

JONAH IN *PATIENCE* AND PRUDENTIUS

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The most individualistic adaptation of the dramatic story of Jonah in the Middle Ages is surely that of the Archpoet. An engaging rogue he seems, clamouring as ever for the crumbs of the good life from which his fecklessness has excluded him:

male vivens et moleste,
trutannizans inhoneste
omne festum duco maeste.¹

If he is reduced to living the life of a tramp, that is no more than one would expect of a poet who roundly declared, in one of the best known lines of mediaeval Latin verse, "Meum est propositum in taberna mori."² But he appeals to his patron, Rainald of Dassel, archbishop of Cologne from 1159, to restore him to favour and thereby, one gathers, to his only available means of subsistence, by comparing himself to Jonah praying from the belly of the whale.

Si remittas hunc reatum
et si ceto des mandatum,
cetus, cuius os est latum,
more suo dans hiatum
vomet vatum decalvatum

et ad portum destinatum
 feret fame tenuatum,
 ut sit rursus vates vatum
 scribens opus tibi gratum.

That is surely a startling parody of Jonah's humble prayer for salvation, and of his sufferings in a situation typologically understood to portray the death of Christ.³ What the Archpoet is pleading to be relieved from is poverty: "paupertatis premor peste." No predecessor of St. Francis he; nor, as the English author of *Patience*,⁴ mindful of the Beatitudes in Matthew:

Thay arn happen þat han in hert pouerte,
 For hores is þe heuen-ryche to holde for euer (13-14),

is he concerned to make spiritual virtue out of earthly deprivation. His prayer is not so much for mercy as for largesse: it is not divine grace he wants, but a patron's alms; and he wants it not in order to rescue a sinful nation on the brink of destruction but simply to save himself in a rapacious world where only the most fortunate (not necessarily the fittest) survive:

Non timebo Ninivitas
 neque gentes infronitas ("stupidity").

Unlike Jonah, prophet of God, he will make his living, given the chance, as a praise-poet extolling the virtues, mainly political, of his benignant patron.

I have chosen to begin with so extreme and obvious a contrast as exists between the Archpoet's whimsical parody and the serious adaptation of the sacred narrative to a moral theme undertaken by the author of *Patience*, because the willingness of critics, every time another redaction of the story of Jonah is brought to their attention, to attempt to prove that the author of *Patience* knew it and was, however slightly, influenced by it, seems to me misplaced. It seems more appropriate to contrast the ways he and another author responded to the same material; in this case the Vulgate text of Jonah.

Thus the question of whether the author of *Patience* was influenced by *De Iona et Ninive*, a fragment in hexameters sometimes attributed to Tertullian,⁵ may be regarded as disposed of, and there seems little point in reopening it in a similar form. The most that should be said is that the storm-scene which makes up the bulk of the Latin poem as we have it may have helped inspire the English poet's imaginative elaboration of the bald hints about the storm's

fury given in the Book of Jonah. Yet even this is speculative. One detail, dismissed by Anderson, may be worth noticing, if only to show the dangers of the equation "similarity implies influence." Both poems have Jonah snoring in his heavy sleep during the storm, where the Vulgate says merely "dormiebat sopore gravi." The snoring in *De Iona*, "stertorou with nostril wide inflated,"⁶ comes evidently from LXX: ἐκάθευδε καὶ ἔρεγγε and τί σὺ ῥέγγεις; It is of course possible that the author of *Patience* may have borrowed the vivid touch from *De Iona*; although if so he elaborated it in his own way, for Jonah not only snores but slobbers as well. E. Wilson suggests that the uncomplimentary "sloberande" (186) may have been added as one of the conventional signs of old age in order to characterize Jonah as a dotard in fleeing the commandment of God.⁷ However, a more likely source for the snoring than *De Iona* is Jerome's commentary *In Ionam Prophetam*. Jerome quotes a Latin version of LXX Jonah 1:5: "Ionas autem descendit in ventrem navis, et dormiebat, et stertebat." He interprets the sleep as a type of human sinfulness, and the deep snores as signifying a culpable disregard of divine retribution: "Sin autem interpretatur in typo, somnus prophetae et gravissimus sopor hominem significat erroris sopore torpentem, cui non suffecerat fugisse a facie Dei, nisi et quadam vecordia mens illius obruta, ignoraret iracundiam Dei, et quasi securus dormiret et profundissimum somnum rauca nare resonaret."⁸ Such typology is more relevant than anything in *De Iona* to *Patience*, one of the themes of which is Jonah's criminal sloth in neglecting to perform God's commandment.

