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## Two Notes on *Christ II*

Robert D. Stevick

There is no difficulty in deciphering the text of *Christ II*: it is preserved on undamaged leaves of the Exeter Book and is written in a 'monumental' hand that is everywhere clear.<sup>1</sup> Understanding the text is not without difficulties, though, over and beyond the permanent ones of understanding a poetic composition in a language long without native speakers. No doubt the most striking revelation of the incomplete understanding of the poem came with John Pope's demonstration that an entire leaf is missing, containing some sixty-five to seventy metrical lines that had come about one-third the way through the composition.<sup>2</sup> In this instance it is possible not only to know that there is in fact a lacuna, but also to know the substance of the lost text.<sup>3</sup> The present paper considers the form of the text of *Christ II* in light of the lacuna, and it also probes possible meanings of one sentence that falls amidst the enumeration of some of the 'gifts of men': *Sum mæg searolice | wordcwide writan* (ll. 672b–73a).

There is no difficulty either in construing the syntax of this particular sentence: subject *sum* governs verb *mæg*, which is complemented by infinitive *writan*, the one object is *wordcwide*, and adverb *searolice* is located normally within the predicate. Word meanings are for the most part very plain: *sum* in a series of sentences designates an item in an inventory, *mæg* expresses ability to do something, *writan* is clearly 'write', and a *wordcwide* is utterance that is recognized as distinctive and significant. 'A certain one is able to write special-status-utterance in a *searolic* manner.' *Searolice* stands as the only word difficult of meaning, not for its root or for its formation, but for the dynamic demands of the other words with which it collocates here. From these truisms of Anglo-Saxon grammar and lexis the question of the meaning is narrowed to that of 'being able to write *wordcwide searolice*'.

Definitions of *searu* (*searw-*, *siru-*, *sirw-*, and the rest) in Modern English are expressed mostly in latinate borrowings: 'searu . . . *n.* Device, design, contrivance,

*art* ' is the beginning of the Bosworth–Toller dictionary entry; these defining terms, and the others, reflect Old English glossing of Latin *adventio*, *molimen*, *machinas*, *factio*, and *ballista*, *catapulta* with forms of *searu*. The lexical root marked an area of semantic field in Old English, however, that seems not to be demarcated by any one or any group of the Romance terms now in English; there has not been a simple equation of the Latin and English words, apparently, at any time in history. Also to be reckoned with is the duality of 'a bad sense' and 'a good sense', as Bosworth–Toller separates the meanings. But let us sort so far as can be done for contexts and collocations.<sup>4</sup>

First, it cannot be doubted that one who has the gift of being able to write set-pieces *searolice* does so in an approved or commendable manner — *searolice* 'in a good sense'. That is what the enumeration of various 'gifts of men' makes clear regularly through its modifiers: *purh . . . æðele andgiet*, . . . *mæg . . . wel . . . hearpan storgan*, and so on. All the commonplace co-occurrences of *searu-* with *beswican*, or *ðæs deofles* with *searo-* in the 'bad sense', are contrary to the significance allowed by the context. So what can it mean 'in a good sense' to be able to write *wordcwide searolice*? It seems unlikely that the somehow artful or ingenious manner of writing refers to calligraphy, which would more naturally be expressed as *fægere writan* or some such phrase employing an adverb signifying beauty of appearance. For that matter, calligraphy in general or perhaps in the special form of executing elaborate decorated initial letters would call for the grammatical object to be expressed by a word such as *bocstafas*. The object, though, is *wordcwide*, some sort of verbal piece considered as a whole.

The 'gifts of men' passage in which the sentence occurs (ll. 664–85) is similar in several ways to *The Gifts of Men* and the last section of *The Fortunes of Men*, whose texts also are preserved in the Exeter Book. There are some items occurring in two or even three of these texts, and there are even clear verbal parallels.<sup>5</sup> The character of the list of men's gifts in *Christ II*, however, differs noticeably from that of the other lists that survive. *The Gifts of Men* comprises a lengthy list of gifts in excellings, in skills, in appearances, in war, in virtues. It begins with earthly goods, physical prowess, patronage, wisdom, goes on to skills in harping, navigation, jewellery-making, weaponry, leadership, animal training, and concludes with skills in songs of praise for the ruler of life, being apt with respect to books, and being *listhendig* for writing down *wordgeryno*. Only the last one-third of *The Fortunes of Men* turns to an inventory of representative gifts after a series of examples of how men may die (hence the difficulty of providing a suitable title for this piece). Among these gifts are several named in three lines (ll. 67–69) —

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prosperity, bravery, and so on; two half-lines (71b–72a) state that *Sume boceras l weortad wisfæst*, 'Some book-scholars become wise', and nine half-lines concern the goldsmith; at the end, hall virtues and animal-training skills are mentioned.

