

FEEDING THE DRAGON

An Eschatological Motif in Medieval Europe

Edited by Claudia Di Sciacca and Andrea Meregalli





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Dipartimento di Lingue, Letterature, Culture e Mediazioni
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INTRODUCTION

The idea of this volume originated in the workshop *Feeding the Dragon. An Eschatological Motif in Early Medieval Europe*, held online on 17 September 2020, as the concluding act of the project ‘Feeding the Dragon. An Eschatological Motif in Old English Homilies and Hagiographies (FEEDEM)’, coordinated by C. Di Sciacca and funded by the University of Udine (PRID - PSA 2017).

The book consists of six original essays concerning two popular eschatological motifs of medieval Europe: the devouring devil, especially in the guise of a dragon, and the zoomorphic mouth of hell, arguably a distinctive English adaptation of the anthropomorphic mouth of hell of classical antiquity.

The opening essay (C. Di Sciacca, “Feeding the Dragon. A Foreword”) offers a survey of the topos of the devouring demonic monster, a veritable commonplace across cultures and ages. Focusing on the analysis of some key Old English (OE) homilies and hagiographies, C. Di Sciacca argues that the pervasive imagery of the devouring dragon in early medieval England coalesced with the mouth of hell, thereby contributing to popularise it, and that such a coalescence was triggered by the special currency of two apocrypha, the *Seven Heavens Apocryphon* and the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, especially the *Descensus Christi ad inferos* section of the latter text.

One of the most influential exegetical interpretation of the devouring dragon in Rev. 12 can be found in Gregory the Great’s *Moralia in Iob*. Moreover, Gregory used the devouring dragon as an iconographic symbol of the devilish tempter in two exempla of the *Homiliae in Evangelia*, eventually incorporated into the *Dialogi* (of disputed authorship). Thus, the Gregorian homiletic and hagiographic works were instrumental in spreading the topos of the devouring dragon in subsequent medieval literature, as well as providing some revealing case-studies of the distinctive modes of production and transmission of Gregory’s texts. (L. Castaldi, “*Recedite, ecce draconi ad devorandum datus sum*. The Devouring Dragon Topos in Gregory the Great’s Works”).

The Gregorian exempla of the swallowing dragons were adapted into OE by the major Anglo-Saxon homilist and hagiographer, Ælfric of Eynsham (c. 950 – c. 1010). Moving on from L. Castaldi's study, the third essay discusses Ælfric's take on the imagery of the swallowing devil in three of the Catholic Homilies: the homily for the twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost (CH I. 35), the homily for St Benedict's Day (CH II. 11), and the homily for Palm Sunday (CH I. 14). In all three homilies, the antecedent of the demonic devourer has ultimately been traced to Gregory the Great, although, as is often the case with Ælfric, the ultimate patristic source has been mediated by Carolingian transmitters and integrated with echoes of ingrained biblical reading, exegetical learning, liturgical drill, and familiar stories of monastic literature. Through a detailed comparative analysis of the primary sources, this essay discusses the relationship between Ælfric's homilies and their source-texts, both ultimate and intermediate, as well as assessing Ælfric's distinctive contribution to the imagery of the devouring dragon. (C. Di Sciacca, "efne her is cumen an draca þe me sceal forswelgan. Ælfric's Vernacular Take on a Gregorian Dragon").

In his eschatological imagery, Ælfric also made use of the worm as a symbol of evil as well as of death and decay. In particular, the punishment of unrepentant sinners involves two scriptural motifs ultimately deriving from Mark 9:43-50, namely the eternal Worm and the unquenchable fire. The fourth essay discusses how Ælfric articulates such motifs within three relevant texts of his homiletic and hagiographic corpus. While the homily *On Auguries* focuses on those guilty of idolatry and the *Homily for the Third Sunday after Epiphany* conveys the spiritual meaning of Christ's healing miracles, the *Passion of St Julian and His Wife Basilissa* presents an exemplary tale of resistance against hostile forces. These three texts offer a way to consider how both the Worm of Hell and the maggots devouring the flesh are embedded in Ælfric's approach to the conflict between Good and Evil, inciting people to follow a Christian conduct that will save them from the jaws of the *undeadlic wyrm*. (F. Di Giuseppe, "þær bið æfre ece fyr and undeadlic wyrm. The Worm of Hell in Ælfric's Corpus").

The role of apocrypha into the shaping of the imaginative and eclectic eschatology and cosmology of the Middle Ages cannot be overemphasized. One of the most distinctive debts of early Insular eschatology to apocryphal lore is the frequency of motifs structured around numbers: the three utterances of the soul, the three hosts of Doomsday, the four kinds of death, the seven journeys of the soul, the seven joys of heaven, the seven heavens, the seven pains of hell, the fifteen tokens of Doomsday, etc. Though fixed by number and at least structurally resistant to alteration, these motifs are nevertheless subject to creative reformulation. T.N. Hall's comprehensive study aims to reconstruct the literary history of these seemingly interrelated ideas, ultimately demonstrating the role of medieval apocrypha and Hiberno-Latin florilegia in transmitting them ("Their Souls Will Shine Seven Times

Brighter Than the Sun'. An Eschatological Motif and Its Permutations in Old English Literature").

The most widespread and influential New Testament apocryphon in medieval Europe was the *Gospel of Nicodemus*. The earliest Icelandic translation of the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, *Niðrstigningar saga* or 'The Story of the Descent' (c. 1200), is not a translation *sensu stricto* but rather an adaptation of the second section of the original Latin text, the *Descensus Christi ad inferos*. D. Bullitta discusses two of the four interpolations of *Niðrstigningar saga* containing two divergent descriptions of Satan: the former as the terrifying seven-headed dragon of Rev. 12:3, who threatens to destroy the world; the latter as the fish swallowing the dying Christ, whose body serves as a human bait and the Cross as a divine hook. The essay traces this metaphor to Augustine's *Sermo 265D (De Quadragesima Ascensione Domini)*, which the Icelandic compiler might have known in the form of a marginal gloss to Peter Lombard's *Sententiae in IV libris distinctae* (c. 1157) ("From Gulping Dragon to Harmless Mouse. Christ's Deception and Entrapment of Satan in *Niðrstigningar saga*").

The three indexes have been put together by Dr Dario Capelli, whom we wish to thank for his generous help. Our gratitude goes of course also to the colleagues and friends who participated in the original workshop (Dario Bullitta, Lucia Castaldi, Tom Hall, and Giorgio Ziffer, who delivered their papers under the competent and good-humoured chairmanship of Rosalind Love), as well as to those who have eventually accepted to contribute to this volume and have ever since gracefully put up with our requests and demands during the (alas) long stages of editing the manuscript. We would also like to thank the reviewers for taking the time and effort to comment on the individual contributions.

Last but not least, we wish to express our gratitude to the Directors and Editorial Board of the series 'di/signi' for their interest in our editorial venture and for accepting our manuscript for publication.

It has been a long and winding road, but it is now a pleasure to bring this book to fruition and an even greater pleasure to make it available to students and scholars open access.

Claudia Di Sciacca and Andrea Meregalli
St George's Day, 23 April 2023

Note: Throughout this book, 'Anglo-Saxon' is used to refer to the history and culture of pre-Norman England.

Latin, Old English, and Old Norse spellings have not been standardised.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANF	<i>Arkiv för nordisk filologi</i>
ASE	<i>Anglo-Saxon England</i>
BHG	Halkin, François, ed. [1895] 1957. <i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca</i> . Brussels: Société des Bollandistes (Subsidia Hagiographica 8a)
BHG Auct.	Halkin, François, ed. 1969. <i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca. Auctarium</i> . Brussels: Société des Bollandistes (Subsidia Hagiographica 47)
BHG Nov. Auct.	Halkin, François, ed. 1984. <i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca. Novum Auctarium</i> . Brussels: Société des Bollandistes (Subsidia Hagiographica 65)
BHL	Socii Bollandiani. 1898-1901. <i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina antiquae et mediae aetatis</i> . Brussels: Société des Bollandistes (Subsidia Hagiographica 6)
BHL Suppl.	Fros, Henrik. 1986. <i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina antiquae et mediae aetatis. Novum Supplementum</i> . Brussels: Société des Bollandistes (Subsidia Hagiographica 70)
BL	British Library
BM	Bibliothèque Municipale
BnF	Bibliothèque nationale de France
Cameron	Cameron, Angus. 1973. "A List of Old English Texts." In <i>A Plan for the Dictionary of Old English</i> , ed. Angus Cameron and Roberta Frank, 27-306. Toronto: UTP (Toronto Old English Series 2)
CANT	Geerard, Maurits. 1992. <i>Clavis Apocryphorum Novi Testamenti</i> . Turnhout: Brepols
CAVT	Haelewyck, Jean-Claude. 1998. <i>Clavis Apocryphorum Veteris Testamenti</i> . Turnhout: Brepols
CCCC	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina

CH I	Clemoes, Peter, ed. 1997. <i>Ælfric's Catholic Homilies. The First Series. Text.</i> Oxford: OUP (EETS s.s. 17)
CH II	Godden, Malcolm R., ed. 1979. <i>Ælfric's Catholic Homilies. The Second Series. Text.</i> Oxford: OUP (EETS s.s. 5)
CPG	Maurits, Geerard. 1974-98. <i>Clavis Patrum Graecorum.</i> 5 vols. and Supplement. Turnhout: Brepols
CPL	Dekkers, Eligius and Emil Gaar. [1951] 1995. <i>Clavis Patrum Latinorum.</i> Turnhout: Brepols
CSASE	Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England
CUP	Cambridge University Press
DOEC	<i>Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus</i> , compiled by Antonette diPaolo Healey with John Price Wilkin and Xin Xiang. Toronto: Dictionary of Old English Project 2009.
EETS	Early English Texts Society
e.s.	extra series
o.s.	ordinary series
s.s.	supplementary series
G & L	Gneuss, Helmut, and Michael Lapidge. 2014. <i>Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts. A Bibliographical Handlist of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100.</i> Toronto: UTP (Toronto Anglo-Saxon Series 15)
JEGP	<i>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</i>
Ker [1957] 1990	Ker, Neil R. [1957] 1990. <i>Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon.</i> Oxford: Clarendon Press
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
MS	<i>Mediaeval Studies</i>
OUP	Oxford University Press
PG	Migne, Jacques-P., ed. 1857-66. <i>Patrologia Graeco-Latina.</i> 161 vols. and Index. Paris
PL	Migne, Jacques-P., ed. 1844-55. <i>Patrologia Latina.</i> 217 vols. Paris; Index. 1864. 4 vols. Paris
PLS	Hamman, Adalbert G. ed. 1958-74. <i>Patrologiae Latinae Supplementum.</i> 5 vols. Paris
SASLC I	Biggs, Frederick M., Thomas D. Hill, and Paul E. Szarmach, eds., with the assistance of Karen Hammond. 1990. <i>Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture. A Trial Version.</i> Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies. State University of New York at Binghamton

SASLC AASS	Biggs, Frederick M., Thomas D. Hill, Paul E. Szarmach, and E. Gordon Whatley, eds., with the assistance of Deborah A. Oosterhouse. 2001. <i>Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture Volume I. Abbo of Fleury, Abbo of Saint-Germain-de-Prés, and Acta Sanctorum</i> . Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University. Medieval Institute Publications.
SASLC Apocrypha	Biggs, Frederick M. 2007. <i>Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture. Apocrypha</i> . Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University. Medieval Institute Publications (Instrumenta Anglistica Mediaevalia 1).
SH	Pope, John C., ed. 1967-68. <i>Homilies of Ælfric. A Supplementary Collection</i> . 2 vols. Oxford: OUP (EETS o.s. 259-60).
UL	University Library
UP	University Press
UTP	University of Toronto Press

EFNE HER IS CUMEN AN DRACA ÐE ME SCEAL FORSWELGAN.
ÆLFRIC'S TAKE ON GREGORY THE GREAT'S SWALLOWING DRAGONS

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O. INTRODUCTION

Despite the familiar characterisation of Ælfric of Eynsham (*c.* 950 – *c.* 1010)¹ as a restrained author, equally cautious of doctrinal liberties and descriptive sensationalism (Clayton 1986; Hill 1993; Godden [1985] 2000a), he did not shy away from dramatic and visionary descriptions (Di Sciacca 2012; 2018; Di Giuseppe, *infra*).

One such graphic sketch is provided by the imagery of the swallowing devil which occurs in at least three of the Catholic Homilies. In two such items, namely the homily for the twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost (CH I. 35, 476-85) and the one for St Benedict's Day (CH II. 11, 92-109), the devil appears as a formidable dragon with jaws agape, ready to swallow a sinner. Thirdly, in the homily for Palm Sunday of the First Series (CH I. 14, 290-98), the devil is disguised as a fish snatching at the hook, with the bait being represented by Christ Himself. Notably, in all three homilies, the antecedent of the demonic devourer has ultimately been traced to the corpus of Gregory the Great,² where the imagery of the devouring dragon

1 Critical literature on Ælfric is extensive; the main general studies and annotated bibliographies are Clemons 1966; Godden 1974; Reinsma 1987; Gneuss 2009; Magennis and Swan 2009; Kleist 2000, 2001, and 2019.

2 On Gregory the Great and his reception in early Germanic Europe in general, see *Rome and the North*, and in early medieval England in particular, see Ricci 2013.

was often redeployed (Castaldi, *supra*).³ This essay will try to clarify the relationship between Ælfric's homilies and their source-texts, both ultimate and intermediate, as well as assessing Ælfric's distinctive contribution to this veritable topos of early English demonology and eschatology.

I. DOMINICA XXI POST PENTECOSTEN (CH I. 35)

Item 35 of the First Series of the Catholic Homilies is a commentary on the parable of the wedding banquet of the king's son as narrated in Matt. 22:1-14. Ælfric explicitly declares that he is following Gregory's exposition of the Gospel lection (l. 26), and indeed Gregory's *Homilia in Euangelia* xxxviii has already been identified as Ælfric's major source-text (Godden 2000b, liii and 289-90; Hill 2007, 75).

The popularity of Gregory's *Homiliae in Euangelia*⁴ in early medieval England has already been demonstrated (Hall 2001). Indeed, the earliest extant witness of the *Homiliae*, a papyrus fragment containing the incipit of the first homily dating to s. vi^{ex}-viiⁱⁿ, possibly reached England shortly afterwards and eventually ended up in the Cottonian library under unknown circumstances.⁵ *Homilia* xxxviii, in particular, is attested in all the five complete or nearly complete witnesses of the *Homiliae in Euangelia* circulating in England *ante c.* 1125.⁶ However, source study of the Catholic Homilies has shown that, rather than consulting discrete texts of the individual patristic authorities he is so keen to acknowledge, Ælfric mostly drew on homiletic collections of Continental origin, namely the homiliaries of Paul the Deacon, Haymo of Auxerre, and Smaragdus of Saint-Mihiel.⁷ Gregory's

3 On Gregory as a key source or indeed the very father of visionary and demonological literature, see at least Carozzi 1994, 43-61; Ciccarese 1987, 115-23; 1989; Gregory 2013, 44; Keskiaho 2015, 93-112, 129-36; 2020.

4 Étaix 1999; item xxxviii is at 359-78. For an overview of the tradition of the *Homiliae in Euangelia* and an assessment of Étaix's edition, see Castaldi 2013b.

5 The fragment in question is London, BL, Cotton Titus C.xv, fol. 1r: see G & L, no. 379.3; *CLA Addenda*, no. 1863; Babcock 1985, 2000; Castaldi 2013b, 87-88.

6 The five codices in question are: CCCC 69 (s. viii^{ex} / ixⁱⁿ; South England); Durham, Cathedral Library, B. III. 11, fols. 1-135 (s. xi^{ex}; Continent (Liège?); provenance Durham); Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 314 (SC 2129) (s. xi/xii; probably Exeter; provenance probably *ibid.*); Salisbury, Cathedral Library 132 (s. xi²; provenance Salisbury); Worcester, Cathedral Library Q. 21 (s. xi^{ex}, North France or Lotharingia; provenance Worcester by s. xi^{ex}): see Hall 2001, 119-20; when relevant, dating and places of origin and/or provenance have been updated on the basis of G & L, nos. 42, 242, 566, 733, and 767. In addition to these five witnesses, G & L list another five manuscripts which contain fragments or excerpts of the *Homiliae in Euangelia*: G & L, nos. 255, 379.3, 418, 439.3, and 804.5.

7 For all three collections we still rely on the editions reprinted in PL: for Paul the Deacon's Homiliary, see PL 95, 1159-566; for Haymo's *Homiliae de tempore*, PL 118, 11-746; and for Smaragdus's *Collectiones in epistolas et euangelia*, also known as *Expositio libri comitis*, see PL 102, 13-552. On the *Quellenforschung* of the Catholic Homilies, see especially Godden 2000b, xxxviii-xliv, and Hill 1996; 1998; 2002; 2005; 2020. According to Godden, Paul the Deacon and

Homilia xxxviii did not feature in the original version of Paul the Deacon's Homiliary,⁸ but it was added quite early on, together with other *Homiliae in Euangelia*, in an augmented version of the Homiliary that demonstrably circulated in England by the beginning of the twelfth century.⁹

Indeed, CH I. 35 suggests a combined use on Ælfric's part of two of his Carolingian sources, namely a supplemented version of Paul the Deacon's Homiliary and of Smaragdus's. Ælfric most likely drew on Gregory's *Homilia* xxxviii from the former, though he can't have consulted any of the above-mentioned early English witnesses of Paul the Deacon's Homiliary, as they all post-date him.¹⁰ Notably, in these manuscripts Gregory's *Homilia* xxxviii is rubricated for the twentieth (rather than the twenty-first) Sunday after Pentecost.¹¹ On the other hand, Smaragdus's Gospel homily for the twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost shares the same lection as the *Homilia* xxxviii, namely Matt. 22:1-14, and draws on it.¹² Smaragdus's debt to the Gregorian source, however, is selective and definitely less extensive than Ælfric's, and, what is more, Smaragdus does not include the final anecdote on the devouring dragon in his selection. Therefore, while drawing on Gregory's homily from his augmented copy of Paul the Deacon's Homiliary, Ælfric may well have followed Smaragdus in using it for the twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost (Hill 2007, 76-77; 2020, 74).

Haymo are the two major sources for the *temporale* items and the Cotton-Corpus Legendary for the *sanctorale* items, whereas Smaragdus would be an additional exegetical source for Gospel pericopes: Godden 2000b, xlii-xliiii. A premium on Smaragdus's role has instead been put by J. Hill (see especially Hill 1992). On the Corpus-Cotton Legendary, the major hagiographic collection circulating in pre-Conquest England and traditionally considered as the chief source of Ælfric's *sanctorale*, see Zettel 1979; 1982; Lapidge 1996; Jackson and Lapidge 1996; Love 1996, xviii-xxxiii. For a recent reassessment of the Legendary and its role as Ælfric's source, see Whatley 2023.