The *Naufragium Jonae Prophetae* of Marbod of Rennes (circa 1035-1123) contains a fairly elaborate storm scene, ten lines on the whale,⁹ and an account of the Ninevites' repentance not much elaborated from the Vulgate. But it ignores the last chapter, on which lines 409-531 of *Patience* are based. William Vantuono's rather uncritical list of parallels between Marbod and *Patience* tends to show their differences rather than similarity;¹⁰ but Attila Fáj is certain of Marbod's influence and believes, moreover, "that a systematic comparison of the poetical oeuvre of the bishop of Rennes with the other three poems by the Gawain-poet, will yet bring interesting resemblances to light."¹¹ However this may be, the *Patience*-poet scarcely needed any help Marbod could give him.

A more interesting comparison (because the poem is better) may be made with the extended exemplum of Jonah in the *Hymnus Ieiunantium* of Prudentius.¹² Ellin Kelly briefly indicated a possible debt on the part of the author of *Patience* to Prudentius' treatment of the repentance of the Ninevites; she overlooked other interesting parallels in the accounts of the whale's

swallowing of Jonah.¹³ But when all is said, the evidence for direct influence is scarcely conclusive. The present paper is concerned not so much with influence as with tone; it attempts to show that the two poets produce radically different effects in their treatment of the same story, because the methods they employ are fundamentally different. Very roughly, one may characterize the difference by saying that whereas Prudentius' style is picturesque, the *Patience*-poet's is dramatic.

Prudentius' hymn of fasting Christians is the seventh of the twelve hymns in the *Liber Cathemerinon* (Hymns for the Christians' Day), mostly in unrhymed four-line stanzas (like *Patience*, one is tempted to remark), though two have stanzas of three lines and two, including our VII, of five lines. Prudentius is a versatile metrist; several metres are represented, Hymn VII being in iambics of six feet. Between a prologue and epilogue, each of twenty-five lines, advocating the purifying virtue of abstinence, the hymn contains the Scriptural examples of Elijah, Moses, John the Baptist, Jonah (81-175), and Christ. *Patience*, as is well known, has a homiletic prologue and epilogue advocating patience, and the exemplum of Jonah in between. The themes of the two poems are different, though fasting in Prudentius leads on to the works of mercy ("operire nudos" etc., 212 ff.),¹⁴ and patience in the Middle English poem to a recognition of the mercifulness of God. Prudentius notices debilitating sloth amongst the evil effects of intemperance, in lines that may, if we wish, recall Jonah in the boat and under the woodbine in the Middle English poem:

sequitur
 scintilla mentis ut tepescat nobilis,
 animusque pigris stertat ut praecordiis. (18-20)

After indulgence the rational spirit snores in the sluggish breast.

Since Prudentius uses the story of Jonah because the people of Nineveh proclaimed a fast ("praedicaverunt ieiunium," Jonah 3:5), he is not concerned, as the author of *Patience* preeminently is, to examine or criticize the behaviour of Jonah. Prudentius finds no room for Jonah's explanation to the sailors, nor for his prayer in the whale, nor for his complaint under the withered plant; in fact, he too, like Marbod, discards chapter four of the Biblical story, and breaks off where God responds mercifully to the repentance of the Ninevites, at a point corresponding to *Patience* line 408. On the other hand, Prudentius is concerned to portray the divine character: God is

"mitis ultor" (101), His justice "terror exorabilis" (99), oxymorons indicating that combination of righteous anger and merciful long-suffering which is precisely what the author of *Patience* shows Jonah coming to appreciate as he learns the meaning of patience: "malyse is noȝ to mayntyne bouȝte mercy with-inne" (523). Events in *Patience* dramatize Jonah's spiritual education; God who acts and speaks is to be understood as God becoming known to Jonah, hence the apparent inconsistencies of His character: unreasonable when He orders Jonah to face apparently certain death at the hands of the "typed schrewes" of Nineveh; terrifying when he sends the storm and the whale; capricious when He excuses the Ninevites. But what Prudentius wants known of God's character he presents in the texture of the verse.

In *Patience*, Jonah's attempts to justify his flight (75-88, 93-96) show clearly that he is afraid of the Ninevites.¹⁵ There is a parallel in Marbod's *Naufragium*, where Jonah also imagines, though much less nervously than in *Patience*, that the Ninevites are likely to kill him.¹⁶ In *Patience* Jonah envisages stocks, eye-gouging, and crucifixion; in the *Naufragium* he expects to be killed by the sword or burning. If the *Patience*-poet had needed a source for so obvious a means of objectifying Jonah's understandable fears, one might have expected the details to be similar. The reference to crucifixion shows that the poet has in mind the exegesis of Jonah as a type of Christ, though he makes the reference to portray Jonah rather as an anti-type: a "saviour" who flees from the possibility of being crucified.¹⁷ In this he outdoes both Marbod and Prudentius.