On the other hand, the 'gifts' in *Christ II* are limited to ten items, and they are grouped as five that are intellectual talents (abilities in eloquence, music, theology, astronomy, writing of *wordcwide*) and five physical talents (skills in war, seamanship, athletics, armory, wayfaring). Altogether it is a striking difference of context, having a clear structure and presumably a firm rationale.<sup>6</sup> The intellectual talents are the most immediate part of the context, the first four of them involving construction — or understanding, anyway — of complex systems. Astronomy requires computation, as does music (unless it is merely a performing skill); so does theology ultimately in its medieval Christian form. We can infer, therefore, that the ability to write *searolice* is very likely to be an intellectual talent that probably is obtained by formal training of the kind found within the seven liberal arts. That is about as far as context, glosses, and grammar will narrow down the semantic range for *searolice*.<sup>7</sup>

Let us turn next to the form of the text of *Christ II* and ask first a question more primitive than is customary: how do we know whether this composition has metrical form throughout? After all, the Exeter Book text does not represent by graphic means the division of the discourse into metrical units — through separate lineation of these units, or through special marks to signal the divisions. The answer, of course, is that the text records phonological aspects of the discourse, there are regular and consistent recurrences of certain types of phonological features, and it is our recognition of these rule-governed recurrences of sounds that is our evidence that *Christ II* is a metrical composition. It will be worth remembering in this regard that the text is essentially only an alphabetic sequence — representing the sequence of 'segmental' speech sounds — and not representing word-stress, an element fundamental to most metrical schemes for Old English poetry: it can be claimed only by inference. Even if the text does not mark the metrical form for us, it would be perverse to argue that therefore *Christ II* is not a metrical composition throughout: the regularities of pattern for syllable, stress, and segmental units (in relation to syntactic boundaries) constitute the metre, or the measure, of formal discourse recorded by this text.

Next, is the form of the poem merely metrical — merely a sequence of verses linked by alliteration into pairs which we now call lines? The other potential for giving form to the text is the grouping of lines according to some other kind of recognizable pattern. Such grouping is not achieved here through any of the

familiar devices of modular phonological patterns such as rhyme-stanzas, or through numerical schemes such as quatrains, or through syllable-patterns such as *cursus* to mark the limit of a grouping. The Exeter Book text does present a grouping of metrical lines, nonetheless. It is unmistakable in the so-called sectional divisions of the text, manifested as a ruled line left blank, preceded by prominent punctuation, and followed by majuscule letters unlike any found elsewhere in the text. These divisions stand out as deliberate and recurrent features of the text, and they occur *only* between whole numbers of metrical lines. The question to consider, in this matter, is whether these divisions of text, these groupings of metrical lines, occur according to a recognizable pattern that we can acknowledge as poetic form.

Locations of the sectional divisions do not match in any consistent way the poet's shift among his sources, or his thematic units of composition, as these have been variously interpreted.<sup>8</sup> The divisions do not even match regularly such basic boundaries of discourse as the opening or closing of direct speech, the first division, for instance, occurring ten lines from the close of a speech, six and a half lines from its beginning, in a section seventy-seven lines long.<sup>9</sup> As much as they have been discussed, though, the locations of these divisions in the tenth century manuscript text have never been considered *in relation to each other*: they have not been considered as possibly being elements of a poetic form.<sup>10</sup>

To analyze the formal potential for the relationships which these dimensions have one to another requires provisionally restoring the number of lines missing by reason of the loss of a single leaf from the text. The numbers of verse lines for each of the leaves containing the poem are listed in Table 1. The average is about 66 1/4, with one folio significantly shorter, two folios significantly longer; sectional divisions affect the length of text copied on all the folios. All folios in this section of the manuscript, it may be noted, are ruled for the same number of lines of text (and there are no pictures); the text is written throughout in one hand.<sup>11</sup>

In the standard edition, which does not register the lacuna, the poem now comprises 427 metrical lines. It comprises 427 1/4 lines in the extant copy when the loss is noted in terms of the metrical structure of the text:

Table 1 Contents of Exeter Book, folios 14-20.

Folio	Number of verse lines	Sectional division
14	65– (r. 31 1/3, v. 33 1/2)	Yes
15	66+ (r. 30 1/2, v. 35 2/3)	Yes

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[Missing]	?		?
16	66-	(r. 33 1/2, v. 32+)	<b>Yes</b>
17	63 1/2	(r. 32 1/2, v. 31)	At end of leaf
18	68-	(r. 33+, v. 34 1/2)	At start of leaf
19	69+	(r. 33, v. 36+)	Yes
20	---	(r. 34 1/2, v. 9 to end of poem)	---

555 on heahsetle heofones waldend,  
 folca feorhgiefan, frætwum [. . . ]  
 [folio missing]  
 [ . . . . . ] ealles waldend  
 middangeardes ond mægenþrymmes.  
 [etc.]

