *Guthlac A*, and, in its opening lines, also from *Guthlac B*. The association of Guthlac with Christ on the one hand and *The Phoenix* on the other has implications for other poems in the Exeter Book, not least Cynewulf's *Juliana* and *The Wanderer*, both of which immediately follow *The Phoenix* in that manuscript.

Keywords: Old English poetry; Exeter Book; Cynewulf; Guthlac; *The Phoenix*

Introduction: The Place of *The Phoenix*

The Phoenix, comprising 677 lines of Old English verse (Cook 1919; Blake 1990; Jones 2012), is one of the longest poems in the Exeter Book, itself the manuscript containing most Old English verse (Muir 2000; Niles 2019). Within the Exeter Book, only *Christ C* (798 lines), *Guthlac A* (818 lines), and *Juliana* (731 lines) are longer, albeit that the first two are themselves parts of still longer compilations, both of which precede *The Phoenix* in the manuscript, while *Juliana*, signed in runes by Cynewulf, immediately follows. *The Phoenix* itself is evidently also part of a wider sequence of poems in the Exeter Book, comprising the damaged and incomplete cycle of poems now called *The Panther*, *The Whale*, and *The Partridge*, which are part of the broader medieval *Physiologus*-tradition, interpreting allegorically various creatures from a Christian perspective (Cook 1919; Squires 1988; O'Donnell 2001; Salvador-Bello 2024). Previous work on *The Phoenix*, particularly over the past quarter-century or so, has focussed on the identification of its major Latin sources (Pulsiano 1989; Gorst 2006; Griffith 2007), on its style, particularly with regard to repeated diction (Tyler 1996; Petersen 2000; Steen 2008; CLASP 2022), and on its themes (Faraci 2000; Appleton 2017; Faulkner 2023). Here, by contrast, this paper seeks to situate *The Phoenix* within the context of the Exeter Book itself, following the trend of studies considering how Old English poems and poets deliberately echoed others still

extant, in precisely the same way as can be demonstrated in contemporary Anglo-Latin poetry (Orchard 1994, 2002, 2003, 2009, 2010, 2016, 2020a, 2020b, and forthcoming; *CLASP* 2022; Evans 2024; Revell 2025; Thomas 2026).

The *Christ*- and *Guthlac*-Compilations of the Exeter Book

The Exeter Book of Old English poetry contains the greatest variety of extant verse. The compilation opens with two composite collections, beginning with three poems on Christ, focusing on Advent, Ascension, and Doomsday (now generally termed *Christ A*, *B*, and *C*, comprising lines 1–439, 440–866, and 867–1664 respectively), followed by two on the Mercian Saint Guthlac (673–714; see Roberts and Thacker 2020), dealing in turn with his battles against demons in his fenland retreat and his death and ascension (with the modern titles *Guthlac A* and *B*, comprising lines 1–818 and 819–1379; see further Cook 1900; Roberts 1979; Bjork 2013; Clayton 2013). Together, these five poems come to more than 3,000 lines, and, given that both the beginning of *Christ A* and the ending of *Guthlac B* are missing as a result of physical damage to the manuscript (with further lacunas after *Christ B* 556 and *Guthlac A* 368), it seems certain that their combined length would greatly have exceeded that of *Beowulf*. It also seems feasible that Cynewulf, who signed the second of the *Christ*-poems (*Christ B*) with his characteristic runic signature, drew on both *Christ A* and (especially) *Christ C* for inspiration not only in *Christ B* (Chase 1974), but in all three of his other signed poems, namely *Juliana* in the Exeter Book and *Fates of the Apostles* and *Elene* in the Vercelli Book (Orchard 2003; 2020a, 324–45). Similarly, the style of *Guthlac B*, which is likewise distinctly Cynewulfian, seems to have been composed as a companion-piece to *Guthlac A*, from which it appears to borrow deliberately. *Guthlac A* also appears to have been a model for Cynewulf's signed poems (Orchard 2020a, 391–94), so presenting a chain of borrowing and association that is found widely elsewhere in both Old English and pre-Conquest Anglo-Latin (Orchard 2009; 2010; 2020a). Both the order of the compilations, and a range of unique or highly restricted verbal parallels strongly support the notion that both *Guthlac*-poets were keen to highlight the fact that Guthlac, a former warrior, acting as a “soldier of Christ” (*miles Christi*), like all saints, took Christ as a model (Cahilly-Bretzin 2020, 86–138; Revell 2025, 105–55).

The Phoenix follows *Guthlac B* in the Exeter Book, with two other poems intervening (Cook 1919; FitzPatrick 1933; McKeage 1985; Blake 1990; White 2000; Jones 2012). Just as the ending of *Guthlac B* is missing through physical damage to the manuscript, so too is the opening of the poem that follows, now known as *Azarias* or *The Canticle of the Three Youths*, which describes the miraculous preservation in the fiery furnace, alongside the prophet Daniel, of Azarias and his two companions. The poem as a whole has an evidently close

relationship with the longer Old English poem known as *Daniel*, preserved in the Junius manuscript, into which a version of *Azarias* appears to have been interpolated (Remley 2002).

Given that the connection between the three *Christ*-poems on the one hand and the two *Guthlac*-poems on the other is compelling, as is the link between the two groups of texts as a result of the identification of saint and saviour, it is tempting to associate *Azarias* with a putative ending for *Guthlac B* that would have focussed on the cleansing fire of Doomsday that will lead the elect to Paradise (see Roberts 1973, responding to Farrell 1972), especially since that is such a prominent theme in both *Christ C* and poems either signed by or associated with Cynewulf (Orchard 2020a). *Azarias* is immediately followed by *The Phoenix*, again dealing with the re-birth and resurrection through flame of a mythical creature figuratively associated with Christ (Steen 2008, 35–70), while the poem that follows *The Phoenix* in the Exeter Book, *Juliana*, is both signed by Cynewulf and describes the martyrdom of that saint after she first miraculously survives torment by fire. In such a fashion, the first eight poems of the Exeter Book can be regarded as being linked by a chain of verbal and thematic connections; the ninth and shortest poem in the opening sequence, *The Wanderer*, also has apparent structural, verbal, and thematic links with both *The Phoenix* and the *Guthlac*-poems, as we shall see, so suggesting conscious compilation for at least this part of the Exeter Book as a whole.

The Latin Sources of the Old English *Phoenix*

The Phoenix itself seems at first glance a composite work, along the lines of the preceding *Christ*- and *Guthlac*-compilations, in that it splits easily into two parts, the first of which has a close Latin source (*Phoen* 1–380), and the second of which represents a meditation on the association of the mythical bird, its rebirth, and the resurrection of Christ (*Phoen* 381–677). Such a format aligns *The Phoenix* with what elsewhere in homiletic writings is called a *big·spell* (“a parable,” “an exemplum”), in which an example, often drawn from a Latin original, is first described and then explained (Steen 2008, 41–44); the same might be said of *The Wanderer*, which likewise splits into two equal parts, focusing respectively on the past and present lives of a warrior who, like Guthlac, has turned first to Christ and then to solitude (Orchard 2002; for a similar argument with regard to *Beowulf*, see Roberts 2007).

That primary source for the first part of *The Phoenix* (*Phoen* 1–380) has long been recognized as a Latin poem comprising 85 elegiac couplets (so 170 lines) “On the bird known as the Phoenix” (*De aue phoenix*), usually attributed to Lactantius (c. 250–c. 325), an orator and Christian convert who went on to become an advisor to the Roman emperor Constantine the Great (c. 272–337).

The attribution to Lactantius (White 2000, 27–28) is implied by Alcuin (c. 735–804), having been stated baldly two centuries before by Gregory of Tours (c. 538–94), while there is also evidence that the Latin poem was known and imitated by pre-Conquest Anglo-Latin poets too (Lapidge 2006, 231, 319; Orchard 2020a, 375).