There is no corresponding self-justification on Jonah's part in Prudentius. After four stanzas describing the wickedness of Nineveh and God's decision to deal justly but mercifully with its people (81-100), Prudentius anticipates the reason for Jonah's flight given in the Vulgate, and correspondingly in *Patience*, after the deliverance of Nineveh: Jonah flees because he knows God would rather save than punish, even when He threatens.¹⁸ The non-Biblical sequence is similar in *De Iona*: perhaps Prudentius knew the poem.

If so, he made short work of the storm scene: a single stanza (106-10) suffices for Jonah to get on board, the ship to set sail, the storm to arise, lots to be cast, and Jonah to be proved guilty. Yet Prudentius still finds room to be picturesque. Jonah embarks ("scandit ratem," words also used in *De Iona*) by a convenient gangplank ("paratis pontibus"), and a moist rope is cast off ("udo reuineta fune") before the ship sails. Embarkation and departure are described in vivid detail in *Patience*, but the Middle English poet

mentions no gangplank, and does not describe the cables as moist.

Prudentius subsumes the storm in a single epithet, "procellosum," possibly because he anticipates it in a description of something else, namely the way in which justice demands that God should wield the thunderbolt over Nineveh:

nimbos crepantes et fragosos turbines
vibrans tonantum nube flammarum quatit, (94-5)

lines which illustrate Prudentius' unblushing readiness to depict deity in terms of Iupiter Tonans.¹⁹ A more elaborate storm scene would have invited comparison with the storm described in *Aeneid* I, 81-129, and so would have required to be treated at a length which would have spoilt the proportions of Prudentius' poem; his subject, after all, was fasting. The storm in *Patience* is violent enough, with waves blown high and the sea scored in chasms to the bottom, but is chiefly interesting as a background for the terror of the sailors, throwing their feather-beds overboard as the ship breaks up, and for the amazing sluggishness of Jonah. The poet may have known Virgil's storm, since he mentions "Eurus and Aquiloun pat on est siffes" (133), but "ventus typhonicus qui vocatur euroaquilo" occurs in Acts 27:14; in that storm Paul, sailing as a prisoner to Rome, remains calm, with much more justification than Jonah, while the terrified crew expect to lose both ship and prisoners. It must be admitted, however, that if the poet had the contrast between Paul and Jonah in mind, he certainly failed to make it explicit.

Prudentius forbears observing that Jonah fasts inside the whale, but no doubt his demonstration that the whale fails either to chew, digest, or retain the swallowed morsel ("offam" 119) is in keeping with his theme. At all events, before introducing the fast of the Ninevites, he pauses to elaborate the bare mention of the "pisces grandem"²⁰ in the Vulgate (Jonah 2:1) into a description of more interest to readers of *Patience* than that in *De Iona*. After the storm scene, the swallowing of Jonah by the whale in *De Iona* is perfunctory. The whale is "scaly with shells" (a unique touch), has slimy jaws (in *Patience* Jonah "glydes in by þe giles purȝ glaymande glette," through slimy filth, 269), and a long belly; Jonah is a living feast (in Prudentius he is swallowed "vivus" 115), and in the intestines he breathes "ferine breath" ("ferino gutture" and "anhelus" occur in Prudentius, 122 and 125). But in *De Iona* the swallowing is described from the point of view of the mariners who merely see Jonah disappear, not as an experience of

the prophet swallowed, as in Prudentius and *Patience*. Marbod gets Jonah into the belly of the fish in the space of a single line: "Et veluti praedam rapit absorbetque prophetam."

"Now is Jonas þe jwe jugged to drowne" and shoved from the shattered ship (245-6); Prudentius comparably says "Iussus perire solus e cunctis . . . praeceps rotatur et profundo inmergitur" (111-3). John of Salisbury takes Jonah's willingness to "perire solus" as a sign of his magnanimity to the mariners;²¹ in Prudentius, if this is where John found the phrase, his feelings are not consulted nor his motives considered. In *Patience* the whale opens his gullet ("swol3" 250) and seizes Jonah ("þe fysch hym tyd hentes" 251): so in Prudentius "Exceptus inde beluinis faucibus" (114), jaws as vast as a church door in the famous simile in *Patience* (268), through which Jonah passes like a "mote," not a "morsel."²² Thereupon he is swallowed alive into the cave of the monster's capacious belly: "alvi capacis vivus hauritur specu" (115). Prudentius' treatment here is not very different from the description in *De Iona*:

limosis faucibus hausit
Viventemque dapem longam percipit in alvum, (87-8)

but he has been influenced apparently by Phaedrus, who thus describes the fate of the mice who stand up against the weasels:

Quos immolatos victor avidis dentibus
Capacis alvi mersit tartareo specu.²³

In *Patience* Jonah's entry into the cavernous interior is correspondingly dramatic: he goes tumbling head over heels down a duct wide as a road "þil he blunt in a blok as brod as a halle" (272).