8 Paul the Deacon's homiliary originally consisted of 244 items, including thirty-two of the total forty *Homiliae in Euangelia* by Gregory: see Grégoire 1980, 423-78; Hill 2007, 67-69; 2020, 69-71. On the original structure and subsequent accretions or abridgements of the Homiliary, see Guiliano 2021, 45-89, 199-243.

9 At least five manuscript witnesses of such supplemented Paul the Deacon's Homiliary featuring Gregory's *Homilia* xxxviii were written or circulating in England by s. xii^m: Cambridge, UL, li. 2. 19 (s. xi/xii; provenance Norwich); Cambridge, Pembroke College 23 [s. xi², France (Saint-Denis or Saint-Germain-des-Prés?); provenance by s. xi/xii, England, Bury St Edmunds]; Durham, Cathedral Library, A. III. 29 [s. xi^{ex} (*ante* 1096), Durham]; London, BL, Harley 652 (s. xi/xii, Canterbury, St Augustine's); Worcester, Cathedral Library F. 93 (s. xi/xii or xii^m; provenance Worcester): see Hall 2001, 122-25; Hill 2007, 73-75, 90-94; Guiliano 2021, 277-78, 283; when relevant, dating and places of origin and/or provenance have been updated on the basis of G & L, nos. 16, 129, 222, 424, and 763.1. On the dissemination of the Homiliary, see Guiliano 2021, 123-62.

10 See above, note 9. On Ælfric's would-be copy of Paul the Deacon's Homiliary, see the classic study by Smetana 1959 and, more recently, Godden 2000b, xli, and Hill 2007.

11 On the organisation and rubricating system of Paul the Deacon's Homiliary and the changes it underwent, see Hill 2007, 81-88, and Guiliano 2021, 103-07, and 80-81 on the Sundays after Pentecost in particular.

12 PL 102, 487-91. Smaragdus's homiliary also features an Epistle homily for the same Sunday, with the lection from Eph. 5:15-21: see PL 102, 485-87.

In line with Gregory's exegesis, Ælfric interprets the parable of the wedding of the king's son as an allegory of Christ's marriage with the Church, in which only a certain number partake, though virtually all are invited. Thus, the homily outlines a progressive series of exclusions, from the ones who downright refuse the king's invitation and are therefore wiped out by the king's army, to the guest with no becoming outfit, that is charity, who is cast into the night of eternal damnation. Hence the *egeful* ('awful', l. 208) conclusion of the pericope, that is *fela sind gecigede 7 feawa gecorene* ("many are called and few are chosen", ll. 208-09; cf. Gregory's *multi autem sunt uocati, pauci uero electi*, l. 21)¹³, conveying the fine line between God's justice and mercy: while no one can take their own salvation for granted, neither should they despair of it, because God's mercy is bountiful.

1.1 *The Dragon Exemplum in Gregory's Homilia in Euangelia xxxviii*

The *exemplum* featuring the dragon that threatens to devour a sinful monk on his deathbed follows the commentary on the Gospel pericope as a closing illustration that even an otherwise pious monastic community can harbour a sinner and, in turn, even this sinner can ultimately achieve salvation through the charitable intercession¹⁴ of the monks' prayers and his own heartfelt repentance.¹⁵

The protagonist of the *exemplum* is the brother of a devout monk of Gregory's own monastery, who follows his relation's steps only for material gain, leading a life utterly contrary to all monastic values and barely tolerated by the community only for his brother's sake.

The duplicitous life of the wicked brother seems to be brought to an abrupt end by plague (*In hac autem pestilentia*, "Indeed in this plague", l. 454), though in Ælfric's vernacular rendition the illness befalling him is left unspecified (*ða wearð he færlice mid sumre coþe gestanden*, "then he was suddenly seized with some disease", ll. 230-31). Despite having made himself burdensome to the community with his depraved conduct, the brethren piously gather around his deathbed to pray for his soul and ease his passing, when he suddenly cries out to them to step away, because a dragon is about to swallow him but is hindered by their presence. Therefore, the dying man beseeches the brethren to leave so that the dragon may no longer afflict him.

¹³ Unless otherwise specified all translations from Latin and Old English are my own.

¹⁴ On the crucial, albeit controversial, theme of intercession and the bonds it establishes between the living and the dead, see at least Foxhall Forbes 2013, 201-64; on Gregory's stance on the matter, in particular, see *ibid.*, 269-71.

¹⁵ For the full text of the *exemplum* in both Gregory's *Homilia xxxviii* and Ælfric's CH I.35, see *infra*, Appendix I b.

The dragon, however, remains invisible to the bewildered brethren, who encourage the dying to dispel the evil apparition¹⁶ by marking himself with the sign of the cross,¹⁷ but the sick man protests that he is prevented from blessing himself by the dragon that oppresses him. Thus, the brethren prostrate themselves on the floor and start to pray more fervently for the salvation of the dying; thereby they ultimately succeed in putting the dragon to flight. Indeed, their intercession also grants the sick man a temporary recovery and sparks his repentance and conversion, as he declares himself ready to give up his worldly conduct and embrace the monastic life, turning to God with all his heart. Reformed and cleansed by the physical suffering caused by his illness, he finally dies shortly afterwards, without facing any dragon this time, having defeated it by means of his conversion.

In line with Ælfric's typical translation method,¹⁸ his rendition of the Latin antecedent can on the whole be said to be faithful, or even literal at times, but also selective. The Old English text is somewhat more succinct than its source, as Ælfric abridges the lengthy preamble detailing the arrival of the wicked brother at the monastery and sketching his depraved personality, to focus more fully on the very climax of the narrative, that is the encounter with the dreadful dragon. In addition to the above-mentioned detail about the nature of the dying monk's illness, Ælfric omits other information concerning the setting of Gregory's story (*Ante biennium frater quidam in monasterium meum, quod iuxta beatorum martyrum Iohannis et Pauli ecclesiam situm est*, "Two years ago a certain brother of my monastery, which is located next to the church of the martyr saints John and Paul", ll. 436-37), by simply situating it in a monastery founded by Gregory (*sum broþer gecyrde to anum mynstre þe [sanctus gregorius] sylf gestapelode*, "a certain brother came to a monastery that St Gregory himself had founded", ll. 219-20). It may be worth noting that in introducing the exemplum, Ælfric feels it appropriate to mention again the source he had already declared at the very beginning of the homily and otherwise never cited again, thereby propping the sensational narrative about to unfold with Gregory's authority (*Cwyð nu sanctus gregorius*, "Now St Gregory says", l. 219).

16 Although visions, dreams, and apparitions are not interchangeable in the theory and terminology of patristic sources, they are often blurred as visionary phenomena in the narrative practice of hagiography and homiletics: see Keskiäho 2015, 20-23, 76-136; 2020, 225-32; and Godden 2001.

17 On the apotropaic efficacy of the sign of the cross, see Johnson 2006a. Making the sign of the cross when facing a dragon is explicitly mentioned as the decisive conquering gesture in the hagiographies of at least four late antique and early medieval dragon-slaying saints, namely Donatus, Caluppan, Clement of Metz, and George: see Ogden 2013a, 395-96, 398, 400-04; and 2013b, 231-32, 235-36, 242-44, 249-55. On the role of the cross in the legend of St Margaret, one of the most popular dragon fighting saints in early medieval England, see Di Sciacca 2019a, 379-80.

18 On Ælfric's theory and practice of translation, see Marsden 1991, 322-28; Wilcox 1993; 1995, 62-65; Stanton 2002, 130-41, 144-71; Major 2006; Anderson 2007; Godden 2009; Gretsich 2009, 113-22.

Also, the prelude is condensed by effectively enhancing the polarisation between the two brothers. Emphasising even further the penchant for distinctions characteristic of his source, Ælfric sets the two in blatant contrast to each other, the one being identified as the spiritual brother (*se gastlica broþer*, ll. 222-23) and the other as the fleshly brother (*sum flæsclīc broþer*, l. 221, or *his flæsclīca broðer*, l. 224). The latter is characterised by his zeal not for a good life but for carnal love (*na for gecnyrdnesse goddre drohtnunge [...] ac for flæsclīcere lufe*, ll. 221-22), as well as by juxtaposing his idle speech with perverse deeds and his rich attire with evil morals (*He wæs gegafspræce. 7 þwyr on dædum. wel besewen on reafe 7 yfel on þeawum*, “he was loquacious and perverse in deeds, well provided in [his] attire and evil in [his] behaviour”, ll. 226-27).

The crucial meeting with the dragon proper is rendered very closely, with no significant omission apart from two Latin adjectives rendered with just one in the vernacular version (cf. Lat. *Longis et continuis [...] flagellis*, “by long and continuous afflictions”, ll. 479-80, and OE *mid langsumum broce*, “by long disease”, l. 255). As already noted regarding the opening of the anecdote, Ælfric again blurs the details of the chronology of the concluding events (cf. Lat. *ante paucos dies*, “before a few days”, l. 480, and OE *æt nextan*, “next”, l. 256), and emphasises the opposition between the monastic and secular ways (cf. Lat. *quia conuerti paratus sum et saecularem uitam funditus relinquere*, “because I am ready to convert and determined to give up the secular life”, ll. 476-67, and OE *ic eom gearo to gecyrrenne to munuclīcere drohtnunge. 7 woruldlīce þeawas ealle forlætan*, “I am eager to convert to the monastic life and abandon all worldly customs”, ll. 252-53). Indeed, as the latter quote shows, the chief trait of Ælfric’s subtle rendering of his Latin source-text in this key episode consists of some slight expansions. Generally, these additions merely restate what is already obvious from the context, such as that God is the addressee of the brethren’s prayers (*þone wealdendan god*, “the almighty God”, l. 247), or that the dragon was dispelled by their intercession (*ongean eowerum þingungum*, “in response to your intercession”, l. 251). More relevantly, however, a few unparalleled details emphasise the distress of the dying man (*mid swa micelre orwennyssse*, “with so much despair”, ll. 242-43), and the torment inflicted by the dragon which oppresses him so gravely (*þearle*, l. 245), that he can’t even make the sign of the cross, although he would gladly (*lustbære*, l. 244) do so.