However, *De aue phoenice* is not overtly Christian, even though interpretations linked the rebirth of the mythical bird with the resurrection of Christ, and indeed the whole of the second part of *The Phoenix* (*Phoen* 381–677) explicitly makes and explores that connection, following the allegorical tradition found elsewhere in the other Old English *Physiologus*-poems in the Exeter Book now known as *The Panther*, *The Partridge*, and *The Whale* (Cook 1919; Kantrowitz 1964; Squires 1988; O'Donnell 2001; Salvador-Bello 2024). Other Latin sources of *The Phoenix* in both prose and verse have also been detected (see in particular Griffith 2007, perhaps to be supplemented by Pulsiano 1989, on which see below), notably Avitus (c. 450–c. 518), Dracontius (c. 455–c. 505), Ambrose (c. 380–500), and the Vulgate (Steen 2008, 48–51; Orchard 1994, 185–88; Gorst 2006; Lapidge 2006; Orchard 2020a, 374), again mainly in the first part of *The Phoenix*; by contrast, the focus here is on potential Old English poetic sources. The poet of *The Phoenix*, who, like *Guthlac B*, has a markedly Cynewulfian style (Orchard 2003, 283–87, 294; 2020a, 394–95), appears to have drawn primarily on *Guthlac A* for that part of the poem based on Latin verse, and on *Guthlac B* both for the concluding part and for the opening lines (Orchard 2020a, 392–93), so suggesting, especially when combined with clear signs that both parts of *The Phoenix* are interconnected, that the poem is best regarded as a unified whole, with an overarching plan and purpose (Tyler 1996; Petersen 2000; Steen 2008, 168 n.110; a fuller list of formulas in *The Phoenix* can be found in CLASP 2022).

***The Phoenix* and *Guthlac A*: Seeking Solitude and Building a Dwelling for Death**

There is considerable expansion in two sections near the beginning of *The Phoenix* (*Phoen* 13–20a, 50–59; see further below), which elaborate greatly on Latin lines describing the secluded dwelling-place of the mythical creature for most of its life, and which evidently derive from the familiar literary trope of the so-called *locus amoenus* (“pleasant place”; see Appleton 2017; Faulkner 2023). After the setting is established, with clear echoes of both Paradise and Eden, as we shall see, the poet describes how, after a thousand years have passed (O'Donnell 2001, 161–62; Steen 2008, 37–38), when it is ripe for rebirth, the exotic bird flies away from this verdant and blooming home to seek solitude far from human habitation (*Phoen* 147b–58a):

Swā ġe-dēmed is
 bearwes bī-gengan, þæt hē þær brūcan mōt
 wonges mid willum, ond welan nēotan,
 līfes ond lissa, londes frætwa,
 oþ-þæt hē þūsende þisses līfes,
 wudu-bearwes weard, wintra ġe-bīdeþ.
 Ðonne bið ġe-hefgad haswiġ-feðra,
 gomol, ġēarum frōd, grēne eorðan
 ā-flȳhð, fugla wyn, foldan ġe-blōwene,
 ond þonne ġe-sēceð sīde rīce
 middan-ġeardes, þær nō men būġað
 eard ond ēþel.

So it is ordained for the inhabitant of the grove that he may be permitted to benefit from the plain as he wishes, and enjoy the wealth <150> of life and favours, the land's adornments, until the wood-grove's guardian has passed a thousand years of this life. Then the pale-feathered creature, old, experienced in years, will be weighed down. <155> The joy of birds flies from the green earth, the blooming land, and then seeks a broad kingdom in the world, where no humans inhabit the land and homeland.

Because of the grammatical genders involved in each language, the phoenix is figured as masculine in the Old English and feminine in Latin, even though in both poems it is made clear that the creature's actual gender is unknown (*De aue phoenix* 163; *Phoen* 355b–57a). The structural alliteration of *þisses* (*Phoen* 151b) is uncommon in Old English verse, and has the effect of highlighting the sense of “this life”; other well-known examples are found in *Beowulf* (*Beo* 197a, 790a, and 806a) and *The Wanderer* (*Wan* 58b), the latter of which indeed follows *The Phoenix* in the Exeter Book, with Cynewulf's *Juliana* intervening (Orchard 2002). The Latin source passage in *De aue phoenix* notes the travels of the Phoenix in Syria (renamed Phoenicia in its honour), and its mention of “a thousand years of life” seeming “heavy” (*De aue phoenix* 59–60: *uitae . . . mille . . . annos . . . grauem*) has clearly influenced specific aspects of the Old English (*Phoen* 151, 152b, and 153a: *þūsende . . . līfes . . . wintra . . . ġe-hefgad*). In the relevant Latin lines there is an emphasis on “this world, where death holds dominion” (*De aue phoenix* 64: *hunc orbem, mors ubi regna tenet*), and that in highlighting through repetition how the bird “seeks out” this retreat, it does so “through trackless wastes” (*De aue phoenix* 64 and 67: *petit . . . petit deserta per auia*), whereas in *The Phoenix*, there is no mention at this point of death or a desert.

There is, however, a parallel passage in *Guthlac A* describing the birdsong that greets the saint returning to his own remotely placed fenland retreat (*GuthA* 742–48a; here, as throughout, parallel phrasing is indicated by *italics*):

That victory-plain was pleasant, and his new dwelling, the birds' voices delightful, the earth in bloom; cuckoos announced the new year. Guthlac, <745> blessed and resolute, was able to enjoy his home. The green plain remained under God's protection; the keeper who came from heaven had expelled the fiends.

Shortly after these lines in *The Phoenix*, there is a passage describing the preparations of the bird, retreating from its accustomed nest and building a sumptuous dwelling in a palm-tree (the Latin for which is also *phoenix*), in order to prepare for death and rebirth (*Phoen* 199b–207):

Ʀær hē sylf biereð
 in Ʀæt trēow innan torhte frætwe;

þær sē wilda fuġel in þām wēstenne
 ofer hēanne bēam hūs ġe·timbreð,
 wlitig ond wynsum, ond ġe·wīcað þær
 sylf in þām solere, ond ymb·seteð ūtan
 in þām lēaf-sceade liç ond feþre
 on healfa ġe·hwāre hālgum stencum
 ond þām æpelestum eorþan blēdum.

There he himself brings <200> bright ornaments into the midst of that tree, the wild bird builds in the wasteland above the lofty tree a house, beautiful and lovely, and himself dwells there in the sunny spot, <205> and in that leafy shade surrounds body and feathers on every side with sacred scents, and the noblest fruits of the earth.

The references both to a “wasteland” and a “sunny spot” in the Old English (*Phoen* 201b: *wēstenne*; 204a: *solere*), neither of which is evident in *De aue phoenice* at this point, led to the tentative suggestion that the *Phoenix*-poet was alluding to a lost vernacular version of Psalm 101: 7–8, based on several Psalm-glosses, that include the terms *wēsten* and *soler* in swift succession. The Vulgate, on which the glosses are based, reads as follows (Pulsiano 1989):

Similis factus sum pellicano solitudinis; factus sum sicut nycticorax in domicilio.
Vigilaui, et factus sum sicut passer solitarius in tecto.

I am become like a pelican of the wilderness: I am like a night-raven in the house.
 I have watched, and am become as a sparrow all alone on the housetop.

The fact that these psalm-verses refer to three birds (a pelican, a night-raven, and a sparrow) may have suggested their relevance to the poet of *The Phoenix*, and it is perhaps significant that the only occurrence outside of verse of the compound “loner,” “solitary one” (*ān-haġa* or *ān-hoġa*) is in a gloss for the Latin *passer solitarius* in the second of the two psalm verses here, where the alternative glosses *ān-hoġa* and *ān-wuniende* (“dwelling alone”) are given for *solitarius*. In poetry, there are eleven occurrences of *ān-haġa* or *ān-hoġa*, distributed across nine different poems, including Cynewulf’s *Elene*, *Guthlac B*, *Andreas*, *The Phoenix*, and *The Wanderer* (*Beo* 2368a; *El* 604b; *GuthB* 997a; *And* 1351a; *Phoen* 87a, 346b; *MaxII* 19a; *Wan* 1a, 40a; *ResB* 90b; *Ridd5* 1a); the last two poems are the only ones where the compound appears twice.