If the missing leaf contained between 64 and 69 lines, the poem would then have comprised any number of (whole) lines between 492 and 496, with greater likelihood of total length probably between 493 and 495 lines. Given the extent and nature of the codicological and paleographical data, the range cannot be narrowed any further.

But let us select one highly probable length, assuming for the moment that the total number of lines originally was 495, the missing leaf having contained 67 3/4 lines and a sectional division. The sectional divisions of the poem have the numerical relationships shown in Table 2 (location of the second division being conjectural).

Table 2 Lengths of sections of *Christ II*, restored

Section	Number of lines in section groups			
[I]	77			
	144			
[II]	67 <sup>a</sup>	228		
	151	314		
[III]	84 <sup>a</sup>	237	407	
	170	330	495	
[IIII]	86	263	418	
	179	351		

[V]	93	267
	181	
[VI]	99	<sup>a</sup> Lacuna of 67 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> verse lines

Do these quantitative relationships among the sectional divisions manifest a pattern that should be recognized as artistic form? No two sections have the same length, and no groups of sections have the same length; but given such large numbers of lines in these separate sections, the recurrence of a given length of text could scarcely function as a formal device to be perceived intuitively, as the metre is, and as some other schemes such as stanzas can be. On the other hand, some forms may have uses and attractions — and meanings — for an artist that need not be intuitively perceivable by his audience. Such a form may well be present in the sectional divisions of *Christ II*. What follows is a method for constructing a graphic analogue of the formal plan of the divisions of *Christ II*; the process of derivation will demonstrate the presence of an integrated and comprehensive pattern in the relationships among all the sectional divisions. The analogue takes as its given a grid of squares 3 x 2, each square measuring 165 units on a side, corresponding to one-third the length inferred for the whole text (see Plate 1).

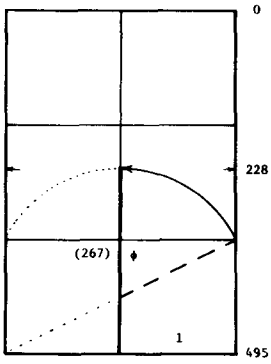
(i) In the lower portion of the grid, construct the golden section ratio ( $\phi$ ) in relation to the modular measure, by traditional method.

The length of  $\phi$  will be 267.<sup>12</sup> Measured from the bottom of the figure, it corresponds to the number of lines in the last three sections of *Christ II*, which are intact. The complementary length 3 –  $\phi$  will be 228, the number of lines in the preceding sections if the original length is 495.

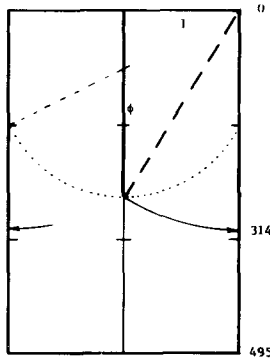
(ii) Copy along the sides of the figure the length of the hypotenuse of a right triangle whose sides have lengths 1 and  $\phi$ .

That length will be 314.<sup>13</sup> Measured from the top of the figure it corresponds to the number of lines which precede the last two sections. If the provisional restoration of 495 lines for the whole poem is correct, the complementary length is 181: that is the actual number of lines comprising the last two sections of the poem as they are preserved without loss in the Exeter Book.

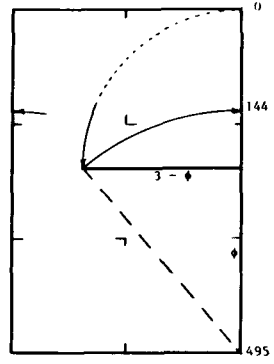
Christ II



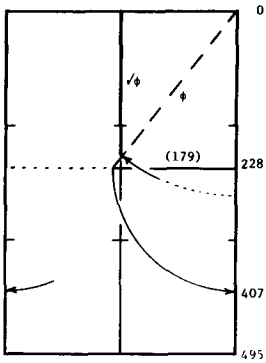
Step i



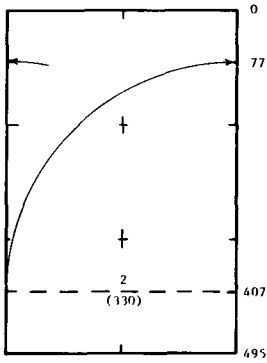
Step ii



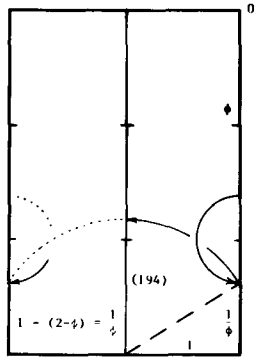
Step iii



Step iv



Step v



Step vi

Plate 1



(iii) Copy along the sides of the figure the length of the hypotenuse of a right triangle whose sides have been set with lengths  $\phi$  and  $3 - \phi$ .