As always, what we are most aware of in the Middle English poem is movement: Jonah getting violently and incontinently inside the whale. The Latin analogues tend rather to present a picture of the place where Jonah is. This is true even when Prudentius in his next stanza describes how Jonah slips so fast over the monster's tongue and past his palate that his wet molars champing ineffectively have no time to fasten on and masticate the flying morsel. While watching the mouth and the molars we too, like the whale, miss the flying morsel. We may note, at any rate, that if the whale is motivated by "vorandi libidinem" (199), he gets no opportunity to enjoy "turpis gula" (11)! Although his emphasis is different, the author of

Patience, too, observes that Jonah reaches the monster's throat unscathed by his teeth - - presumably because of the rapidity with which he is swallowed: "With-outen towche of any tothe he fult in his prote" (252). This, one of only two parallels close enough to imply indebtedness, could nevertheless have been arrived at quite easily from the mere fact of Jonah's survival, filthy but unchewed.

Inside the ferine maw, Jonah wanders about the twisted meanderings of the pitch-dark intestines, gasping for breath in the internal heat of the entrails. In *Patience* his wanderings are as explorative, but seem more purposeful: he is looking for somewhere safe to sit down. All he can find is filth: "ramei ande myre, In wych gut so-euer he got3" (279-80); but "wyth a prayer and a pyne" (in the contemptuous words he uses of the Ninevites, 423), he finds a cosy enough corner after praying to God who is ever gracious. The statement "euer is God swete" (280) is ironic: if Jonah ever knew that truth, it has taken a desperate reversal to bring him to rely upon it.

The *Patience*-poet specifically compares Jonah's safety in the bowel to his former imagined safety in the boat (291-2), the chief difference being the degree of darkness ("merk") in the "blok" of the whale (272) and the "bulk" of the boat. Likewise the poet calls the mephitic filth of the stinking stomach "his bour" (276) to anticipate the paradisaal greenery of the bower in which Jonah loiters outside Nineveh.²⁴ Clearly the author of *Patience* is doing far more than Prudentius here, vivid and concentrated as Prudentius' description is; even so, there are several details that the Middle English poet might have included with advantage. He makes one brief mention of darkness ("merk," 291) and none of suffocating heat, concentrating as he does on the defiling filth which is no doubt an appropriate reflection of Jonas' sinful condition. Marbod of Rennes gives the best indication that it was dark inside the whale when he describes the light breaking upon Jonah once he has been disgorged: "Atque refulsit ei lux desperata diei" -- 'And the despaired of surprise of daylight shines in his eyes.' Prudentius has only "latebras," "obscure hiding-places", which Thomson translates "darkness." He is more explicit on the subject of heat. Inside the whale the organs give off such heat that Jonah goes about gasping for breath: "circumibat . . . anhelus extis intus aestuantibus." More startling is an image in the *Speculum Sacerdotale*, according to which the inside of the whale was so hot that it made Jonah bald: "And for the hete of the fisse alle the heeres of his hede were loste and gone of."²⁵ One recalls the Archpoet's "vatem decalvatum";

perhaps his personal appearance was sufficiently like that of the thin bald prophet emerging from the whale to excite Rainald's compassion. Darkness, heat, and suffocating smoke are traditionally associated with hell,²⁶ which is what the whale suggests to the author of *Patience* (274-75, 306). He missed an opportunity to enrich the symbolic connection in his poem by failing to elaborate them in his description of the whale. It seems better not to insist that he used Prudentius as a source than to have to admit that he did not use him very well.

After three days Jonah makes the whale very sick. Mote-sized though he is, he makes him queasy in the pit of his stomach ("to wame! at his hert" 300), and in due course at God's bidding the whale spits him up on dry land (338 and 340). If this queasiness is a noteworthy example of the mediaeval poet's Gothic imagination,²⁷ it may be pointed out that the whale is sicker still in Prudentius, who has him retching, belching, and vomiting.