The equivalent passage in the Latin poem comprises six lines (*De aue phoenice* 89–94) but omits many details that embellish the Old English. There is, for example, passing mention of “unguents” and “various scents” (*De aue phoenice* 91 and 93: *sucos . . . uarios . . . odores*), expanded in the Old English as “sacred scents and the noblest fruits of the earth” (*Phoen* 206b–207: *hālgum stencum /*

ond *þām æpelestum eorþan blēdum*). There is a general parallel with Guthlac's own withdrawal to his fenland retreat, where, according to *Guthlac A*, he builds his own haven and lives until his demise. By comparison, in a section towards the beginning of *Guthlac A* discussing the end of the world and the approach of Doomsday, the poet makes a direct connection between the waning of the world and the cooling of Christ's love, focusing on the aging of the earth's abundance (*GuthA* 43–46a):

Ealdað *eorþan blæd* *æpela* ġe·hwylcre
 ond of wite wendað wæstma ġe·cyndu;
 bið sēo sīpre tīd sæda ġe·hwylces
 mætræ in mægne.

The earth's abundance is growing old in every one of its noble qualities, and all kinds of fruit decrease in beauty; <45> everything that grows is weaker in strength in this later time.

Three of the four on-verses here exhibit double alliteration, when the figure for the poem as a whole is just over 45 percent, while all three off-verses are of the same type A1, so marking off this brief passage metrically (Pascual 2026, 250, 503). Whereas in *The Phoenix* it is the mythical bird who is oppressed with age, here it is the fruitful produce of the earth that grows old. The parallel phrasing with regard to the nobility of the earth's fruitfulness here (*GuthA* 43: *eorþan blæd æpela*) and "the noblest fruits of the earth" is clear (*Phoen* 207: *þām æpelestum eorþan blēdum*).

The self-immolation of the bird follows in *The Phoenix*, in the course of an extraordinary passage (*Phoen* 240b–59a) representing one of the longest extended similes in Old English (Stanley 1955, 417; Steen 2008, 55–62), duly demarcated by the echo-words *swā . . . swā* ("just . . . as"), but based only very loosely on another simile in the Latin poetic source (*De aue phoenice* 99–108), likewise employing repetition (and bounded by *uelut . . . uelut*). *The Phoenix*-poet highlights the nature of the reborn bird, "sundered from sins" (*Phoen* 242a: *synnum ā·sundrad*), and while there is no basis in the Latin for this, the wording does have a precise parallel in a passage immediately following a speech directed at Guthlac's tormenting demons, where the poet of *Guthlac A* emphasizes the purity and heroism of the secluded saint (*GuthA* 513–15a; see too Thomas 2026, 102):

Swā hleoþrade hālig cempa;
 wæs sē martyre from mon-cynnes
synnum ā·sundrad.

So spoke the holy warrior; he was a martyr, <515> sundered from mankind's sins.

The description of Guthlac as a “holy warrior” (*GuthA* 513b: *hāliġ cempa*), not only alludes to his previous life as a secular warrior who gave up his former life for Christ, but also to his current role as a “soldier of Christ” (*miles Christi*; for the role in four Old English Saints' Lives, see Cahilly-Bretzin 2020). In *Guthlac B*, in a striking metaphor that gestures back to Guthlac's earlier life as a warrior just as that life is now drawing to an end, death itself is figured as a “warrior keen for carnage” (*GuthB* 996b–99a):

Swā wæs Gūð·lāce
 enġe an-hoġa æt·ryhte þā
 æfter niht-scūan nēah ġe·þýded,
 wiga wæl-ġífre.

So the cruel solitary one, the warrior keen for carnage, came close to Guthlac through the shade of night.

Precisely the same arresting phrase is employed in the second part of *The Phoenix*, likewise in the context of how death in the form of a “warrior keen for carnage, made strong by weapons” snatches away the life of even the “blessed warrior” (*Phoen* 482–90):

Þus ēadiġ eorl ēcan drēames,
 heofona hāmes mid hēah-cyning
 earnað on elne, oþ·þæt ende cymeð
 dōġor-rīmes, þonne dēað nimeð,
 wiga wæl-ġífre, wæpnum ġe·þrýþed,
 ealdor ānra ġe·hwæs, ond in eorþan fæðm
 snūde sendeð sāwlum bi·numene
 læne lič-homan, þær hī longe bēoð
 oð fýres cyme foldan bi·þeahte.

Thus does the blessed warrior earn with valour eternal joy, a home in the heavens, until the end <485> of his day comes, when death, the warrior keen for carnage, made strong by weapons, takes the life of every one, and swiftly sends into the earth's embrace the fleeting bodies, deprived of souls, where they shall be long covered in soil <490> until the coming of flame.

The “blessed warrior” mentioned here (*Phoen* 482a: *ēadiġ eorl*) looks like an allusion to Guthlac, explicitly described as “blessed and resolute” in a passage already discussed (*GuthA* 745a: *ēadiġ ond onmōd*; we might note too the early description of the dwelling-place of the phoenix as “blessed and unharmed”

[*Phoen* 20a: *ēadiġ ond onsund*] in a passage discussed below), while the distribution of the term *wæl-ġīfre* (“keen for carnage”) may itself be noteworthy: beyond these two passages, it is only found elsewhere in *The Wanderer*, *Andreas*, and *Judith* (*And* 372a, 1271a; *Wan* 100a; *Jud* 207a, 295b, again in the context of an actual battle, like *siġe-wong* [*Jud* 294a above]). We have already seen that the term *ān-hoġa* found here in the parallel passage from *Guthlac B* also occurs twice in *The Wanderer*, as indeed does the compound *niht-scūa* (*Wan* 104a), but the overlapping diction exhibited here between three compounds in successive a-lines of *Guthlac B* perhaps supports the idea of some connection, the more so given that the eponymous wanderer gives up a life of warfare and watery travel to end up, not only settled apart and devoted to a life of solitary meditation (*Wan* 111b: *ġeæt him sundor æt rūne*), but also “deprived of joys” (*Wan* 79a: *drēame bi-drorene*; the phrase is otherwise only found in the *Guthlac*-poems [*GuthA* 626a *drēame bi-drorene*; *GuthB* 901a: *drēamum bi-drorene*]).

But if *Guthlac* (and indeed the character of at least the first half of *The Wanderer*) can rightly be identified as a warrior and a champion, it is at first glance more puzzling that the phoenix should also be designated as “war-brave” and “battle-skilled” (*Phoen* 228a, 286a: *heabo-rōf* and *beadu-cræftiġ*). Neither of these epithets have any known Latin source, and it is also worth pointing out that in another of the so-called *Physiologus*-poems in the Exeter Book, *The Panther*, the creature in question, identified, like the phoenix, as a type of dying and resurrected Christ, is likewise described in quick succession both as a “mighty fighter” (the term is unique) and “courage-brave” (*Pan* 38a, 40a: *þeod-wiġa* and *ellen-rōf*). Similarly, in the second part of *The Phoenix*, reference is made, for example, both to “the Lord’s champion” and to “the Creator’s champions” (*Phoen* 452b, 471b: *dryhtnes cempa* and *meotudes cempa*). Such language echoes the designation of *Guthlac* as a “holy champion” in a passage already discussed above that gestures towards his former life (*GuthA* 513b: *hāliġ cempa*); elsewhere, the poet speaks of him as, for example, “Christ’s champion,” “the creator’s warrior,” “the Lord’s champion,” and (three times) “the champion of glory” (*GuthA* 153a: *Crīstes cempa*; 324b: *wuldres cempa*; 558b: *wuldres cempa*; 576a: *meotudes cempa*; 558b: *wuldres cempa*; and 727b: *dryhtnes cempa*).