That length will be 351.<sup>14</sup> Measured from the bottom of the figure it predicts a sectional division on the missing folio 351 metrical lines from the end of the poem, complementing 144 lines in the first two (of six) sections of the text.

(iv) Use length  $\phi$  for hypotenuse and length 1 for the short side of a right triangle along the top of the figure; the long side will measure  $\sqrt{\phi}$ ; extend the hypotenuse of that triangle to intersect a line across the figure at a distance  $3 - \phi$  from the top (this is at measure 228, already established); then along the side of the figure add to the length  $3 - \phi$  the length of the short side of the larger resulting triangle.

The length added to 228 is 179.<sup>15</sup> That length corresponds to the actual number of lines in the second and third from the last sectional divisions of the poem. The sum of 228 and 179 is 407, which is 88 less than the full length of the graphic figure; that number is the same as the count of lines in the last section of the poem.

(v) Then measure back from this last point the length of two modules, that is, by the width of the figure.

The length of two modules is 330, the number of lines intervening between the first and last sections of the poem if its original length was in fact 495. On this basis the length 77 is set at the top of the figure, corresponding accurately to the number of metrical lines in the undamaged first section of this verse text.

The pattern of relationships qualifies rationally as a formal scheme for the poetic text in deriving all the divisions from the ratio  $3 : 2$  together with quantities in ratios incorporating the golden section. The presence of pattern is evident in more than just the recurrence of 3 and  $\phi$  in the formulas expressing the relationships among the parts.<sup>16</sup> Most notably, the ratio of the whole length to that of the latter three sections (495 to 267) is that of  $3 : \phi$ , and the *same* ratio recurs in the lengths of the last three and the first two sections (267 to 144). Another ratio within the design is  $\phi : (3 - \phi)$ , in the lengths 267 : 228, for the two 'halves' of the poem. Between the last two sections and all other sections but the first, the ratio of linecounts is 181 to 237, equivalent to  $2 : (\phi + 1)$ . Or, between the middle four sections (as reconstructed) and the first three the ratio of linecounts is 330 to 228, equivalent to  $2 : (3 - \phi)$ . And so on. As the graphic analogue makes obvious, *all sectional*

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lengths of the poem conform to a plan contrived from the relations of 3 and 2 and, from them, 1 and  $\phi$ . The complete integration of proportioning of the known section lengths in the Exeter Book copy of *Christ II* is powerful argument for restoration of the length to 495 metrical lines, in terms of mathematical probabilities.

If there is unmistakable pattern in the sectional divisions of this poem — rational, precise, and without aberration — is it reasonable to regard it as appropriate to the art of poetry? This question cannot properly be answered of course by consulting intuition alone. Some regard must be given to other art forms in the same culture. There can be no question that the kind of pattern described above, in all its complexity of articulation but simplicity of conception, was available in Anglo-Saxon England. It turns up repeatedly in the decorative pages of religious texts, chiefly in the primary accounts of Christ's life, death, and ascension: the early Gospel codices.<sup>17</sup> In fact, the page depicting the symbol of St John in the Echternach Gospels is laid out with spatial proportions as elaborately (and exclusively) developing ratios built from two and the golden section as the proportions among the sectional lengths of *Christ II* develop three and the golden section.<sup>18</sup>

How this kind of proportional plan was employed in pictorial art can be illustrated briefly from the full-page depiction of St Mark in the eighth-century gospels text preserved as Codex 51 in the St Gallen Stiftsbibliothek (see Plate 2). The frame encloses a rectangular area whose dimensions are in the ratio 4 : 3. The inner area — the panel in which St Mark is depicted — has dimensions derived directly from that ratio and again incorporating the golden section. The initial and simplest relationship of dimensions is in the widths: on either side of the centre the width of the heavy frame and the width of the inner picture area are related very accurately in the ratio of the golden section; or considered in another way, the width of the inner panel in relation to the overall width of the frame is equivalent to  $1:\phi^2$ , or to  $1:\phi+1$  (steps *a*, *b*, *c*). The height of the inner panel is related by a simple derivation (*d*) (the measure when expressed in modern notation becomes more complex with each successive derivation, being equivalent to  $\sqrt{2-(1-1/\phi)}$  of the measure of the overall width). Shapes of the principal areas within the ornate sides of the frame are plotted similarly. The outer edges of the diamond-shaped cells follow the diamond-shaped diagonals of the quadrants of the overall area (then symmetrically copied for the inner edges), and the division of the upper and lower cells from the middle ones is set by copying the distance from the corners of the frame to the diamond pattern of diagonals of quadrants (*e*). Even the centre of the halo is located by a related derivational procedure (*f*).<sup>19</sup>