The major discrepancy between Ælfric’s vernacular version and Gregory’s text, however, consists of a difference in the age assigned to the protagonist. Throughout the Latin exemplum, the age of the dying man is never specified: he can be assumed to be an adult and towards the conclusion of *Homilia xxxviii* he is indeed defined as a man (*homo*, l. 477). Conversely, the Old English describes the monk as *se adlia cniht* (“the sick boy/young

man”¹⁹, l. 248), whereas the corresponding Latin reading is *meliорatus aeger* (“the improved sick-man”, l. 473). Also, it may be noteworthy that the Latin sentence where the protagonist is said to be a man (*homo [...] qui [...] ab extrema corporis fuerat parte praemortus, reseruatus ad uitam*, “the man who had been dead in the extremities of the body, [was] restored to life”, ll. 477-78), is rendered into a shorter Old English phrase, the subject of which is no longer the (apparently) adult man of the Latin source-text, but his limbs (*His cealdan leomu þa geeducedon*, “then his cold limbs revived”, ll. 253-54).

1.2 *The Dragon Exemplum in Gregory's Homilia in Euangelia XIX*

The deathbed exemplum with the dragon threatening to devour the dying man is also attested within the *Homilia in Euangelia XIX* (Étaix 1999, 142-52, §7 at 149-52), and in *Dialogi IV.xl.2-5* (de Vogüé 1980, III, 140-42).

The Gospel lection for *Homilia XIX* is the parable of the workers in the vineyard (Matt. 20:1-16), which makes a similar point as the parable of the wedding feast and, what is more, features the very same conclusion, namely *multi enim sunt uocati, pauci uero electi* (Matt. 20:16; cf. above, 60). Thus, here too the story of a wicked man snatched from the jaws of the terrible dragon on his deathbed by the monks' intercession and eventually repenting and converting after a life of sin and misconduct, provides a fitting epilogue to the explication of the pericope.

Compared with its counterpart in *Homilia XXXVIII*, the exemplum in *Homilia XIX* is somewhat differently structured and can be said to be slightly lengthier and rhetorically more elaborated. In turn, there are some differences between the two recensions in which *Homilia XIX* is attested, the earlier, unauthorised α , and the later, definitive β .²⁰ Recension α , in particular, indulges in graphic anatomic details of the dragon's attack (*squamis draconis premor. Spumae oris eius faciem meam liniunt, guttur meum eius ore suffocatur et ne signare me possim, squamis eius mea brachia comprimuntur*, “I am oppressed by the dragon's scales. The foam of his mouth is spreading over my face, my throat is suffocated by his mouth and my arms are squeezed together by his scales, so that I can't sign myself”, ll. 190-96). Also, the α -version repeats twice that the dragon's suffocating grip prevents the sick man from making the sign of the cross (*uolo me signare, sed non possum*, “I

19 While OE *cniht* is admittedly a polysemic word, it most often denotes a male of young age, including in Ælfric's own usage: see *DOE*, s.v. *cniht*, I. a-d, I. i, 2, and 4; the only two recorded Ælfrician occurrences where *cniht* apparently means “man” (I. f), do not seem to me to be statistically relevant, all the more so since in Ælfric's own *Grammar cniht* glosses Lat. *pub[er]is* “pubescent, young man” (I. d).

20 On the two recensions, α and β , of the first twenty *Homiliae in Euangelia*, see Castaldi 2013b, 72-77, and *Eadem, supra*. The four Gregorian versions of the exemplum are presented synoptically in Appendix I a.

want to sign myself but I can't", ll. 189-90, and the above-quoted *ne signare me possim*, l. 194). Conversely, the β -version doesn't mention the dragon's scales (Castaldi, *supra*), but keeps the vivid detail of the dragon's drooling on the man's face and rounds up the scene with the dragon's swallowing of his head (*Volo me signare, sed non possum, quia a dracone premor. Spumae oris eius faciem meam liniunt, guttur meum eius ore suffocatur. Ecce ab eo mea brachia comprimuntur, qui iam et caput meum in suo ore absorbit*, "I want to sign myself, but I cannot, because I am oppressed by the dragon. The foam of his mouth is spreading over my face, my throat is suffocated by his mouth. Behold, my arms are squeezed by him, who has already swallowed my head in his mouth", ll. 189-96).

The very last phrase occurs almost identically in *Homilia xxxviii* (*Caput meum in suo ore iam absorbit*, l. 465), but no mention is made of either the dragon's scales or saliva. Also, in *Homilia xxxviii* the phrase about the dragon's swallowing of the sick man's head is included in the latter's first address to the brethren to step back so that the dragon can finish him off and stop tormenting him, while in *Homilia xix* the phrase is part of the subsequent reply of the sick man to the brethren that urge him to sign himself. Furthermore, in both recensions of *Homilia xix* the distress of the sinful man, both during his hallucination and after the dragon has been dispelled, is described more meticulously and emphatically than in *Homilia xxxviii*. Note, for example, the climactic sequence *pullens tremens et moriens*, "growing pale, trembling, and dying" (l. 197); the twin phrases *febribus premitur, doloribus fatigatur*, "he is oppressed by fevers, vexed by aches" (l. 203); or the sentence *longis et diuturnis iniquitatibus pressus est, longo languore fatigatur et durum cor ignis purgationis durior concremat*, "he is oppressed by long and continuous hardships, he is vexed by a long-lasting languor, and [his] hard heart is burnt by the even harder purging fire" (ll. 205-06). Conversely, in *Homilia xxxviii* just one final mention is made of the man's infirmity *after* he has been rescued by the dragon (*Longis et continuis [...] flagellis eruditus*, "instructed by long and continuous afflictions", ll. 479-80).

On the whole, however, it can be concluded that the narrative of *Homilia xxxviii* fundamentally keeps to the β -version of *Homilia xix*, which is in line with the relative chronology that can be reconstructed for the two pieces, with Gregory rewriting the exemplum in *Homilia xxxviii* by keeping to the changes and revisions he made when he emended the unauthorised α -text (see Castaldi, *supra*, and above, note 20).

As to the key detail of the age of the dying man, in particular, throughout *Homilia xix* it is left unspecified and both the reading *melioratus aeger* of *Homilia xxxviii* or Ælfric's *se adlia cniht* are unparalleled. Thus, throughout *Homilia xix* the protagonist can be assumed to be an adult, except that in the lengthy concluding passage, which is unparalleled in all the other Latin

versions under consideration, he is referred to as a *iuuenis prauus*, “evil youngster” (ll. 209-10).

1.3 *The Dragon Exemplum in Gregory's Dialogi IV.xl.2-5*

The *Dialogi* version of the exemplum (de Vogüé 1980, III, 140-42) is the shortest of the four and is explicitly presented as derivative of some unspecified homilies that had been delivered in public (*in omeliis coram populo iam narrasse me memini*, “I remember that I have already told [this story] in homilies [preached] in public”, ll. 6-7). Indeed, the core of the *Dialogi* tale overlaps almost verbatim with *Homilia* xxxviii, whilst the latter’s lengthy preamble concerning the contrasting demeanour of the two brothers is drastically summarised in the sentence *fratrem suum necessitate magis quam uoluntate secutus est* (“he followed his brother out of necessity rather than of [his own] will”, ll. 8-9), and the conclusion is also wrapped up more succinctly (ll. 42-46). The *Dialogi* exemplum also shares with *Homilia* xxxviii distinctive readings against *Homilia* xix, such as *percussus in inguine est* (“he was hit in the groin”, ll. 15-16; cf. *Homilia* xix reading *percussus est*, “he was hit”, l. 178), or *adhuc calor anhelabat* (“the vital heat was still panting”, l. 20; cf. the *Homilia* xix reading *et lingua remanserat*, “and the tongue had remained [vital]”, l. 180).

On the other hand, the *Dialogi* version shares at least two distinctive details with the α -recension of *Homilia* xix. Firstly, both the *Dialogi* and the α -text of *Homilia* xix restate three times that the dying monk utters loud cries (cf. the *Dialogi* readings *magnis uocibus*, *magnis clamoribus*, and *magnis uocibus*, ll. 24, 32-33, and 37, respectively, with *Homilia* xix readings *magnis uocibus*, *magnis clamoribus*, and *magnis uocibus*, ll. 183, 188-89, and 199-200, respectively). Notably, instead of the α -reading *magnis clamoribus*, the β -text of *Homilia* xix reads *uirtute qua poterat* (“with what strength he had”, ll. 188-89), and *Homilia* xxxviii further tones down the expressionist mode of both the *Dialogi* and *Homilia* xix (cf. the corresponding readings *adnisu quo poterat*, “with the effort he could master”, ll. 461-62; *ut poterat*, “as he could master”, l. 469; and *quibus ualebat uocibus*, “with the cries he could master”, l. 473). Secondly, both the *Dialogi* and the α -version of *Homilia* xix mention the dragon’s scales – indeed, the latter mentions them twice (cf. *Dialogi*, l. 34 and *Homilia* xix, ll. 190-91 and 194), whereas neither recension β of *Homilia* xix nor *Homilia* xxxviii features them.