Prudentius is more lyrical about the breaking waves and spray pounding on the salt-caked boulders where Jonah comes ashore than the author of *Patience*, who is content to translate the Vulgate "aridam" literally, "vpon spare drye." Instead of describing the beached verge of the salt flood and the turbulent surf with its embossed froth, he comments wryly that it would be a good thing for Jonah to wash his mucky garments. Prudentius observes that Jonah comes out amazed at his deliverance ("exit seque servatum stupet" 130), the only indication Prudentius gives of what Jonah feels about his experiences. In *Patience* it is the narrator who marvels at Jonah's preservation (259-60).

Jonah predicts the destruction of Nineveh after "forty dayez fully fare to an ende" (359); Prudentius says simply "mox," either ignoring the Vulgate "quadraginta," or because he knew that the LXX stipulated only three days. Jerome is puzzled by the discrepancy, but Augustine ingeniously explains it as typifying in the case of the Greek the time till Christ's resurrection and in the case of the Hebrew the time till His ascension.²⁸

The author of *Patience* also follows the Vulgate in sending Jonah east of the city (*Patience* adds "on a felde" 435) after he has predicted its destruction. In Prudentius, however, Jonah climbs to the top of a high mountain to get a good view of the disaster; perhaps Prudentius also felt he would want to be sure of getting well out of the way. In the Vulgate, Jonah predicts that Nineveh will be overthrown ("subvertetur," Jonah 3:4). This literal catastrophe (LXX has καταστροφῆσεται) the Middle English poet evidently takes

to imply an earthquake: the town will "tylfe to grounde," the inhabitants being dumped "vp so doun" into the abyss, and swallowed up in the earth (361-3); later God explains to Jonah why He does not "type doun zonder toun" (506). Prudentius on the other hand seems to have something like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in mind, for he has Jonah predict that the city will be burnt in flames, and from his mountain peak Jonah expects to see thick smoke hanging over the heaps of ruins. For a parallel to this, one would have to go to the Middle English poet's description of the fiery rain over Sodom in his poem *Cleanness*:

pe rayn rueled adoun, ridlande pikke
Of felle flaunkes of fyr and flakes of soufre,
Al in smolderande smoke smachande ful ille. (935-5)²⁹

The rest of Prudentius' account concerns the repentance of the Ninevites, a subject to which Bishop Maximus of Turin (d. between 408 and 423) devotes a whole sermon. In the Vulgate there is no indication of what crimes the Ninevites have committed: God merely proposes to punish their "malitia" (Jonah 1:2). Hence "malys" in *Patience* (70, cf. 508), a word paralleled by "vilanye" and "venym" (71). A thirteenth-century French poem on pride and humility, "Or dirons de Jonas et de la balaine," contains by way of illustration a meeting of Jonah and accompanying angels with an arrogant and morally "smelly" Ninevite dandy: the angels sniff him out, though Jonah does not.³⁰ Ninevite pride is not obvious in *Patience*, where Jonah fears rather their violence; he is in fact prouder of his reputation as a prophet than they are of theirs as "schrewes." Prudentius, a master of elegant variation, expands "malitia" in a number of phrases consisting of adjective plus noun (of course, not always adjacent as here quoted): "insolenti iactantia" (86), "corrupta lascivia" (88), "bruto fastidio" (89), "inprobam libidinem" (97), "veteres nugas" (98), and "pudenda opprobria" (133). The care he takes to avoid repetition is noteworthy. But all these phrases seem to boil down to the twin faults of pride and self-indulgence, faults of which Jonah in *Patience* is also guilty. Maximus offers a useful commentary: to appease the divine anger, the Ninevites exchange indulgence for abstinence and pride for humility: "ut iram divinitatis, quam luxuriando provocaverant, abstinendo lenirent; et offensam, quam in eos superbia contraxerat, humilitas mitigaret."³¹

Since the Vulgate gives ten verses to the repentance of the Ninevites, and only one to describing the whale, there is more opportunity in this section

for superficial resemblances between Prudentius and *Patience*. Both poems stress the panic that grips the inhabitants:

Such a hidor hem hent and a hatel drede,
pat al changed her chere and chyllled at pe hert' (367-8)

Sed maesta postquam civitas vulnus novi
hausit doloris, heu, supremum palpitat. (141-2)

Prudentius, however, adds that everyone, whom he distinguishes by rank, age, and sex, rushes in a mob ("congregatim") about the walls of the city: a vivid picture of helpless terror affecting all levels of the populace. Both poems combine visual and auditory imagery to evoke sympathy: if "changed her chere" means "turned pale" and not simply "repented,"³² the phrase may be taken with the plangent alliterations of "pe peple pitosly pleyned" (371) for comparison with Prudentius' "pallens iuventus, heulantes feminae" (145). The Vulgate mentions no complaint, merely "praedicaverunt ieiunium, et vestiti sunt saccis, a maiore usque ad minorem" (Jonah 3:5): a half-verse which, with very little change, makes slightly more than a leonine hexameter, and so Marbod ekes out the metre with the tears and the prayers of the Ninevites:

Saccis induti maiores atque minuti,
Ieiunaverunt, lacrimasque precesque dederunt.