We might also note the reference to the cleansing flame at Doomsday in the final line of the parallel passage in *The Phoenix* (*Phoen* 490a: *oð fýres cyme*), matching a still more explicit reference towards the beginning of *The Phoenix* to the bird’s Edenic dwelling lasting “until the coming of flame, the Lord’s judgement” (*Phoen* 47b–48a: *oð bæles cyme / dryhtnes dōmes*). The stark outcomes at Doomsday are also evident in a later passage in *Guthlac A*, where *Guthlac* contrasts his own heavenly life after death in Paradise with the living death that his demonic adversaries suffer in hell (*GuthA* 679b–84a):

“Pær gē gnornende
 deað sceolon dreogan, ond ic drēama wyn
 āgan mid englum in pām uplican
 rodera rīce, pær is ryht cyning,
 help ond hælu hælepa cynne,
 duðuð ond drohtað.”

“Lamenting there, you <680> have to suffer death, and I shall possess the joy of delights among the angels in the celestial kingdom of the heavens, where the true king is, help and safety for mankind, blessings and society.”

All of the on-verses here are of the same type (A1), and all exhibit double alliteration, whereas the rate for the poem as a whole is just over 45 percent, so again marking out this passage metrically (Pascual 2026, 264, 530).

The complete contrast between heaven and hell is underlined by the correlative parallelism of the sequence *Pær . . . pær*, something much clearer in the Old English than in modern translation (“there . . . where”). In part, this passage seems to draw on the final words of a speech by Mary, the mother of Christ, in *Christ A*, also known as *The Advent Lyrics*, earlier in the Exeter Book (Jones 2024); the relevant lines of which read as follows (*ChristA* 99b–103):

“Hyht is on-fangen
 pæt nū blētsung mōt bām gē-mæne,
 werum ond wīfum, ā to worulde forð
 in pām uplican engla drēame
 mid sōð-fæder symle wunian.”

“They have received hope <100> that happiness may now last forever for both men and women alike, world dwells always without end in the heavenly joy of the angels with the Father of truth.”

We might note the parallel sequences (*GuthA* 680b–81: *drēama . . . englum in pām uplican*; *ChristA* 102: *in pām uplican engla drēame*), so perhaps suggesting some connection. By contrast, in a brief passage comparing the mythical bird to Christ’s elect, just after the beginning of the second part of *The Phoenix*, when the poet has departed from the main Latin poetic source, it seems unclear whether the lines are drawn from *Guthlac A* or *Christ A* (*Phoen* 387–92):

Pisses fugles gē-cynd fela gē-liċes
 bi pām gē-cornum Crīstes þegnum
 beacnað in burgum, hū hī beorhtne gē-fēan
 þurh fæder fultum on pās frēcnan tīd
 healdap under heofonum, ond him hēanne blæd

in þām ūplican ēðle ġe·strȳnaþ.

The nature of this bird points to a great similarity with those chosen servants of Christ in the dwelling-places, how they maintain under the heavens a shining joy <390> with the support of the Father in this treacherous time, lay up for themselves supreme splendour in that homeland above.

The shared phrase *in þām ūplican* linking all three passages seems on its own insufficient to demonstrate any direct connection, even if the reference in *Christ A* to the “Father of truth” (*ChristA* 103a: *sōð-fæder*; the compound is unique) may have influenced “through the support of the Father” in *The Phoenix* (*Phoen* 390a: *þurh fæder fultum*). However, the same phrase also appears towards the end of that poem, when the comparison between the wondrous reborn bird and the risen Christ is made utterly plain (*Phoen* 642b–46a):

Þeah hē dēaþes cwealm
on rōde trēow ræfnan sceaolde,
þearlic wite, hē þȳ þriddan dæge
æfter līces hryre līf eft on·fēng
þurh fæder fultum.

Though He had to suffer the pains of death on the tree of the Cross, a terrible punishment, on the third day <645> after the demise of his body He received life again through the support of the Father.

The repeated phrase “through the support of the Father” connecting the two passages from *The Phoenix* (*Phoen* 380a, 646a: *þurh fæder fultum*) again highlights another envelope-pattern that encompasses the second part of the poem.

At all events, the lines immediately preceding the stylistically distinct macaronic ending of *The Phoenix* (discussed further below) make it plain that it is the passage from *Guthlac A* that has drawn the focus of the poet (*Phoen* 661b–66):

Sȳ Him lof symle
þurh woruld worulda, ond wuldres blæd,
ār ond onwald, *in þām ūplican*
rodera rīce. *Hē is on ryht cyning*
middan-ġeardes ond mægen-þrymmes,
wuldre bi·wunden in þære wlitigan byrig.

To him be praise continually throughout all ages, and the splendour of glory, honour and power in the kingdom of the skies above. He is by right the king <665> of the world and wrapped in the glory of mighty power in that beautiful city.

The whole-line doublet *middan-geardes ond mægen-brymmes* (*Phoen* 665) also appears to be a direct echo of two lines in poems elsewhere in the Exeter Book signed by Cynewulf, namely *Christ B* and *Juliana* (*ChristB* 557; *Jul* 154); the compound *mægen-brymme* also appears in a third signed poem, namely *Elene* in the Vercelli Book (*El* 734a). While the sequence *blæd . . . in þām ūplīcan* connects this passage to the earlier lines in *The Phoenix* (*Phoen* 387–92), so giving an envelope-structure to the second part of the poem as a whole, the still more impressive sequence here, comprising nine elements (*Phoen* 663b–64: *in þām ūplīcan . . . rīce. Hē is on ryht cyning*), makes clear the connection to the parallel passage in *Guthlac A*.

In some further lines in *Andreas* from the Vercelli Book, it is likewise likely that the same passage from *Guthlac A* has also been an inspiration, perhaps combined with the relevant lines from *The Phoenix* (*And* 118–21):

Ġe-wāt him þā sē hālga helm æl-wihta,
engla scýppend, tō þām ūplīcan
ēðel-rīce. Hē is on riht cyning,
staðol-fæst styrend, in stōwa ġe-hwām.

Then there departed the holy protector of all creatures, creator of angels, off to the <120> homeland on high. He is by right the king, the well-grounded governor, in every place.

This brief passage opens with a line of type A3, and the other three on-verses are all of type A1, so once more marking it out metrically as a coherent whole (Pascual 2026, 133). Certainly, the impressive sequence here (*And* 119–20: *engla . . . tō þām ūplīcan / ēðel-rīce. Hē is on riht cyning*) seems to blend aspects of both previous poems (see further Orchard 2016, 362–70).

Another echo of *Guthlac A* is found towards the end of the first part of *The Phoenix*, where the poet describes the phoenix thronged by both men and flocks of every kind of bird, the latter singing powerfully (*Phoen* 331–41a):

Ðonne wundriað weras ofer eorþan
wlite ond wæstma, ond ġe-writum cýþað,
mundum mearciað on marm-stāne
hwonne sē dæg ond sēo tīd dryhtum ġe-ēawe
frætwe flyht-hwates. Ðonne fugla cynn
on healfa ġe-hwone hēapum þringað,
sīgað sīd-wegum, songe lofiað,

mærað mōdigne mēaglūm reordum,
 ond swā þone hālgan hringe be·teldað
 flyhte on lyfte; fenix biþ on middum,
 þrēatum bi·þrunge.

Then men across the earth marvel at his beauty and attainments, and they reveal it in their writings and carve with hands in marble what day and hour reveal to the multitudes <335> the adornments of the one swift in flight. Then the species of birds throng in flocks on either side, press in from distant paths, praise in song, celebrate the bold one with powerful voices, and so surround in a circle the holy creature <340> in flight in the air; the phoenix is in the midst, encompassed by troops.