In sum, the *Dialogi* exemplum on the whole doesn’t correspond closely with either the β -text of *Homilia* xix and *Homilia* xxxviii, on the one hand, or with the α -text of *Homilia* xix, on the other. The apparently bewildering distribution of parallelisms and discrepancies with the three versions of the exemplum from the *Homiliae* has been put down to the fact that the *Dialogi*

tale may have been pieced together by a later compiler who, having access to both recensions of the *Homiliae in Evangelia*, mostly followed *Homilia* xxxviii but incorporated in it at least two details from the α -text of *Homilia* xix, namely the loud cries and the scales, to confer greater graphic quality to their narrative.²¹

What is most relevant in light of Ælfric's rendition, however, is the *incipit* of the *Dialogi* exemplum. Here the opening lines are totally idiosyncratic and feature some details concerning the protagonist unparalleled in either homily, in that he is presented as a restless youth named Theodore (*inquietus ualde Theodorus nomine puer fuit*, "there was a very restless youth, named Theodore", l. 7), although at the end, in a passage overlapping with *Homilia* xxxviii (l. 477), he is referred to as a *homo* (l. 42).

The Old English version of the *Dialogi*, traditionally attributed to Wærferth, bishop of Worcester from c. 872 to 915,²² repeatedly identifies the dying man as a *cniht* (Hecht 1965, 324, ll. 4, 6, and 22, and 325, ll. 7 and 8). Thus, Godden has concluded that Ælfric's *se adlia cniht* "presumably" recalls the Old English *Dialogi*: "unless he had a copy of the homily [xxxviii] in which the detail had been added" (Godden 2000b, 297).²³ In fact, the matter is further complicated by the reading *iuuenis prauus* of *Homilia* xix, which Godden doesn't consider.²⁴

However, given the complexities of the relative dating and textual vicissitudes of the *Homiliae in Euangelia*, on the one hand, and of the *Dialogi*, on the other (see above, notes 20 and 21), the two most sensible options are that Ælfric's *se adlia cniht* may be traced to either a version of the *Homilia* xxxviii which, unlike Étaix's edited text, featured a putative *puer*-reading instead of Étaix's *melioratus aeger* (l. 473), or a mnemonic recollection of the *Dialogi* (whether in Latin or Old English) on Ælfric's part. As to the former hypothesis, the reading featured in the extant witnesses of *Homilia* xxxviii which were either written or circulating in early medieval England that I have been able to consult is fundamentally identical to Étaix's *melioratus*

21 Castaldi, *supra*. On the disputed authorship of *Dialogi* and their highly contaminated tradition, see Castaldi 2013c.

22 On the popularity of Gregory's *Dialogi* in early medieval England, see Castaldi 2013c, 153-58, and on their vernacularisation there, see Dekker 2001; Godden 1997; and Langefeld 1986. A revision of Wærferth's translation was eventually undertaken by an anonymous reviser between 950 and 1050, probably at Worcester: see Yerkes 1979 and 1982. The *Dialogi* were also translated into Old Norse: see Wolf 2013c and Unger 1877, I, 179-255; for the exemplum in question see iv, §38, at 251, ll. 9-32.

23 On Ælfric's knowledge of Wærferth's version of the *Dialogi*, see Johnson 2006b. The Latin source-text and the two Old English versions are presented synoptically in Appendix I c.

24 A further echo of *Homilia* xix and its more emphatic description of the sick man's distress in Ælfric's text may possibly be the adverb *þearle* 'greatly' in *for þan ðe se draca me þearle ofþrihð*, "because the dragon greatly vexes me" (ll. 245-46), unparalleled in *Homilia* xxxviii (*quia a dracone premor*, "because I am oppressed by the dragon", l. 470): see above, 62.

aeger.²⁵ As to the latter, the role of spontaneous mnemonic quotation has been positively advocated in the composition and transmission of Old English anonymous homilies (Swan 1998; Teresi 2000), while it remains “a more open question” (Hill 1997, 97) when it comes to Ælfric.²⁶ Be that as it may on the Old English front, Gregory himself (or whoever was responsible for the *Dialogi* version of the exemplum) explicitly evokes the role of memory, by stating that the *Dialogi* tale recalls some unspecified homilies (*in omeliis coram populo iam narrasse me memini*, ll. 6-7), where the plural form of *omelia* can be taken as a revealing, albeit scanty, acknowledgement of the plurality of versions of the exemplum within the Gregorian corpus.²⁷

Indeed, a similar exemplum occurs shortly later on in the *Dialogi* (IV. xl.10-12: de Vogüé 1980, III, 144-47), featuring another sinful monk who, after living a life of deceit and pretence, on his deathbed reveals to the unaware brethren that he is hopelessly falling prey to a dragon.²⁸ In particular, the dragon is apparently winding its tail around the monk's knees and feet and pressing its head into his mouth to draw out his breath of life, in a reversal of the swallowing scene described in the previous tale. Interestingly, this exemplum has been likened to a narrative in the *Adhortationes Sanctorum Patrum*, one of the many collections of exempla making up the *Vitas Patrum* as we know them from Rosweyde's edition,²⁹ a vast and heterogeneous corpus of homiletic and hagiographic texts which constituted the bedrock of monastic literature (Di Sciacca 2010, 311-22, 342-45; 2018, 151-54). Unlike the *Dialogi*, the *Vitas Patrum* tale doesn't admittedly mention any dragon; however, like the former, the latter describes the departing of the soul of a wicked monk who during his life had deceptively acquired a reputation as a holy man and on his deathbed falls prey to a merciless dark devil. What is more relevant, however, is that the *Vitas Patrum* tale was translated into Old

25 CCC 69 (*melioratus ager*, fol. 78^{va}4); Durham, Cathedral Library, A. III. 29 (*melioratus eger*, fol. 149^v2); Durham, Cathedral Library, B. III. 11 (*melioratus eger*, fol. 67^{rb}7-8); London, BL, Harley 652 (*melioratus eger*, fol. 140^{rb}19).

26 Whereas Cross positively argued for Ælfric's “power of recall [and] processes of association” (1969, 135), Hill (1997, 97) and Wright (2007, 24-26) have been more tentative. Eventually, however, Hill has conceded that whereas “[t]he tradition within which Ælfric was working was firmly text-based, [the] effects of memory in contributing to the weaving and interweaving of texts certainly cannot be excluded” (2016, 22).

27 As Castaldi has pointed out, the two key traits of Gregory's production are “una costante e diffusa pluralità redazionale e la rilevanza che l'*archivum* ebbe nell'*iter* della produzione dei testi” (2013a, vii).

28 This exemplum too was faithfully rendered into the Old English version of the *Dialogi*: see Hecht 1965, 326, l. 21 – 327, l. 19, and Appendix I d. The exemplum is also attested in a fragmentary Old Norse version: see Unger 1877, I, 252, ll. 3-6.

29 Cf. de Vogüé 1980, III, 147 note 11. The *Adhortationes Sanctorum Patrum* have been attributed to the deacon Pelagius (eventually Pope Pelagius I) and to the subdeacon John (eventually Pope John III) and are included in Rosweyde's *Vitas Patrum* as Books V and VI (CPG 5570; BHL 6527-30; PL 73, 851-1024; Battle 1972); the exemplum in question is no. 13 of the *Libellus tertius* of Book VI: PL 73, 1011-12. In the *Dialogi* the tale is attributed to certain *Athanasius Isauriae presbiter* of the monastery *Ton Galathon* (144, ll. 80-83).

English by Ælfric for some unknown occasion (SH II. 27, 775-79), thereby confirming Ælfric's receptiveness to such *post-mortem* tableaux and their gripping, spectacular potential (Di Sciacca 2018). The Latin source-text also demonstrably circulated in pre-Conquest England, as it is attested in the final section (fols. 105-64) of ms. Worcester, Cathedral Library F. 48, dated to the mid-eleventh century (G & L, no. 761). The codex clearly post-dates Ælfric, so it cannot have been the base text of Ælfric's vernacular version of the exemplum, nor does the latter feature any distinctive reading that might link it to the putative exemplar of the Worcester manuscript (Di Sciacca 2018, 156-58). Finally, this tale was also known in medieval Ireland and Scandinavia, as an Irish version of it is attested within a sermon known as *The Two Deaths* (Ritari 2014; see also Ritari 2013; Wright 1993, 177-78; 2014a; 2014b, 362-69), and two versions are attested within the Old Norse *Vitae Patrum* (Unger 1877, II, 632-34; Tveitane 1968, 20-21).

2. XII KALENDAS APRELIS. SANCTI BENEDICTI ABBATIS (CH II. II)

Another Gregorian tale of a dragon attempting to swallow a stray monk was included by Ælfric within his vernacular take on the life of St Benedict of Nursia, a sanctorale item of the Second Series of the Catholic Homilies (CH II. II, 92-109, esp. 103, ll. 376-92). Although Gregory is acknowledged as a source only about halfway through this long homily (ll. 326-27) – the longest, in fact, of the Catholic Homilies –, the saint's life in the second book of the *Dialogi* is fundamentally Ælfric's only source, which he drastically summarises, keeping to the basics of the many miracles stories and doing without the doctrinal musings, historical details, and dialogue structure of his base-text (Godden 2000b, 429-30). Thereby, Ælfric reshapes Gregory's account into "a context free narrative of sanctity, exemplifying divine power working through Benedict in miracles of healing, prophecy and defeat of the devil" (Godden 2000b, 430).