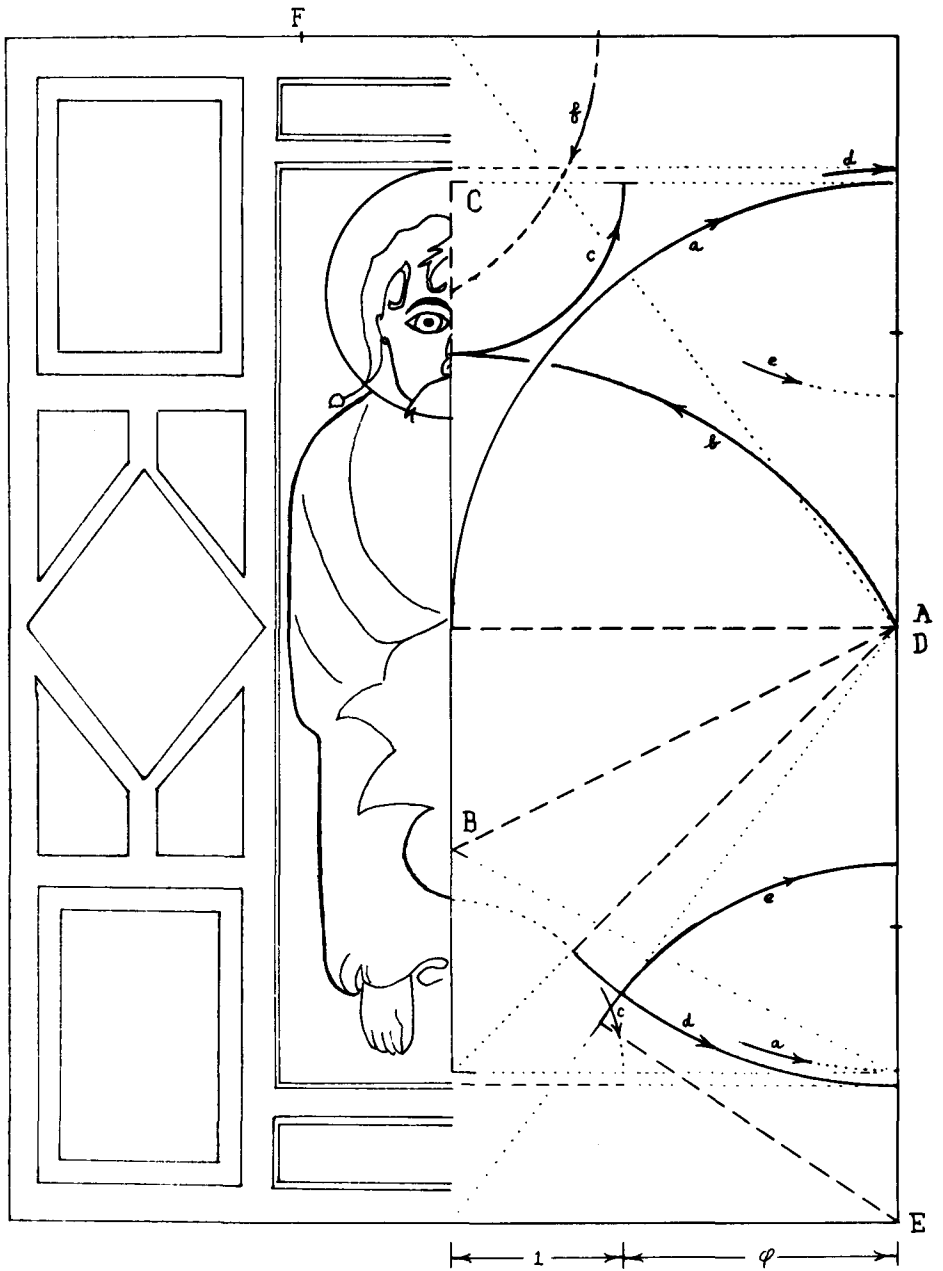


Plate 2

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In sum, from the overall shape, a 4x3 rectangle, have been developed the principal shapes of the picture panel, the decorative cells, and the halo of St Mark — the governing form of the illuminated page. By the nature of the derivational procedures which have been described, the formal plan, both aesthetically and rationally, bonds the constituent shapes by a principle of geometrical proportioning. With analogous forms in the book-art of the same culture, produced in the same contexts (monastic scriptoria), the plausibility of the author of *Christ II* employing a formal scheme such as the one sketched above is beyond question.

If we suppose now that the fine formal scheme to be recognized in the careful copy of *Christ II* followed the same principles of artistic form given practical development in visual arts, too,<sup>20</sup> then perhaps we have an avenue to understanding more accurately than before two aspects of this text. One is the graphically prominent divisions of the text, now recognizable as an aspect of its form. The other is the meaning of the 'gift' of certain men to write *searolice* a formal verbal creation.