The passage is clearly structured around repetition (*Donne . . . Donne*), begins with continued alliteration on *w-*, and includes connecting terms (*flyht-hwates . . . hēapum þringað; flyhte . . . þrēatum bi·þrunge*) that link both halves of the passage. The continued alliteration highlights the reference to “writings,” as is perhaps only appropriate as we come to the end of the main Latin source, and the whole phrase (*Phoen* 332b: *ond ġe·writum cýþað*) echoes what is found at the beginning of the poem as a whole (*Phoen* 30b: *on ġe·writum cýðað*); elsewhere, the phrase only occurs towards the beginning of *The Panther* (*Pan* 14b [*on ġe·writum cýþað*, emended from *cyþan*]), and twice in Cynewulf’s *Elene* (*El* 826b: *on ġe·writum cýðed*; and 1255b: *on ġe·writum cýðan*; the latter phrase occurs just before the runic signature). The soundscape at this point in *The Phoenix* is also emphasized, both through reference to “song” and “powerful voices” (*Phoen* 337b, 338b: *songe . . . mēaglūm reordum*).

By contrast, the Latin simply describes the phoenix being accompanied by a throng of other birds (*De aue phoenice* 157–58):

Alituum stipata choro uolat illa per altum
 turbaque prosequitur munere laeta pio.

Thronged by a chorus of winged creatures she flies through the heights, and the crowd follows on, happy in their pious gift.

However, any sense of sound or song here has to be extrapolated from the single mention of a “chorus,” though the word also carries the sense “a dance in a ring,” and the Old English explicitly mentions a “ring” at the appropriate moment (*Phoen* 339b: *hringē*), so suggesting that the source of the singing lies elsewhere. By contrast, the poet of *Guthlac A*, describing how the reclusive saint, returning to his fenland retreat, makes it very clear using the same phrase that he is blessed by throngs of birds singing with powerful voices (*GuthA* 732b–36a):

Sige-hrēðig cwōm
 bytla tō þām beorge. Hine blētsadon
 monġe mæg-wlitas, *mēaglum reordum*,
 trēo-fugla tuddor, tācnum cȳðdon
 ēadġes eft-cyme.

Triumphant, the builder came to that hill. The many species and breeds <735> of birds in the trees blessed him with ardent voices, and by these signals announced the blessed man's return.

The passage is embellished with double alliteration in all of the full lines, so making it stand out somewhat. The phrase “with powerful voices” (*mēaglum reordum*) is uniquely shared by these two poems, and likewise the term “builder” (*bytla*) here is only witnessed in verse, and only in the Exeter Book, twice in *Guthlac A* and a third time in *The Gifts of Men*, the poem that immediately follows *The Wanderer* (*GuthA* 148b, 733a; *Gifts* 75b: *bylda*). The earlier occurrence of the term in *Guthlac A* evidently foreshadows its appearance here; there, the sequence *beorg . . . bytla cwōm* (*GuthA* 148) matches *cwōm / bytla . . . beorge* (*GuthA* 172b–73). We might also recall that in a passage from the *Phoenix* already considered above (*Phoen* 199b–207), the bird “builds a dwelling” (*Phoen* 202b: *hūs ġe-timbred*). Moreover, the dwellings of both *Guthlac* and the phoenix can be connected in other ways, given that *De aue phoenice* explicitly says that “she then builds herself a nest or tomb” (77: *Construit inde sibi seu nidum siue sepulchrum*), while *Guthlac*'s dwelling is widely interpreted as a repurposed barrow, especially in *Guthlac B*, where the focus is squarely on death and the afterlife (Roberts 1979, 132, note on *GuthA* 140a; O'Donnell 2001, 167–68; Sharma 2002).

The Phoenix and Guthlac B: Eden and Paradise

In a passage following immediately on from one discussed above (*Phoen* 387–92), close to the beginning of the second half of *The Phoenix*, so just after the poet departs from *De aue phoenice*, there is a description of the prelapsarian life of Adam and Eve, which reads as follows (*Phoen* 393–400a):

Habbaþ wē ġe·ascad þæt se æl-mihtġa
 worhte wer ond wīf þurh his wundra spēd,
 ond hī þā ġe·sette on þone sēlestan
 foldan scēata, þone fīra bearn
 nemnað neorxna-wong, þær him nānġes wæs
 ēades on·sȳn, þenden ēces word,
 hālġes hlēoþor-cwide, healdan woldan

on þām nīwan ġe·fēan.

We have learned that the almighty created man and woman through the abundance of his miracles, <395> and then set them up in the best region of the earth, which the children of men call paradise, where there was for them no want of wealth, for as long as they were willing to keep the word of the eternal one, the spoken command of the holy one <400> in that fresh joy.

Though they are unnamed, it is clear that the “man and woman” are Adam and Eve, who were allowed to live in Eden “for as long as they were willing to keep the word of the eternal one, the spoken command of the holy one” (*Phoen* 398b–99: *þenden ēces word / hālġes hlēoþor-cwide healdan woldan*); shortly after these lines there is further reference to them acting “against the word of the eternal one” (*Phoen* 411a: *ofer ēces word*). Similarly, in *Guthlac B*, we are told that Adam and Eve would remain deathless “if they would keep the word of the holy one” (*GuthB* 842: *ġif hȳ hālġes word healdan woldun*).

It is instructive to compare the passage just quoted, close to the start of the second part of *The Phoenix*, and with an emphasis on the first-person plural “we” (*Phoen* 393a: *wē*) with the opening lines of the poem as a whole, where the first-person singular “I” (*Phoen* 1a: *ic*) is emphasized instead (*Phoen* 1–10):

Hæbbe ic ġe·frugnen þætte is feor heonan
 ēast-dælum on æpelast londa,
 fīrum ġe·fræge. Nis sē foldan scēat
 ofer middan-ġeard mongum ġe·fēre
 folc-āgendra, ac hē ā·fyrred is
 þurh meotudes meaht mǣn-fremmendum.
 Wlitig is sē wong eall, wynnum ġe·blissad
 mid þām fægrestum foldan stencum.
 Ænlic is þæt īġ-lond, æpele sē wyrhta,
 mōdiġ, meahtrum spēdiġ, sē þā moldan ġe·sette.

I have heard that far from here in the regions of the East is the noblest of lands, famed among men. That expanse of earth is not accessible to many leaders of nations <5> across the world, but it has been placed far away from evil-doers through the might of God. That whole plain is beautiful, blessed with joys, and with the fairest perfumes of the earth. That island is peerless, noble its maker, <10> great-hearted and abundant in powers, the one who established that ground.

The same sudden switch half-way through a poem from first-person singular to plural is also a notable feature of *The Wanderer* (Orchard 2002). This passage from *The Phoenix* is delimited by an envelope-pattern emphasizing the nobility of both the land itself and its creator (*Phoen* 2b, 9b: *æpelast . . . æpele*), neither

of which terms has a counterpart in *De aue phoenice*. In *The Phoenix* as a whole, there are, however, no fewer than nineteen *æpel*-elements (*Phoen* 2b, 9b, 20b, 26b, 43b, 93b, 104a, 164a, 195b, 207a, 281b, 290a, 319a, 346a, 354b, 500b, 528b, 586b, and 614b), including both a unique compound “noble odour” (*Phoen* 195b: *æpel-stenc*) and another, “noble star,” referring to the sun, that is only found in *The Phoenix* and *Guthlac B* (*GuthB* 1314a; *Phoen* 290a: *æpel-tungol*). We might also note the reference here to the provision of the plain “with the fairest perfumes of the earth” (*Phoen* 8: *mid þām fægrestum foldan stencum*), which foreshadows later description of the “sacred scents and the noblest fruits of the earth” with which the phoenix decks its nest (*Phoen* 206b–7: *hālgum stencum / ond þām æpelestum eorþan blēdum*) in a passage already discussed that seems to draw on *Guthlac A* for inspiration (*Phoen* 199b–207).