Both *Patience* and Prudentius give some space to describing the sackcloth and the fasting that characterize the Ninevites' repentance. The rasp of bristles on bare flesh is described with tactile suggestiveness in *Patience*; equivalent emphasis is given to the scattering of dust on the peoples' heads and the rapidity with which the king propels himself from his throne to the ash heap. His eagerness to translate contrition into penance contrasts sharply with Jonah's customary slothfulness: he "ran fro" his chair and "hitte" the ashes in the midst. Tears, dust, a hair shirt, and sacking replace the rich robe torn from his back. Prudentius, while mentioning the "sordidus cinis" and "turpi pulvere" which matron and king affect, itemizes rather the trappings of wealth -- necklaces, silks, jewels, Coan purple -- which are exchanged for dark mourning garments and black veils. Even in their lamentation the citizens preserve distinctions of rank, the high-born attiring themselves in black and grey stuffs, the plebians appearing less well off in bristly haircloth: "saetas textiles." The king has more to lose

than just a "ryche robe." The older women undo their hair ("crinem fluentem"), but the younger make theirs as dishevelled as an animal's mane ("inpexa villis virgo bestialibus"). Neither poet regards the suggestion of the king in the Vulgate that animals too should wear sackcloth. Seeing he goes through all levels of society, Prudentius for good measure has the children rolling in the sand.

The fasting is thorough in all versions. Its purpose, according to Prudentius, is "frementem . . . placare Christum": he minds neither the anachronism nor the questionable theology of making Christ resemble a pagan god who needs appeasing. One may contrast the reference to Christ (also of course an anachronism) in *Cleanness*: the yelling of the doomed Sodomites was such "pat Kryst myzt haf rawpe" (972). Prudentius' most affecting picture portrays the infants squalling in their cradles because wet-nurses deny them milk. The poet of *Patience* likewise adds to the Vulgate account a reference to unfed infants: "sese3 childer of her sok, soghe hem so neuer" (391). This is the other of the two parallels close enough to imply indebtedness; but it may be noted that the idea occurred also to Marbod:

Dum genetrix luget, nullus puer ubera suget,
Vox a ieiunis resonabit stridula curis.

Affecting misery extends also to the lower creation. Flocks and cattle, in Prudentius, are penned up to prevent them getting at the dewy grass and brawling stream, and low mournfully over their empty mangers. In *Patience* no beast ox, or horse, is allowed broom, grass, pasture, herbs, or water.

True to his predilection for description rather than dialogue, Prudentius takes for granted what would seem to be the most important feature of the repentance: the cries of contrition to God. We do not hear in Prudentius of the king "wepande ful wonderly alle his wrange dedes," nor of his directions to make the fast general, nor of his hope that God will respond to their pleas with mercy.³³ What Prudentius does stress, however, is that God is easily mollified by such sincere penance. And with that his account of the story of Jonah ends.

A comparison between *Patience* and the *Hymnus Ieiunantium* reveals some interesting coincidences not accounted for by the Vulgate text of Jonah, especially Jonah escaping the monster's teeth and the suckling infants denied their milk (though this second detail is also in Marbod). But it is to be expected that two Christian poets independently treating the same

Biblical subject will often say similar things. Of more interest is the contrast in style that the comparison reveals. One admires the rhetorical skill with which Prudentius amplifies in short space the details he describes, and the dramatic verve and vigour with which the poet of *Patience* presents the actions and events of his tale. Prudentius' imagination is fundamentally a visual one, and his preferred manner is description; nouns and adjectives characteristically carry the chief weight of his meaning. The poet of *Patience* thinks dramatically; he favours dialogue, and a range of tone from the colloquially comic to the serious; his verbs generally express vigorous action; the characteristic quality of his style is gusto.

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NOTES

¹ Quotations are from the portion of the poem edited by F.J.E. Raby, *The Oxford Book of Medieval Latin Verse* (Oxford 1959, rpt. 1974) 269-71. For the full text see *Die Gedichte des Archipoeta*, ed. H. Watenphul and H. Krefeld (Heidelberg 1958).