The exemplum in question features indeed the devil in its most archetypal guise, the dragon, but here the latter plays not so much the saint's antagonist but his ally, instrumental in recovering a stray sheep.³⁰ As we learn from the final pun, the dragon is a hallucination conjured up by St Benedict himself to scare off a restless monk, who had tried the saint's patience with his eagerness to venture out of the monastery. As soon as the monk is finally granted permission to leave by an exasperated Benedict and actually exits the monastery, he is confronted by a dragon moving menacingly towards him with jaws agape. Terrified, he cries out for help and his brethren promptly run to his rescue, carrying him back to the monastery.

³⁰ This exemplum is also attested within the *Benedikt's saga* (§27; Camiz 2017, 140-41), whilst it is missing in the Old Norse version of the *Dialogi* due to an extensive lacuna: cf. Unger 1877, I, 216. On both the saga and the *Dialogi* version, see Wolf 2013b and 2013c.

Still shaking with fear, he is deterred from his roaming whims for good and solemnly promises never to leave again.

Like in the previous deathbed exemplum, here too the dragon is invisible to the other brethren, whereas to the restless monk it is the ultimate epiphany of the devil he had been following all along albeit without seeing him. This basic moral implicitly underlies both this exemplum and the former one, in all its versions, but it is explicitly stated only in the concluding lines of both *Dialogi* II.xxv.2 (*qui sancti uiri orationibus contra se adsistere draconem uiderat, quem prius non uidendo sequebatur*, “because of the holy man’s [Benedict’s] prayers, he had seen the dragon move against him, whom he had previously followed without seeing [him]”, ll. 17-19) and *Homilia* xix (*et eum a quo prius non uidens tenebatur, uidit postea ne tenetur*, “and he then saw the one [the dragon] by whom he had previously been held without seeing [him], so that he wouldn’t be held thereafter”, ll. 212-13).³¹

Ælfric’s rendition of the tale is a straightforward retelling, independent from the corresponding passage of Wærferth’s version.³² While the latter keeps closely to the Latin base-text, occasionally expanding it by means of doublets (Bately 1988, 120-23), Ælfric, in line with the concision he displays throughout the homily, abridges the description of the preliminary exchanges between the rebellious monk and the admonishing Benedict, but retains all the events that follow the monk’s departure from the monastery. Notably, when mentioning that the brethren succouring the monk can’t see the dragon, Ælfric takes the chance to explain that the reason for this was that the dragon was the invisible devil (*for ðan þæt wæs se ungesewenlica deofol*, “for that was the invisible devil”, l. 387) – an explanation that might perhaps sound superfluous, but which Ælfric apparently felt in line with the edifying scope of his text.

3. IN DOMINICA PALMARUM (CH I. 14) AND THE BAIT-AND-HOOK METAPHOR

Whereas in CH I. 35 and CH II. 11 Ælfric draws on Gregory’s swallowing dragons in exemplary anecdotes, in the homily for Palm Sunday of the First Series of the Catholic Homilies (CH I. 14, 290-98), the Gregorian imagery of the greedy Satanic snake is employed in a dense exegetical passage where

³¹ As noted by de Vogüé (1979, II, 441), a similar version of this tale occurs, together with other anecdotes concerning monks intolerant of the Benedictine *stabilitas loci*, at the end of Gregory’s *Epistola* xi. 26 (Norberg 1982, II, 900, ll. 61-77). In the epistle, however, the attack on the stray monk happens in a dream and is virtually carried out by a black hound (rather than a dragon), unleashed by an old man who chastises the monk for his wish to leave the monastery. On Gregory’s epistolary, see Pollard 2013. On the fine distinction between visions and dreams, see above, note 16. On the black dog as a recurrent manifestation of the devil or as an evil, hellish monster, from the three-headed Cerberus to Fenrir up to *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, see at least Brown 1958 and Woods 1959.

³² The Latin source-text and the the two Old English versions of the *Dialogi* and Ælfric’s rendition are presented synoptically in Appendix II.

Ælfric tackles crucial theological questions, such as the coexistence of divinity and humanity in Christ and the divine plan for universal redemption through His death on the cross.

The key theme of the homily is Christ's entry into Jerusalem, of which Ælfric provides a "fairly complex" exposition, by drawing on the accounts of all four Gospels and on different Patristic elucidations of the evangelical narratives, as well as "working at several levels of interpretation" (Godden 2000b, 110). In particular, the reading of the event as an allegory of mankind's redemption triggers a general discussion of the divine scheme for universal salvation (ll. 161-78), culminating in the graphic image of Satan as the greedy fish who is fooled by Christ's suffering body on the cross and tries to snatch Him, but is fatally pierced by the hook of His divine nature.

First attested in the corpus of Gregory of Nyssa († 394), the bait-and-hook imagery was introduced to the West by Rufinus of Aquileia and popularised by Gregory the Great as an effective metaphor to illustrate the ultimate conflict between God and the devil for the salvation of humankind.³³ As noted by Godden (2000b, 117), Ælfric's take on this imagery is most likely indebted, though not verbatim, to Gregory's *Homilia in Euangelia* xxv for Easter Sunday (Étaix 1999, 205-16).³⁴ Here the bait-and-hook metaphor follows the explanation of the Gospel pericope (John 20:11-18) recounting the meeting of Mary Magdalene with the two angels and the resuscitated Christ on Easter morning, and is instrumental in explaining the divine plan of Christ's incarnation, death on the cross, and resurrection, as well as its soteriological implications for mankind (§§7-9, ll. 212-84).

In particular, the key image of Satan as a greedy fish and of Christ as both the bait – in His human body – and the hook – in His divine nature –, is introduced to expound two quotations from Job (40:20-21), that is *Numquid capies Leviathan hamo [...] aut armilla perforabis maxillam eius?* ("Will you catch Leviathan with a fishhook? [...] Or will you pierce its jaw with a band?", ll. 224-55 and 257). The two (rhetorical) questions, allegedly uttered by Yahweh, insist on Job's, that is man's, inability to capture Leviathan, on which Gregory commented extensively in his own *Moralia in Iob*, XXXIII. vii.14 – xii.26 (Adriaen 1985, III, 1684-96).³⁵ Whereas the biblical source

33 See Di Sciacca 2019b, 71, and Bullitta, *infra*.

34 This homily features in four of the five manuscript witnesses of the *Homiliae in Evangelia* circulating in England *ante ca.* 1125, namely CCC 69; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 314 (SC 2129); Salisbury, Cathedral Library 132; and Worcester, Cathedral Library Q. 21: see above, note 6. Moreover, it was included in six of the manuscript witnesses of Paul the Deacon's homiliary circulating in England by the early twelfth century, namely Cambridge, UL, li. 2. 19; Cambridge, Pembroke College 23; Durham, Cathedral Library, A. III. 29; London, BL, Harley 652; Worcester, Cathedral Library F. 93; and Salisbury, Cathedral Library 179 (s. xi^{ex}, Salisbury): on the first four manuscripts, see above, note 9, and on the Salisbury codex, see G&L, no. 753. The relevant sections from *Homilia* xxv and CH I. 14 are presented synoptically in Appendix III.

35 A subsequent passage of the *Moralia* (XXXIII.xv.30-31 and XXXIII.xvi.32; Adriaen 1985, III, 1699-702) concerns the description of Behemot (Job 40:15-24), which concludes with an

emphasises Leviathan's reptilian traits, Gregory's *Homilia* xxv rather describes it as a devouring sea-monster (*cetus deuorator*, l. 227), rushing hither and thither in the abyss with an open mouth in eager search of prey (see also *Moralia* XXXIII.ix.17, Adriaen 1985, III, 1687-88).³⁶

Satan is misled by Christ's human flesh veiling His divine and immortal nature like a bait on a fishhook,³⁷ and greedily attempts to swallow Jesus dying on the cross, but gets trapped and ultimately vanquished. Thereby, Christ's apparent humiliation and suffering on the cross turns into His definitive triumph over Satan and death. Indeed, all mankind shares in Christ's victory, since by sacrificing Himself on the cross, He has ransomed humanity from Satan and death.³⁸ Thereby Christ has rescued mankind from the subjugation it had been enduring since the Edenic serpent first caused the progenitors to sin and, by deceptively promising to bestow divinity upon them, in fact took away their immortality (*qui dum se diuinitatem homini addere spondit, immortalitatem sustulit*, "when he [the serpent] promised to bestow divinity upon human beings, took away their immortality", ll. 227-78). Hence, through Christ's death on the cross the divine plan of redemption comes full circle and the human race is granted the possibility to escape Leviathan's mouth and return to life, both during our earthly existence, by repenting after having sinned, and after death, by participating in the eternal salvation won for us by Christ (*Homilia* xxv, §9, ll. 249-84).