In the glosses of *searu* and in the dynamics of the sentence stating a truism that *Sum mæg searolice wordcwide writan* are convergent clues to the meaning of *searolice* in Cynewulf's poem. Cook's gloss 'skilfully' is good, though it generalizes too broadly. Other glosses on the root and its derivatives (especially *beadu-*, *bealu-*, *facen-*, *fær-*, *gup-*, *inwit-*, *lap-*, *lyge-*, *nearu-*, the *searu*-compounds, and *besyrwan*), whenever they do not signify a transferred sense, consistently signify art, contrivance, cunning or ingenious design, plot, net, artifice, cleverness of construction, wondrously tied, intricately bound. Any and all these terms are appropriate to description of the graphic analogue of the divisions of the poem that has been developed here. The analogue in turn shows the same concepts and techniques of construction that are implicit in Northumbrian (and Irish) religious art in book-decoration; the larger forms of this nature seem to serve the same aesthetic purpose as that of interlace design, in fact, to bind together intricately and ingeniously all the parts of the whole. The form embodied in the sectional divisions of the text is the only correlate to be proposed thus far with any and all the approximations to the meaning of *searolice*. It provides, I believe, ostensive definition of this word in this sentence. Cynewulf's poem is a formal written composition, as the use of its sources implies, and as the runic signature proves. It is itself a *wordcwide searolice writen*.

It may be through Cynewulf's *searocræft*, or perhaps it is only by chance, but the locus of this sentence about cunning composition of written *wordcwide* is also noteworthy. It fits perfectly with the ingenious design of the larger form of this

text. In the final step of the derivation illustrated in Plate 1, the place of the sentence is plotted precisely (shown this time along the centre line) by a simple extension of the scheme already outlined.

(vi) Copy along the centre line the length of the hypotenuse of a right triangle with sides 1 and the reciprocal of the golden section ratio. (One way is to copy first the distance  $2 - \phi$  (from Step ii) into the lowest square, leaving as a complement the reciprocal of  $\phi$ , and constructing the triangle incorporating that measure.)

It is 194 from the bottom<sup>21</sup> — representing the end of the poem. In the conventional line numbering (which begins with *Christ I*), that 194 is to be counted back from 866, that is, to 672, the number of the completed line in the standard editions on either side of which the two halves of the sentence occur.<sup>22</sup>

One of the gifts of men — one commensurate with the skills of the goldsmith, or the orator, astronomer, theologian, musician — is to *write* formal discourse *searolice*, as Cynewulf himself and others have done, setting out his poem within a formal scheme that is comprehensive, ingenious, rational, and that creates a colligation of all parts of that poem in an æsthetic equilibrium as effective as that attained also in the best religious art of early Anglo-Saxon England.

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### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The facsimile edition is *The Exeter Book of Old English Poetry*, with introductory chapters by R. W. Chambers, Max Förster, and Robin Flower (London, 1933). The two principal editions are those by Albert S. Cook, *The Christ of Cynewulf: A Poem in Three Parts, The Advent, The Ascension, and the Last Judgment* (Boston, 1900), and by George Philip Krapp and Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie, *The Exeter Book*, The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, 3 (New York, 1936); both editions describe the manuscript divisions of the text of *Christ II* — that is, lines 440–866 of the first verse text in the codex — but do not represent them within the text itself. Daniel G. Calder's *Cynewulf* (Boston, 1981) provides a very useful critical review of earlier studies and an interpretative analysis of all Cynewulf's poems considered together.

<sup>2</sup> John C. Pope, 'The Lacuna in the Text of Cynewulf's *Ascension* (*Christ II*, l. 556b)', in *Studies in Language, Literature and Culture of the Middle Ages and Later*, edited by E. Bagby Atwood and Archibald A. Hill (Austin, Texas, 1969), pp. 210–19.

<sup>3</sup> Pope reconstructs the substance as follows: '[W]e can suppose that, after completing his description of the heavenly celebration, and thus bringing to a close his treatment of the white robes of the angels, Cynewulf turned to a broader aspect of the ascension and to a previously neglected portion of his narrative. It is natural that he should have done so, for the theme is undeveloped in his chief source, Gregory's homily, and the narrative is not in the Bible. For this new section he had to turn for guidance to Bede's ascension hymn or its sources: the apocryphal accounts of the harrowing of hell, the corresponding inferences about the host of the redeemed that Christ led to heaven at his ascension, and the twenty-fourth psalm' ('The Lacuna in the Text of Cynewulf's *Ascension*', pp. 216–17).

<sup>4</sup> I have made extensive and grateful use of *A Microfiche Concordance to Old English*, Publications of the Dictionary of Old English, 1, compiled by Antonette diPaolo Healey and Richard L. Venezky (Toronto, 1980).