² Ed. Raby (at n.1) 265. It is only fair to add that in the concluding stanzas of his "confession" the Archpoet declares his intention of abandoning vice; but Raby for one doubts his sincerity: "The very shamelessness of this 'confession' is without parallel," F.J.E. Raby, *A History of Secular Latin Poetry in the Middle Ages* (Oxford 1934) ii, 185; for the Archpoet, see pp. 180-89. The scandal that caused him to forfeit Rainald's favour may have resulted from his promiscuity: he confesses to being "pluralis genitivus," Raby, *History* p. 188n.

³ The proof text is Matthew 12:40. For a list of correspondences, see Quodvultdeus of Carthage, *Opera*, ed. R. Braun, *Corpus Christianorum, Ser. Lat.* 60, 358-59. Verecundus expounds Jonah's prayer in his *Expositio Cantici Ionaë*: see *Verecundi Iuncensis Opera*, ed. R. Demeulenaere, *C.C.*, Ser. Lat. 93, 162-72.

⁴ Quotations are from the edition by J.J. Anderson (Manchester 1969).

See also *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript* ed. M. Andrew and R. Waldrom (London 1978). John Burrow, *English Verse 1300 - 1500* (London 1977) 47-61, edits lines 61-296, with useful comments.

⁵ PL 2.1165-72; text reproduced by H. Bateson, ed., *Patience* (2nd ed., Manchester 1918) 74-77. I. Gollancz, ed. *Patience* (London 1913) quotes lines 23-52 and 102-3 from the superior text, ed. F. Oehler (Leipzig 1854). For references and a critique of the controversy, see *Patience*, ed. Anderson (at n.4) 5-6.

⁶ "Reus . . . stertentem inflata resonabat nare soporem," *De Iona* 54. Translations quoted are those of S. Thelwall in *The Writings of Tertullianus III, Ante-Nicene Christian Library* 18 (Edinburgh 1870) 278-83.

⁷ E. Wilson, *The Gawain-Poet* (Leiden 1976) 58. For the signs of old age, see G.R. Coffman, "Old Age from Horace to Chaucer: Some Literary Affinities and Adventures of an Idea," *Speculum* 9 (1934) 249-77.

⁸ Jerome, "In Ionam Prophetam" 1:5, *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera, Commentarii in Prophetas Minores*, ed. M. Adriaen, C.C., Ser. Lat. 76, 377-419; see pp. 385-86. Also Paul E. Szarmach, "Two Notes on *Patience*," *N. & Q.*, NS. 18 (1971) 125-27.

⁹ For the text (from PL 171.1675-78) and a translation of this section, see my essay "*Patience in Perspective*," *U.C.T. Studies in English* 9 (1979) 5-22, esp. 7.

¹⁰ W. Vantuono, "The Structure and Sources of *Patience*," *M.S.* 34 (1972) 401-21; esp. 413-15.

¹¹ Attila Fáj, "Poetic Reminiscences and an Ascetic Principle in 'Patience'," *English Miscellany* 25 (Rome 1975-76) 9-26' quotation from p. 12.

¹² *Prudentia Carmina*, ed. M.P. Cunningham, C.C., Ser. Lat. 126, "Hymnus Ieiunantium," pp. 35-42. The *Cathemerinon* is discussed by P. De Labriolle, *The History and Literature of Christianity from Tertullian to Boethius*, trans. Herbert Wilson (London 1924) 448-50, and by F.J.E. Raby, *A History of Christian-Latin Poetry* (Oxford 1927) 44-49. Raby notices *De Iona* on p. 15.

¹³ Ellin M. Kelly, "Parallels between the Middle English *Patience* and *Hymnus Ieiunantium* of Prudentius," *E.L.N.* 4 (1966-67) 244-47. Cf. Vantuono (at n.10) 415-16.

¹⁴ Based, obviously on Matthew 25:35-6, which provided the Middle Ages with six of the seven works of mercy, the seventh being derived from Tobit 1: 19-20. See *John Gaytryge's Sermon* 250-71, ed. N.F. Blake, *Middle English Religious Prose* (London 1972) 82. A Middle English poem on the subject is in

W.L. Braekman, ed., "A Middle English Didactic Poem on the Works of Mercy," *N.M.* 79 (1978), 145-51. The prologue in *Patience* refers instead to the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:3-10, but both the Middle-English poet and Prudentius use their texts to single out the needs of the poor.

¹⁵ Cf. A.C. Spearing, *The Gawain-Poet* (Cambridge 1970) 86.

¹⁶ F.N.M. Diekstra, "Jonah and *Patience*: the Psychology of a Prophet," *E.S.* 55 (1974) 213 and n.31.

¹⁷ Cf. M. Andrew, "Jonah and Christ in *Patience*," *M.P.* 70 (1972-73) 230-33.