The relevant section from Ælfric's Palm Sunday homily doesn't seem to rely closely on any of the sources which have so far been identified (cf. Godden 2011, 110-11, 117), and can instead be considered a pretty drastic précis of the Gregorian argument as laid out in both *Homilia* xxv and the *Moralia*.³⁹ In particular, Ælfric's synthesis revolves around a series of key

analogous rhetorical question (Job 40:24): *Numquid illudes ei quasi avi, aut ligabis eum ancillis tuis?* ("Shalt thou play with him as with a bird, or tie him up for thy handmaids?"). Behemot and Leviathan have been interpreted as both two distinct creatures or two personifications of one monster creature: see at least Batto [1995] 1998 and Uehlinger [1995] 1998. For a convenient overview of the Old Testament monsters and their often misleading different designations, see Di Sciacca 2019b, 65-66, and Kelly 2006, 150-51. On the devil in Gregory's *Moralia*, see Kingston 2011, 53-112.

³⁶ Job 40:25 - 41:26 contains the most comprehensive and formidable description of Leviathan as a gigantic fanged, scale-covered, and fire-spitting reptile, a sort of hybrid between a crocodile and a dragon; however, elsewhere in the Old Testament, Leviathan and fellow monstrous creatures are associated with the sea: on the overlap between the reptilian and marine traits of the biblical Leviathan, see Di Sciacca 2019b, 54, 65-66.

³⁷ On Gregory's interpretation of Christ's double nature, see Green 2013, 136-48.

³⁸ On the motif of *Christus uictor*, the ransom theory, and their relationship to the bait-and-hook metaphor, see Russell 1981, 80-106, and Staines 2008, 89-95. See also Di Sciacca 2019b, 70-71, and Bullitta, *infra*. On Gregory's take on the soteriology of Christ's passion, see Green 2013, 149-55.

³⁹ Whereas the *Moralia* features a diffusive exegetical argument, the *Homilia* presents a more succinct illustration of the bait-and-hook metaphor and, in line with its catechetical nature, the redeeming efficacy of Christ's sacrifice on the cross is applied to the daily fight against sin by the individual Christian.

oppositions, such as humanity (*þa menniscnysse*, l. 175) *versus* divinity (*ða godcundnysse*, ll. 175-76); mortality *versus* immortality or Christ's temporary death *versus* the eternal death that impended on all mankind before His redeeming sacrifice on the Cross (*he wolde [...] mancynn alysan fram þam ecan deaðe mid his hwilwendlicum deaðe*, "He wanted to release mankind from the eternal death with His temporary death", ll. 162-64);⁴⁰ Christ's innocent death for all the believers *versus* the devil's deceitful instigation of the Jews to slay Him (*þurh [Cristes] unscēððian deaðe wurdon we alysede fram þam ecan deaðe*, "through Christ's innocent death we have been released from the eternal death", ll. 170-71; *sprytte [se deofol] þæt Iudeisce folc to [Cristes] slege*, "[the devil] incited the Jewish folk to slay Christ", l. 176; *ða heafodmen [...] syrewydon mid micelre smeauunge hú hi mihton hine to deaðe gebringan*, "the elders plotted with great consideration how they could bring Him to death", ll. 159-61).

Ælfric must have been familiar with the bait-and-hook imagery and its soteriological implications, as it seems to underlie his sketch of God's plan of Christ's incarnation, passion, and resurrection in the opening sermon of the First Series of the Catholic Homilies, *De initio creaturae* (CH I. 1, 178-89, esp. ll. 265-76). Furthermore, in CH I.14 Ælfric seems to imply that he has often dealt with the ransoming of mankind from the devil on Christ's part (*We habbað oft gesæd*, "We have often said", l. 167), though presumably in his preaching rather than in written texts (Godden 2001, 117). Given the lack of any close correspondences between either the *Moralia* or *Homilia* xxv and the relevant passage in the Palm Sunday homily, the latter could be considered as a synthetic and memorial recollection of the extensive Gregorian treatment of the theme, perhaps triggered by Smaragdus's two homilies for Palm Sunday.

In Smaragdus's homiliary, the Gospel account of Christ's entry in Jerusalem as recounted in Matt. 21:1-9 makes up the pericope of the homily for the first Advent Sunday (PL 102, 512-15), which Godden lists among the possible sources of CH I. 14. However, I would suggest that a more pertinent relationship could instead be established with Smaragdus's Epistle and Gospel homilies for Palm Sunday. The former (PL 102, 199-202) expounds the famous Christological poem embedded within Paul's Phil. 2:5-11, whereas the latter (PL 102, 202-21) is an exposition of John's account (13:1-15) of the Last Supper. Both the Epistle and the Gospel pericopes deal with Christ's double nature and the Pauline Epistle, in particular, focuses on His self-sacrifice on the cross as an act of universal redemption (see esp. PL 102, 200-02, 210-11, and 216-18). Although neither homily features the bait-and-hook metaphor itself, the topic of both largely overlaps with Ælfric's argument. Thus, the bait-and-hook section of the Palm Sunday homily of the First

⁴⁰ On the soteriology of the cross in general, see Staines 2008. On the special devotion of the Cross endorsed by the *Regularis Concordia*, particularly within the paschal liturgy, see Di Sciacca 2019a, 380-83.

Series may be taken as a climactic close to the narrative of Christ's entry in Jerusalem, possibly recalled from memory by a spontaneous association with Smaragdus's homilies for the same liturgical occasion.

Indeed, it should be stressed that neither of the two Smaragdus homilies for Palm Sunday draws on Gregory: the epistle homily is a brief catena of passages from Augustine and John Chrysostom, whereas the much longer Gospel homily consists of extracts from St Augustine's *In Iohannis evangelium tractatus CXXIV* (Willelms 1990). This exegetical treatise was a major source of Smaragdus for his Johannine homilies, though mostly via Alcuin's *Commentaria in S. Iohannis evangelium* (PL 100, 733-1008; Hill 2013, 161).

Notably, the Augustinian tractates count among the ultimate sources of Ælfric's Palm Sunday for the Second Series of the Catholic Homilies (*De passione Domini*: CH II. 14, 135-49), though mediated, as is often the case with Ælfric, by Haymo and, again, Smaragdus (Godden 2000b, 474-86; Hill 2013, 172-76). The Palm Sunday homily of the Second Series is a long narrative piece on Christ's passion drawing on all four Gospels and supplemented with some points of interpretation, including a brief, but significant one about the humanity of Christ and His suffering on the cross (ll. 266-67), which may have been inspired by Augustine's *Tractatus* (Godden 2000b, 484) or be put down to Ælfric's "personal touch" (Hill 2013, 174). Be that as it may, it is noteworthy that the Smaragdus piece which is among the immediate sources of CH II. 14 is not so much a homily as a lengthy account of Christ's passion based on the three synoptic Gospels and integrated with exegetical commentary (*Passio Domini nostri Iesu Christi*, PL 102, 169-99) – not unlike Ælfric's text itself, with which it also shares an almost identical title.⁴¹ Finally, the Smaragdus piece immediately precedes the two homilies for Palm Sunday which I have suggested may have inspired Ælfric's discussion of the bait-and-hook metaphor in the Palm Sunday homily of the First Series.

In sum, both Palm Sunday items in the two series of the Catholic Homilies seem to be somehow indebted to Smaragdus's homiliary, although such a debt cannot be forthrightly defined in terms of 'source-text'. The relationship between Ælfric's homilies and Smaragdus's ones should rather be assessed in the light of the dense and multi-layered intertextual tradition in which Ælfric consciously positioned himself, as well as of the methods of composition typical of a literary culture where ingrained biblical and patristic reading, doctrinal instruction, and liturgical practice coexisted (see at least Hill 2013, 188, and 2020, 67-69, 75, 77-79). On the one hand, the extensive discussion of Christ's double nature and the soteriology of

41 It is noteworthy that Smaragdus's comment on Christ's final cry to the Father (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34) draws on Augustine's *Tractatus* to point out that Christ's exhaustion and desperation were due to His human nature (PL 102, 192). This passage of the Gospel narrative is unparalleled in CH II. 14, presumably out of Ælfric's deliberate choice to omit those "moments which might suggest Christ's own reluctance" to submit to the excruciating death on the cross (Godden 2000b, 474).

the cross in the Palm Sunday homily of the First Series may have been inspired by Smaragdus's Epistle and Gospel homilies for Palm Sunday and ultimately crowned with the iconic bait-and-hook imagery of Gregorian brand, although the latter was not included in any of Ælfric's Carolingian intermediate sources. On the other, the corresponding item of the Second Series is structured as a Gospel-based account of Christ's passion in a guise "somewhat unusual" for Ælfric (Godden 2000b, 474) and possibly reminiscent of Smaragdus's *Passio Domini nostri Iesu Christi*, where Ælfric probably worked "as much from memory and his trained understanding of [the Gospel narratives] as from direct sources" (Godden 2000b, 475).

Interestingly, the bait-and-hook passage in CH I. 14 is followed by a very brief outline of the crucial events of Christ's passion, from His arrest on Friday evening up to His resurrection on Easter Sunday (ll. 179-91). In light of the distinction made concerning Christ's double nature, Ælfric makes a point of specifying that while Christ's body lay dead in the sepulchre in the night between Friday and Saturday and in the one between Saturday and Sunday, Christ in His divine nature was in hell (*his lic læg on byrigene þa sæterniht 7 sunnaniht. 7 seo godcundndnyss wæs þære hwile on helle*, ll. 186-88). It was during Christ's descent into hell that Satan was fatally pierced by the hook which he had greedily attempted to swallow, being then definitively bound at the bottom of hell, while Christ harrowed the progenitors and the patriarchs when resurrecting on Easter Sunday.⁴² Significantly, then, Ælfric associates the Satanic devourer of the iconic bait-and-hook metaphor with the Harrowing of Hell, that is one of the eschatological themes which, as I have argued, played a crucial role in the development of the distinctively early English imagery of the zoomorphic mouth of hell (Di Sciacca 2019b; *Eadem, supra*). Indeed, not long after Ælfric, from the mid-eleventh century onwards, the monstrous mouth of hell seems to have become a distinctive trademark of illuminations depicting the Harrowing of Hell in English Psalters, as well as featuring in the late eleventh-century illustrations of the *Genesis* poem in the Junius Book (Di Sciacca 2019b, 60-64; G & L, no. 640).