<sup>5</sup> Cook calls attention to them in the Notes to his edition (note 1, above). J. E. Cross, 'The Old English Poetic Theme of "The Gifts of Men"', *Neophilologus*, 46 (1962), 66–70, discusses these texts and their sources. Nicholas Howe, in the chapter on 'The Catalogues of Order and Diversity: *The Gifts of Men* and *The Fortunes of Men*', in *The Old English Catalogue Poems*, *Anglistica*, 23 (Copenhagen, 1985), turns first to some consideration of the catalogue of 'gifts' in *Christ II* — 'So similar is this passage' to the two shorter poems 'that it could be inserted wholesale into *Gifts* (after, say, l. 66) without disturbing the flow of that poem' (p. 105).

<sup>6</sup> In his note to ll. 664–85, Cook calls attention to Ælfric's version of the 'gifts' passage in I Corinthians 12. 8–11; these gifts have to do with the utterance of wisdom and knowledge, faith, healing, prophecy, distinguishing good spirits and evil, various languages, interpretation of various tongues. Ælfric also translates part of a text of Gregory naming the gifts of *boclicere lare* and *eorðlice æhta*, and the observation that some have neither *þæt gastlice andgit* nor *ða eorðlican speda*, but learned *sumne cræft þe hine afet* ('In Natale Unius Confessoris', 165–71, in *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The Second Series: Text*, edited by Malcolm Godden, EETS, SS 5 (London, 1979)). Neither of these sources has the character of Cynewulf's list. Peter Clemoes, in *Rhythm and Cosmic Order in Old English Christian Literature: An Inaugural Lecture* (Cambridge, 1970), has this to say about the 'gifts' passage: 'The gifts are lively and diverse. Their arrangement draws on the poet's feeling for an archetypal versified list. . . . The artificial way in which the ten gifts are set out in the verse externalizes their schematic quality' (p. 13).

<sup>7</sup> A full semantic field study is much needed, comprehending the contexts of *orþonc* (and its derivatives), the baffling statement ostensibly in the poet's own voice at the beginning of the final section of *Elene*, that *ic . . . wordcræft[um] wæf* (ll. 1236–37), and the meaning of the statement that the Creator *serede and sette on six dagum eorðan dælas*, in *Christ and Satan*, l. 14.

<sup>8</sup> Cook (note 1, above, pp. 115–16) provides a thorough breakdown of the correspondences of segments of text with Gregory's homily which are the sources. The corresponding passages are printed also in Michael J. B. Allen and Daniel G. Calder, *Sources and Analogues of Old English Poetry: The Major Latin Texts in Translation* (Cambridge and Totowa, New Jersey, 1976), pp. 79–83. Colin Chase, 'God's Presence through Grace as the Theme of Cynewulf's *Christ II* and the Relationship of this Theme to *Christ I* and *Christ III*', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3 (1974), 87–101, notes the extensive divergences from the principal source, Gregory's homily, and in the use of that homily, in the course of explaining the theme of God's presence through grace which he attributes to the poem. The thematic units of the poem have been defined ordinarily without reference to the manuscript divisions of the text.

<sup>9</sup> Jean Milhaupt, O.P., 'The Structure of Cynewulf's *Christ II*', *Studies in Medieval Culture*, 4 (1979), 70–77, calls the manuscript divisions 'unsatisfactory' because 'Part I [in her tripartite division by thematic analysis] breaks off in the middle of a speech . . . and Part III in the middle of a discussion of God's gifts' (p. 72). The divisions of the manuscript text 'may represent the judgment of the scribe' (p. 72). Because it is the *text* which I am discussing, the sectional divisions in the manuscript can be regarded as neither satisfactory nor unsatisfactory; they are part of the text and cannot be set aside.

## Christ II

<sup>10</sup> The sectional divisions of long verse texts, according to B. J. Timmer, occur only in English manuscripts (and the English-influenced Old Saxon text of *Heliand* [manuscript C]), 'Sectional Divisions of Poems in Old English Manuscripts', *Modern Language Review*, 47 (1952), 319–22; he attributes the sectional divisions to the limits of 'the duration of the momentary inspiration of the poet'. Much earlier, Henry Bradley, in 'The Numbered Sections in Old English Poetical MSS', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 7 (1915–16), 165–87, linked the divisions to the space afforded by separate sheets of parchment. W. W. Greg, in *The Library*, Fourth Series, I (1920), 58–61, modified this notion by suggesting the sections reflect the stretches of discourse to be read 'at a series of uniform sitting, say during meals'. Geoffrey Shepherd, 'Scriptural Poetry', in *Continuations and Beginnings: Studies in Old English Literature*, edited by E. G. Stanley (London, 1966), pp. 1–36, infers that 'the division of religious poems appears to derive from liturgical practice', but is unable to be more specific than that. David Marsdon Wells, 'The Sections in Old English Poetry', *Yearbook of English Studies*, 6 (1976), 1–4, accounts for the divisions in terms of eye-appeal on laying out facing pages of text. And so on. A summation and perspective was provided by Thomas Elwood Hart in note 11 (p. 267) to 'Ellen: Some Tectonic Relationships in *Beowulf* and Their Formal Resemblances in Anglo-Saxon Art', *Papers on Language and Literature*, 6 (1970), 263–98. Whatever else the divisions have been correlated with, no one so far has tried correlating the divisions in this text with each other.