These opening lines also contain three compounds, two of which are commonplace (*Phoen* 4a, 9a: *middan-geard* and *iġ-lond*), while the third is distinctly restricted in distribution: in this compound-form “evil-doers” are found outside *The Phoenix* only in *Christ C*, in two of the signed poems of Cynewulf, namely *Elene* and *Juliana*, and in a single psalm-verse of *The Paris Psalter* (*Phoen* 6b; *ChristC* 1436b; *El* 906a; *Jul* 137a; *PPs140*:6 1b). Likewise, some lines towards the end of *The Phoenix* evidently also echo this opening passage, so forming an envelope-pattern for the poem as a whole (*Phoen* 632–33):

Dus reordiað ryht-fremmende,
mānes ā·merede, in þære mæran byrig;

Thus the righteous, purified of evil, speak out in that famous dwelling-place;

The antithetical compound to the “evil-doers” of the opening lines, here *ryht-fremmende* has an even more restricted circulation, being found only in the Exeter Book, and outside *The Phoenix* only in *Christ C* and Cynewulf’s *Juliana* (*Phoen* 632b; *ChristC* 1655a; *Jul* 8a).

If we return to the description in *The Phoenix* of the life of Adam and Eve in Eden before the Fall (*Phoen* 393–400a), we find a sequence comprising eight elements (*Phoen* 397–98a, 400a: *neorxna-wong þær him nænġes wæs . . . on·sȳn . . . nīwan ġe·fēan*). Similarly, early on in *Guthlac B*, the poet describes the life of Adam, flourishing in Eden before the Fall (*GuthB* 825b–33a):

Fæder wæs ā·cenned
Ādam ærest þurh ēst godes
on neorxna-wong, þær him nænġes wæs
willan on·sȳn, ne welan brosnung,
ne lifes lyre ne liċes hryre,
ne drēames dryre ne dēaðes cyme,

ac hē on þām lande lifgan mōste
ealra leahtra lēas, longe nēotan
nīwra ġe:fēana.

Our father Adam was born first through the grace of God in paradise, where for him there was no lack of any desire, nor decay of prosperity, nor loss of life, nor destruction of the body, <830> nor decline of gladness, nor the coming of death, but he on that land could live free of all faults, long to make use of fresh joys.

There is an almost identical sequence here to what is found in the parallel passage of *The Phoenix*, with the same eight elements in the same order (*GuthB* 827–28a, 833a *neorxna-wong þær him nænġes wæs . . . onsȳn . . . nīwra ġe:fēana*). But whereas there is no obvious Latin source for the parallel lines in *The Phoenix*, the reference here in *Guthlac B* to Adam (but not, we note, Eve) derives directly from the acknowledged primary Latin source of *Guthlac B*, namely Chapter 50 of Felix of Crowland’s *Vita S. Guthlaci*, where close to the beginning of the chapter we are told that “just as death was prescribed in Adam, so it is to have dominion over all” (*Vita Sancti Guthlaci* 50: *sicut mors in Adam data est, ita et in omnes dominabitur* [Colgrave 1985, 150–52]). Moreover, the fivefold anaphora on *ne* in five successive half-lines here (*GuthB* 828b–30, itself sparked off by the negative *nænġes* in 827b), marks the whole sequence as something of a purple passage, and so perhaps one ripe for borrowing; the threefold end-rhyme in three successive half-lines that is itself embedded in the anaphora only adds to the allure (*GuthB* 829–830a: *lyre . . . hryre . . . dryre*). There is an echo of this passage later on in *Guthlac B* (see in general Palumbo 1977), at the end of Guthlac’s final speech to his unnamed companion, as he looks ahead to his heavenly reward, albeit with much-reduced anaphora (*GuthB* 1091b–93):

“Nis þes ēþel mē
ne sār ne sorg. Ic mē sylfum wāt
æfter *līces hryre* lēan unhwīlen.”

“This home has neither pain nor sorrow for me. I know that eternal reward awaits me after the fall of the body.”

By comparison, where the opening lines of the *Phoenix* deviate considerably from their Latin source (Steen 2008, 43–46, 62–63), in describing the lush landscape of the creature’s native home, they seem to carry an echo of the extended anaphora of the earlier passage from *Guthlac B*, describing Adam’s time in Eden before the Fall (*Phoen* 13–20a):

Þæt is wynsum *wong*, wealdas grēne,
rūme under roderum. *Ne mæg þær rēn ne snāw*,

ne forstes fnæst, ne fýres blæst,
ne hægles hryre, ne hrīmes dryre,
ne sunnan hætu, ne sīn-ċaldu,
ne wearm weder, ne winter-sċūr
wihte ġe-wyrdan, ac sē wong seomað
ēadiġ ond onsund.

That is a delightful plain, green forests, spacious beneath the heavens. There, neither rain nor snow, <15> nor the breath of frost, nor the blast of fire, nor the dropping of hail, nor the falling of rime, nor the heat of the sun, nor continual cold, nor warm weather, nor a winter shower, can cause any harm, but the plain remains, <20> blessed and unharmed.

There is considerably more evidence of anaphora, rhyme, and assonance here, than in the first parallel passage in *Guthlac B*. However, just as the initial passage in *Guthlac B* is evidently echoed later on in the same poem, so too the extended anaphora describing the Edenic dwelling-place of the phoenix is described with a series of no fewer than seventeen elements (*Phoen* 50–59), including an echo of *ne lifes lyre* (*Phoen* 53a).

Immediately following the passage cited above (*GuthB* 825a–33a), the poet of *Guthlac B* goes on to be more specific about the deathless joys of Eden, for as long as Adam and Eve obey God's commands (*GuthB* 833b–44):

Þær hē nō þorfte
līfes ne lissa in þām lēohtan hām
þurh ælda tīd ende ġe-bīdan,
ac æfter fyrste tō þām færestan
heofon-rīces ġe-fēan hweorfan mōstan,
leomu līc somud ond līfes gæst,
ond þær sīþþan ā in sīn-drēamum
tō wīdan fēore wunian mōstun
dryhtne on ġe-sihðe, būtan dēaðe forð,
ġif hȳ hālġes word healdan woldun
beorht in brēostum, ond his be-bodu læstan,
æfnan on ēðle.

There he did not need to experience through old age an end of life nor of favours <835> in that bright home, but he after an interval to the fairest joy of the heavenly kingdom could turn, limbs, body, and the soul of life together, and there forever after <840> in everlasting joy could always dwell in the sight of the lord without death, if they would keep the word of the holy one bright in their hearts and follow his bidding, sustain it in their homeland.

We might note the pairing of “life” and “favours” (*GuthB* 834a: *līfes . . . lissa*) here, as in an earlier passage from *The Phoenix*, discussed above (*Phoen* 147b–58a: *līfes . . . lissa* is at 150a); the concluding lines of *The Phoenix*, discussed below (*Phoen* 667–77), also include the related phrase “live in the favour” (*Phoen* 672a: *lifġan in lisse*). Similarly, the compound *sīn-drēamum* is rather rare, being found outside this passage once more in *Guthlac B* (*GuthB* 1043a) and only elsewhere in *Elene* and *The Phoenix* (*El* 740a; *Phoen* 385a). Likewise, we might note the eight-element sequence containing this compound (*GuthB* 839–41: *ond . . . sīþþan ā . . . sīn-drēamum . . . wunian mōstun / dryhtne . . . dēaðe*), since something very similar is found in *The Phoenix*, where the same compound occurs, in the passage that opens the second part, immediately after the poet departs from *De aue phoenice* (*Phoen* 381–86):

Swā þæt ēce lif ēadigra ġe-hwylc
 æfter sār-wræce sylf ġe-ċeoseð
 þurh deorcne *dēað*, þæt hē *dryhtnes mōt*
 æfter ġeār-daġum ġeofona nēotan
 on *sīn-drēamum*, *ond sīþþan ā*
wunian in wuldre weorca tō lēane.