¹⁸ In *Patience* 413-16, though not in the Vulgate, Jonah's claim is disingenuous, since in fact (in the poem) he fled for fear (n.15 above). Cf. Anderson, ed. (at n.4) 14.

¹⁹ Cf. H.J. Thomson, intr. to the Loeb ed. and trans. of Prudentius (Harvard and London 1949, rpt. 1962) I, ix.

²⁰ The "big fish" is a whale in LXX (κῆτος) and in Matthew 12:40 ("in ventre ceti"); "cetus" in *De Iona* 83; "bestia" in Tertullian's *De Fuga in Persecutione*, ed. E.F. Leopold, *Tertulliani Opera Pars I* (Leipzig 1839) 214; in Marbod "piscis par monti, saevissima bellua ponti," also "cetus" and "ferus"; in Prudentius "belua" and "monstrum"; in *Patience* "whal," "fissche," "warlow" and "best."

²¹ *Policraticus*, ed. C.C.J. Webb (Oxford 1909) II, 406.

²² Dorothy Everett, *Essays on Middle English Literature* (Oxford 1955) 71. Derek Pearsall, *Old English and Middle English Poetry* (London 1977) 171. M. Andrew, "Patience: the 'Munster Dor'," *E.L.N.* 14 (1976-77) 164-67.

²³ Phaedrus, *Fabulae* IV, 9-10, ed. Pierre Constant, *Fables de Phèdre* (Paris 1937) 94.

²⁴ For the symmetrical opposition in *Patience* of boat, bowel, and bower, see Jay Schleusener, "History and Action in *Patience*," *PMLA* 86 (1971) 959-65, esp. p. 963. "Bluk" in *Gawain* 440 means the Green Knight's headless trunk; evidently the *Patience*-poet is deliberately comparing the "blok" (body) of the whale with the "bulk" (cargo-hold) of the ship by using the same word (O.N. *bǫlki*, heap, cargo) for both. Cf. Burrow's note (at n.4 above) 60.

²⁵ *Speculum Sacerdotale*, ed. E.H. Weatherly, *EETS* 200 (1935) 57.

²⁶ E.g. "exundantis incendii terribiles strepitus pati, barathri fuman-
tis amara caligine oculos caecari," Jonas Aurelianensis, *De Institutione Laicali* III. xix, "De Aeternis Suppliciis Reproborum," 106.274-75. Cf. Middle English descriptions of hell in, e.g., *Sawles Warde*, ed. J. Bennett and

G. Smithers, *Early Middle English Verse and Prose* (2nd ed., Oxford 1968) 250-52; *Speculum Christiani*, "De Penis Inferni," ed. G. Holmstedt, EETS 182 (1933) 120-21; *Cursor Mundi* 23207-350, ed. R. Morris, Part IV, EETS 66 (1877); *The Pricke of Conscience*, Part 6, 6421-7531, ed. R. Morris (Philological Society, 1863); and Chaucer, *Parson's Tale*, 158-230. On such mediaeval descriptions, see Nicolai von Kreisler, "Metaphorical Usages of 'Heaven' and 'Hell' in Modern English Speech," *Neophilologus* 57 (1973) 287-93; and Hildegard L.C. Tristram, "Stock Descriptions of Heaven and Hell in Old English," *N.M.* 79 (1978) 102-13.

²⁷ E. Wilson (at n.7) 64.

²⁸ Augustinus, *Quaestiones Genesis* CLXVIII, C.C., Ser. Lat. 33, 66, 2254-81.

²⁹ *Cleanness*, ed. Andrew and Waldrom, *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript*, 151.

³⁰ Ed. A. Vitale Brovarone, *Studi Francesi* 19 (1975) 1-16; discussed in the article cited in n.11 above.

³¹ Sermon 81, "De Ieiuniis Ninivitarum," in *Maximi Episcopi Taurinensis Sermones*, ed. A. Mutzenbecher, C.C., Ser. Lat. 23, 332-34.

³² Cf. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* 334 and *M.E.D.* "chere" 2a; for the sense "to change one's mind" see *M.E.D.* "chere" 5a; in *Gawain* 711 and 2169 it is direction rather than mind or expression that is changed.

³³ The comment by W.A. Davenport, *The Art of the Gawain-Poet* (London 1978) 123, on lines 391-96 that "The effect of this expansion, in particular, is to exaggerate the king's speech to such an extent that the rhetoric seems false" ignores the importance attached to contrition in the Middle Ages. Cf. Chaucer's *Parson's Tale* 304: "contricioun sholde be wonder sorweful and angwissous."