<sup>11</sup> Patrick W. Connor, 'The Structure of the Exeter Book Codex (Exeter, Cathedral Library, MS. 3501)', *Scriptorium*, 40 (1986), 233–42, provides a very careful review of rulings, membranes, variations in letter-shapes, and other characteristics of the manuscript, concluding that the present codex originated as three separate booklets. There are no variations noted, however, which give reason to doubt the general consistency of the text-space and the writing that fills it.

<sup>12</sup> The decimal approximation of  $\phi$  is 1.618. In relation to the module,  $1.618 \times 165 = 266.97$ , or 267 in whole numbers; in a three-module length ( $3 \times 165 = 495$ ) the complement is 228.

<sup>13</sup> The length of the hypotenuse, expressed in modern notation, is  $\sqrt{(1^2 + \phi^2)}$ , the decimal approximation of which is 1.902; applied to the module 165 it yields 313.85, which rounds to 314.

<sup>14</sup> The length of the hypotenuse, expressed in modern notation, is  $\sqrt{(\phi^2 + [3 - \phi]^2)}$ , the decimal approximation of which is 2.128; applied to the modular measure it yields 351.10, which rounds to 351.



15 The decimal approximation of  $\sqrt{\phi}$  is 1.272. The procedure is to set the ratio 1:  $\sqrt{\phi}$ , and then apply it to 228.03, yielding 179.27; the combined length then is 407.30, which rounds to 407.

16 If the total length is given, and if all five divisions are derived from 3 and 2 and  $\phi$ , then by mathematical necessity the length of each section and all the ratios between lengths of contiguous groups of sections can be expressed by formulas employing only these numerals: that is the modern way of conceiving of the integration of the plan that otherwise can be conceived of in a geometrical form such as the one shown.

17 I have demonstrated the geometrical conception of several of these: 'The Design of Lindisfarne Gospels folio 138v', *Gesta*, 22 (1983), 3–12; 'The Shapes of the Book of Durrow Evangelist-Symbol Pages', *The Art Bulletin*, 68 (1986), 182–94; 'The 4x3 Crosses in the Lindisfarne and Lichfield Gospels', *Gesta*, 25 (1986), 171–84; 'The St Cuthbert Gospel Binding and Insular Design', *Artibus et Historiae*, 15 (1987), 9–19; 'The Echternach Gospels' Evangelist-Symbol Pages: Forms from "The Two True Measures of Geometry" ', *Peritia*, 5 (for 1986, forthcoming). The first parallel to be pointed out between proportions of a decorative page and the divisions of a poetic text in Anglo-Saxon books was that of Cynewulf's *Elene* and the cross page, folio 138v, preceding St Luke's Gospel in the Lindisfarne Gospels; it is analyzed in 'A Formal Analog of *Elene*', *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, n.s. 5 (1982), 45–104.

18 The full-page depiction of the eagle, symbol of St John (folio 176v), in the Echternach Gospels (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS lat. 9389).

19 The St Mark portrait is on p. 78 of this gospels codex. I have been able to examine this page at first hand. Not only does the plan described here and sketched in Plate 2 correspond fully to the specific shape of the manuscript illumination, but certain of the construction marks in the original picture-page also correspond to marks left by the procedure shown here.

20 Peter Clemoes, in 'Cynewulf's Image of the Ascension', in *England Before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock*, edited by Peter Clemoes and Kathleen Hughes (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 293–304, compares Cynewulf's verbal image of Christ's ascension to representations in contemporary Anglo-Saxon art — two carvings, one in Northumberland, one in Derbyshire — and infers that the poet's image was 'moulded by liturgical worship as well as by the visual arts' (p. 302). 'What we can be sure . . . is that his image had some main source of visual stimulus' (p. 304).

## *Christ II*

21 The measure  $2 - \phi$ , in decimal approximation, is 0.382. In the bottom square the complement is  $1 - 0.382$ , or 0.618; that is the reciprocal of  $\phi$ . The hypotenuse is therefore  $\sqrt{(1^2 + [1/\phi]^2)}$ , which in decimal approximation is 1.1756. In relation to the module 165, the measure is 193.97, which rounds to 194.

22 If the 'given' for the graphic analogue, the 3x2 grid, seems gratuitous, it should be noted that the Exeter Book itself is laid out with text-space ruled on each page in a 3x2 rectangle (240x160 mm), and furthermore the area embraced by outer limits of text-space on facing pages (when the book is opened flat) is also a 3x2 rectangle. The use of geometrical regularities is ubiquitous in early Insular book-art.