So does each of the blessed choose for himself that eternal life through dark death, after painful exile, so that he may afterwards be permitted, when the old days are done, to enjoy the gifts of the Lord <385> in perpetual joy, and ever afterwards dwell in glory as a reward for their labours.

Here, we find a sequence of the same eight elements, albeit in a slightly different order: (*Phoen* 383, 385–86a: *dēað . . . dryhtnes mōt . . . sīn-drēamum, ond sīþþan ā / wunian*).

Moreover, in *Guthlac B*, the notion of bodily resurrection is enshrined in a single line speaking of “limbs, body, and the soul of life together” (*GuthB* 838: *leomu līc somud ond līfes gæst*), and precisely the same line also occurs shortly after the description of the coming of death in a warrior’s guise noted above (*Phoen* 508b–17):

Þonne on lēoht cymeð
 ældum þisses in þā openan tīd
 fæġer ond ġe-fēaliċ fugles tācen,
 þonne anwald eal ūp ā-stelleð
 of byrġenum, bān ġe-gædrað,
leomu līc somod, ond līfes gæst,
 fore Crīstes cnēo. Cyning þrymlice
 of his hēah-setle hālgum scīneð,
 wlitig wuldres ġim. Wēl biþ þām þe mōt

in þā ġeōmran tīd Gode līcian.

Then to men in that manifest time into the light comes, <510> beautiful and joyous, the symbol of this bird, when the sole power raises up all, gathers the bones from graves, limbs and bodies together with the spirit of life, before Christ's knee. Mightily the king <515> from his lofty throne shines on the holy ones, the beautiful jewel of glory. It will be well for the one who is permitted to please God in that terrible time.

This passage is bound by an envelope-pattern of twin Doomsday-phrases “in that manifest time . . . in that terrible time” (*Phoen* 509b, 517a: *in þā openan tīd . . . in þā ġeōmran tīd*), and also concludes with the phrase “It will be well for the one who” (*Phoen* 516b: *Wēl biþ þām þe*) that is otherwise found only in *The Wanderer* and *The Lord's Prayer II* (*Wan* 114b: *Wēl bið þām þe*; *LPII* 17a: *Wēl bið þām þe*). We might also note the sequence here comprising fourteen elements (*Phoen* 508b–9, 513, 517a: *lēoht . . . ældum . . . in þā . . . tīd . . . leomu līc somod ond līfes gæst . . . in þā . . . tīd*). There is a very similar sequence in *Guthlac B*, in the passage referring to Adam and Eve in Eden already discussed (*GuthB* 833b–44). There, the sequence lacks the parallelism, and so only comprises ten items (*GuthB* 834b–35a and 838: *in . . . lēohtan . . . ælda tīd . . . leomu līc somud ond līfes gæst*). A likely source for the whole shared line is also found in a half-line in Cynewulf's *Christ B*, earlier in the Exeter Book, in an extended warning about how we should all protect ourselves against the devil's darts, the better to prepare for Doomsday (*ChristB* 771b–78):

Ūtan ūs beorgan þā,
 þenden wē on eorðan eard weardien;
 ūtan ūs tō fæder freoþa wilnian,
 biddan bearn godes ond þone bliðan gæst
 þæt hē ūs ġe·scilde wið sceaþan wæpnum,
 lāþra lyġe·searwum, sē ūs līf for·ġeaf,
 leomu, līc ond gæst. Sī him lof symle
 þurh woruld worulda, wuldor on heofnum.

Let us then defend ourselves, for as long as we maintain a dwelling on earth; let us entreat the father for protection, implore the son of God and the kindly Spirit <775> that he shield us from the weapons of the destroyer, the lying cunning of hateful ones, he who granted us life, limbs, body, and spirit. To him be praise always, world without end, glory in the heavens.

The passage begins with a repeated exhortation “Let us . . . let us” (*ChristB* 771b, 773a: *Ūtan ūs . . . ūtan ūs*) that is common in homiletic prose, but only found in that form here in verse. The closing doxology (*ChristB* 777b–78: *Sī him lof symle*

/ *þurh woruld worulda wuldor*), however, is echoed in a passage towards the end of *The Phoenix* already quoted above (*Phoen* 661b–62: *Sȳ Him lof symle / þurh woruld worulda . . . wuldres*). It is the very thought of Doomsday that then leads Cynewulf to ponder his own position, and literally to insert himself into the text through his runic signature, which follows soon after (*ChristB* 797–807a).

It is, of course, precisely because Adam and Eve failed to guard themselves against the wiles of the wicked one that they fell into error, and their Fall is mentioned directly early in the second part of *The Phoenix*, albeit without naming them directly (*Phoen* 407–11a):

Wurdon tēonlīce tōþas īdġe
 ā·ġeald æfter ġylte. Hæfdon Godes yrre,
 bittre bealo-sorge. Pæs þā byre siþþan
 ġyrne on·guldon, þe hī þæt ġyfl þēgun
 ofer ēces word.

Their busy teeth were grievously repaid for their sin; they had God's wrath, a bitter painful sorrow, and ever since their children <410> have paid for it with pain, because they consumed that food against the word of the eternal one.

We have already noted how the phrase “against the word of the eternal one” (*Phoen* 411a: *ofer ēces word*) is also found in a preceding passage on the disobedience of Adam and Eve (*Phoen* 393–400a). Using very similar language, as Guthlac's demise draws near, the poet of *Guthlac B* also makes an explicit connection back to the Fall of Man, when Eve passed on to Adam the bitter cup of death, first served to her by Satan (*GuthB* 982b–93a):

Fēond byrlade
 ærest þære idese, ond hēo Ādame,
 hyre swāsum were, siþþan sċencte
 bittor bāde-wēġ. Pæs þā byre siþþan
 grimme on·guldon gaful-rādenne
 þurh ær-ġe-wyrht, þætte æniġ ne wæs
 fyra cynnes from fruman siððan
 mon on moldan, þætte meahte him
 ġe·beorgan ond bi·buġan þone blēatan drync,
 dēopan dēað-wēġes, ac him duru sylfa
 on þā slīðnan tīd sōna on·tȳneð,
 in·gong ġe·openað.

The enemy poured it out first to the woman, and to Adam, to her dear husband, she then served up <985> the bitter drinking-cup. Their descendants then paid terrible tribute on account of the ancient deed so that not one of the human race

from the beginning on, not anyone on earth, could <990> find protection and avoid the wretched drink, the deep death-cup, but instead the door in that cruel time immediately reveals itself, the entrance opens up.

The passage is bounded by two compounds referring to the fatal draught, which is both a “drinking-cup” (*GuthB* 985a: *bæde-wēġ*) before Adam drinks it down, and afterwards a “death-cup” (*GuthB* 991a: *dēað-wēġ*); the latter is only found here, while the former has a single parallel in the Alfredian Old English translation of Bede, where it seems rare enough to have been mangled by some scribes as the (in context) nonsensical “battle-war” (*beado-wīġ*; see *DOE*, s.v. *bæde-wæġ*). The whole passage is a prime example of the so-called “cup of death” (*poculum mortis*) theme in Old English (Brown 1940; see also Roberts 1979, 232). Indeed, the compounds in the parallel passages from *The Phoenix* and *Guthlac B* here all have rather restricted circulation: “painful sorrow” (*Phoen* 409a: *bealo-sorge*) is unique, while “tribute” (*GuthB* 986b: *gaful-rædenne*) is otherwise found only in verse in familiar texts, namely Cynewulf’s *Juliana* and *Andreas* (*Jul* 529b; *And* 296a; also once in prose, in a law), and “ancient deed” (*GuthB* 987a: *æþr-ġe-wyrht*; repeated at 1079b), only in *Christ C* and Cynewulf’s *Elene* and *Juliana* (*ChristC* 1240b; *El* 1301a; *Jul* 702b; also twice in homiletic prose). It also seems likely that the first element of *gaful-rædenne* here may have influenced the choice of the form *ġyfl* in *The Phoenix* (*Phoen* 410b; the term also appears twice in *GuthB* 850b and 1301a, among other appearances elsewhere). Likewise, in a Doomsday passage from *The Phoenix* discussed above, the twin phrases “in that manifest time . . . in that terrible time” (*Phoen* 509b, 517a: *in þā openan tīd . . . in þā ġeōmran tīd*) were highlighted, matched here in *Guthlac B* by “in that cruel time” (*GuthB* 992a: *on þā slīðnan tīd*).

There are several other verbal links connecting the *Guthlac*-poems, *The Phoenix*, and the signed poems of Cynewulf, that seem to owe more than simply to a shared background in daily worship. So, for example, we have already noted above the notion that both the phoenix reborn from the flames and the reformed *Guthlac* were designated as “sundered from sins” (*Phoen* 242a and *GuthA* 515a: *synnum ā-sundrad*). In a similar vein, towards the very end of *Elene*, after his runic signature, Cynewulf describes how deserving souls are to be purged by flame using slightly different but evidently related diction (*El* 1307b–12a):

Mōton engla frēan
 ġe-sēon, sigora god. Hīe ā-sodene bēoð,
 ā-sundrod fram synnum, swā smæte gold
 þæt in wylme bið womma ġe-hwylces
 þurh ofnes fyr eall ġe-clænsod,
 ā-mered ond ġe-mylted.

They will be permitted to see the Lord of angels, God of victories. They will be distilled, sundered from sins like smelted gold <1310> that is wholly cleansed in the surging from every blemish through the furnace's fire, refined and melted.

The phrase “sundered from sins,” in the form found here (*El* 1309a: *ā·sundrod fram synnum*), is also found both in *Andreas* and in one of the Old English poetic renderings of the *Gloria patri* (*And* 1243a: *ā·sundrad fram synnum*; *GlorI* 12a: *ā·sundrod fram synnum*; for the wider influence of Cynewulf on *Andreas*, see Orchard 2016, 359–62). We might also note the use of the term “purified” here (*El* 1312a: *ā·mered*), the second of three past participles (*ġe·clǣnsod . . . ā·mered . . . ġe·mylled*), since outside this passage, the word is only found twice in extant verse, both times in the second part of *The Phoenix*, including in some lines already quoted (*Phoen* 544a, 633a). The sequence *frēan* / *ġe·sēon sigora* here is evidently echoed both in *Guthlac B* (*GuthB* 1080a) and (as in *Elene*) in almost the final line of *The Phoenix* (*Phoen* 675a). So, in a final speech to his distraught follower in *Guthlac B*, the saint assures his beloved companion, using repeated endearments at the beginning and end of the passage to form an envelope pattern, that so far from having fear of death, he embraces the idea of that journey, since it will lead to the eternal joys of heaven, and the sight of God himself (*GuthB* 1076b–80):

Mīn þæt lēofe bearn,
ne bēo þū on sefan tō sēoc. Ic ēom sīpes fūs
ūp-eard niman ed·lēana ġeorn
in þām ēcan ġe·fēan, ær-ġe·wyrhtum
ġe·sēon sigora frēan, mīn þæt swāse bearn.

My dear child, don't be sick at heart. I am ready for the journey, eager to take up abode in the dwelling of rewards on high in that eternal joy, <1080> to see the lord of victories for deeds of old, my beloved child.

The repeated phrases “My dear child . . . my beloved child” (*Mīn þæt lēofe bearn . . . mīn þæt swāse bearn*) that delineate this passage emphasize the emotional bond that connects Guthlac with his junior, and the concern that he expresses that the young man should not be “too sick at heart” (*on sefan tō sēoc*) represents a sensitive echo of the saint's own fatal sickness. The second of these phrases “my beloved child” (*mīn þæt swāse bearn*) is further repeated later in *Guthlac B*, on the last occasion the saint addresses his disciple (*GuthB* 1166a).

The closing macaronic lines of the *Phoenix* likewise, where Latin half-lines are linked through alliteration with Old English verses, offer an uplifting vision of life after death, gazing on the same “lord of victories” for ever (*Phoen* 667–77; the Latin half-lines and their translations are in italics):

Hafað ūs ā·lyfed *lūcis auctor*
 þæt wē mōtun hēr *meruēri*,
 gōd-dædum be·ġietan *gaudia in cēlo*,
 þær wē mōtun *maxima regna*
 sēcan ond ġe·sittan *sēdibus altis*,
 lifġan in lisse *lūcis et pācis*,
 āġan eardinga *almæ letitiæ*,
 brūcan blæd-daġa, *blandem et mitem*
 ġe·sēon sigora frēan *sine fine*,
 ond him lof singan *laude perenne*,
 ēadġe mid englum. *Alleluia*.

The author of light has granted us that we may *merit* here to attain through good deeds *joys in heaven*, <670> where we may seek the greatest kingdoms and sit *on lofty thrones*, live in the favour of *light and peace*, have dwellings of *kindly happiness*, enjoy glorious days, <675> see the lord of victories *calm and kind without end* and sing his praise *with continuous acclaim*, blessed among the angels. *Hallelujah*.

There is a clear structuring sequence (*wē mōtun hēr . . . þær wē mōtun*) contrasting the “here” of now and the “there” of the afterlife (Steen 2008, 69–70; Orchard 2020a, 322–23). While there is only a single Old English non-alliterating infinitive dependent on the former, “to attain” (*Phoen* 669a: *be·ġietan*), matched by a single alliterating Latin infinitive (*meruēri*), the mangled form of which (*merēri* is correct) might suggest that the poet recognized that in Old English verse, four positions were the norm, it is striking that there are no fewer than seven dependent infinitives signifying “seek . . . sit . . . live . . . have . . . enjoy . . . see . . . sing” (*sēcan . . . ġe·sittan . . . lifġan . . . āġan . . . brūcan . . . ġe·sēon . . . singan*), five of which open the verse, and all but the last carry the alliteration. The extent to which the Old English verses emphasize action is marked; the Latin half-lines, by contrast, seem to focus on nouns and adjectives “author of light . . . joys in heaven . . . lofty thrones . . . light and peace . . . kindly happiness . . . calm and kind . . . without end . . . continuous acclaim” (*lūcis auctor . . . gaudia in cēlo . . . maxima regna . . . sēdibus altis . . . lūcis et pācis . . . almæ letitiæ . . . blandem et mitem . . . sine fine . . . laude perenne*). Indeed, the entire Latin–Old English nature of the closing lines seems a suitable symbol for the structure of the poem as a whole, which, as we have seen, is a clever combination of both Latin and Old English sources.

Conclusion: *The Phoenix*, the Exeter Book, and Beyond

The above arguments cumulatively seek to situate *The Phoenix* firmly not simply within the wider context of the Exeter Book, in which it resides, but as part of extant Old English verse more broadly. *The Phoenix* looks back to the preceding compilations of *Christ* and (especially) *Guthlac*, as well as to *Azarias*, which follows *Guthlac B*, and ahead to *Juliana* and *The Wanderer* that both immediately follow *The Phoenix*, and further on to the three poems of the *Physiologus*-compilation of the Exeter Book, as well as sideways to the Vercelli Book, where *The Phoenix* appears to have been influenced by Cynewulf's *Elene* and to have been one of many influences on *Andreas*. Such a complex nexus of texts naturally inspires further speculation, not least (for example) the particular links that suggest *The Wanderer* may have been included in the Exeter Book at this point precisely to reflect the course of Guthlac's life, given that the compilation speaks to Guthlac as a type of Christ, and the phoenix as a type of both Christ and Guthlac. Such a burgeoning body of evidence for the direct literary influence of Old English poets and poems on each other in a relative chronological sequence that even now can still be determined seems increasingly secure, and indeed aligns the overwhelming majority of extant vernacular verse with the kinds of techniques of echo and emulation that can be demonstrated routinely and comprehensively in almost all the surviving Anglo-Latin poetry from precisely the same period.¹

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