4. CONCLUSIONS

Contrary to the restraint with which he has been traditionally characterised as opposed to the many unnamed Old English anonymous homilists, as well as to his temperamental contemporary Wulfstan, Ælfric penned quite a few graphic and sensational visionary or eschatological scenes (Di Sciacca 2018; Di Giuseppe, *infra*). Indeed, as the above discussion has shown, Ælfric

⁴² Godden 2000b, 118. On the uncertain timing of the Harrowing of Hell and its association with Easter liturgy, see Di Sciacca 2019b, 97-98. Indeed, Ælfric mentions again the Harrowing of Hell in the Easter Sunday homily (CH I. 15, ll. 167-69), which immediately follows the Palm Sunday one in the First Series of the Catholic Homilies.

also included in his homilies some pretty haunting exempla of the demonic devourer, thereby sharing in what may be called the early English penchant for this imagery. Without indulging in the received dichotomy between the anonymous homilists and hagiographers, with their apocryphal slant and doctrinal liberties, on the one hand, and the rigorous, patristic-based, and reform-aligned Ælfric, on the other (Di Sciacca 2014, 177-81), it should be pointed out that in all the three case studies examined in this paper, Ælfric does indeed derive his take on the swallowing devilish monster from a most commanding patristic authority, Gregory the Great. However, as is often the case with Ælfric, the ultimate patristic source has been mediated by Carolingian transmitters, as well as being aptly elaborated on and integrated with echoes of ingrained biblical reading, exegetical learning, liturgical drill, and familiar stories of monastic literature. In this regard, the exempla discussed contribute interesting insights into Ælfric's methods of composition and into the densely multi-layered, intertextual tradition in which Ælfric actively participated and with which he subtly engaged.

Gregory's pivotal role in the development of medieval vision literature and demonology cannot be overemphasised (see above, note 3), as in the momentous transition from the sixth to the seventh century (Markus 1990, 222), Gregory heralded "an imaginative shift" (Brown 1999a, 290) or "a 'tilt' toward the moment of death and the subsequent fate of the soul in an increasingly circumstantial other world" (Brown 1999b, 38; Palmer 2014, 55-68). In particular, the *Dialogi* and the *Homiliae in Euangelia* were the texts where Gregory successfully managed to blend doctrinal concerns and homiletic exhortations, theological musings and hagiographic narratives, eschatological projections and pastoral care (Alexander 2000, 132-34; Dagens 1977, 45-55, 198-201; Keskiäho 2015, 12-13; McCready 1989, 47-57; Straw 1988, 106).

Mutatis mutandis, Ælfric was a monk like Gregory (Müller 2013) and presumably shared his very monastic preoccupation with the devil's ubiquity and the human vulnerability to it (Kingston 2011, 231-34), as well as his catechetical concerns and pastoral care. Like Gregory with the *Dialogi* and *Homiliae in Euangelia*, Ælfric too with his homilies and saints' lives tried to tailor exegetical learning as a resource for pastoral work, thereby negotiating between complex theological issues and everyday instruction, intellectual faith and popular belief, Christ's universal soteriology and the individual Christian's salvation. For both Gregory and Ælfric, the imagery of the devouring dragon and the bait-and-hook metaphor, themselves relying on a complex and time-honoured "conglomerate of early Christian notions" (Brown 1999b, 38), proved instrumental in conveying such a conglomerate to their respective audiences in captivating and exemplary narratives.⁴³

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Appendix I

a)

<i>Homelia in Euangelia</i> xix §7 α (Étaix 1999, 149-51, ll. 160-213)	<i>Homelia in Euangelia</i> xix, §7 β (Étaix 1999, 149-51, ll. 160-213)	<i>Homelia in Euangelia</i> xxxviii, §16 (Étaix 1999, 376-78, ll. 436-82)	<i>Dialogi</i> IV.xl.2-5 (de Vogüé 1980, III, 140, l. 6 - 142, l. 46)
<p>Rem, fratres, quae nuper contigit refero, ut si uos peccatores esse ex corde conspicitis, omnipotentis Dei misericordiam amplius ametis. Praesenti anno in monasterio meo, quod iuxta beatorum martyrum Iohannis et Pauli ecclesiam situm est, frater quidam ad conuersionem uenit, deuote susceptus est, sed ipse deuotius conuersatus. Hunc ad monasterium frater suus ex eodem patre et matre genitus corpore, non corde secutus est. Nam ualde conuersionis uitam et habitum detestans, in monasterio ut hospes habitabat, et monachorum uitam moribus fugiens, recedere a monasterii habitatione non poterat, quia uel quid ageret, uel unde uiueret non habebat. Erat eius prauitas cunctis onerosa, sed hunc omnes aequanimiter pro fratris eius amore tolerabant. Nam superbus et lubricus si qua post hoc saeculum sequeretur uita nesciebat; irridebat uero si quis illi hanc praedicare uoluisset. Ita que cum habitu saeculari uiuebat in monasterio, uerbis leuis, nutibus instabilis, mente tumidus, ueste compositus, actione dissipatus.</p>	<p>Rem, fratres, quae nuper contigit refero, ut si uos peccatores esse ex corde conspicitis, omnipotentis Dei misericordiam amplius ametis. Praesenti anno in monasterio meo, quod iuxta beatorum martyrum Iohannis et Pauli ecclesiam situm est, frater quidam ad conuersionem uenit, deuote susceptus est, sed ipse deuotius conuersatus. Hunc ad monasterium frater suus corpore, non corde secutus est. Nam ualde conuersionis uitam et habitum detestans, in monasterio ut hospes habitabat, et monachorum uitam moribus fugiens, recedere a monasterii habitatione non poterat, quia uel quid ageret, uel unde uiueret non habebat. Erat eius prauitas cunctis onerosa, sed hunc omnes aequanimiter pro fratris eius amore tolerabant. Nam superbus et lubricus si qua post hoc saeculum sequeretur uita nesciebat; irridebat uero si quis illi hanc praedicare uoluisset. Ita que cum habitu saeculari uiuebat in monasterio, uerbis leuis, nutibus instabilis, mente tumidus, ueste compositus, actione dissipatus.</p>	<p>Ante biennium frater quidam in monasterium meum, quod iuxta beatorum martyrum Iohannis et Pauli ecclesiam situm est, gratia conuersationis uenit, qui diu regulariter protractus, quandoque susceptus est. Quem frater suus ad monasterium non conuersationis studio, sed carnali amore secutus est. Is autem qui ad conuersionem uenerat ualde fratribus placebat; at contra frater illius longe a uita eius ac moribus discrepabat. Viuebat tamen in monasterio necessitate potius quam uoluntate. Et cum in cunctis actibus peruersus existeret, pro fratre suo ab omnibus aequanimiter tolerabatur. Erat enim leuis eloquio, prauus actione, cultus uestibus, moribus incultus; ferre uero non poterat si quisquam illi de sancti habitus conuersatione loqueretur. Facta autem fuerat uita illius cunctis fratribus uisu grauis, sed tamen, ut dictum est, pro fratris sui gratia erat cunctis tolerabilis. Aspernabatur ualde si quis sibi aliquid de prauitatis suae correptione loqueretur. Bona non solum facere, sed etiam audire non poterat. Numquam se ad sanctae conuersationis habitum uenire, iurando, irascendo, deridendo testabatur.</p>	<p>[2] Nam is de quo in omeliis coram populo iam narrasse me memini, inquietus ualde Theodorus nomine puer fuit, qui in meum monasterium fratrem suum necessitate magis quam uoluntate secutus est. Cui nimirum grauis erat si quis pro sua aliquid salute loqueretur. Bona autem non solum facere, sed etiam audire non poterat. Numquam se ad sanctae conuersationis habitum uenire, iurando, irascendo, deridendo testabatur. [3] In hac autem pestilentia, quae nuper huius urbis populum magna ex parte consumpsit, percussus in inguine est perductus ad mortem. Cumque extremum spiritum ageret, conuenerunt fratres, ut egressum illius orando protegerent. Iam corpus eius ab extrema fuerat parte praemortuum; in solo tantummodo pectore uitalis adhuc calor anhelabat. Cuncti autem fratres tanto pro eo coeperunt enixius orare, quanto eum iam uidebant sub celeritate discedere.</p>

<p>Mense autem iulio nuper elapso, huius quam nostis pestilentiae cladē percussus est, qui ad extremum ueniens, urgeri coepit ut animam redderet. Et ultima iam corporis parte praemortua, uitalis uirtus in solo pectore et lingua remanserat. Fratres aderant, eius que exitum, in quantum Deo largiente poterant, oratione tuebantur. At ille subito ad deuorandum se draconem uenire conspiciens, magnis coepit uocibus clamare dicens: Ecce draconi ad deuorandum datus sum; propter uestram praesentiam deuorare me non potest. Quid mihi moras facitis? Date locum ut ei deuorare me liceat. Cum que hunc fratres ut signum sibi crucis imprimeret admonerent, respondebat magnis clamoribus dicens: Volo me signare, sed non possum, quia squamis draconis premor. Spumae oris eius faciem meam liniunt, guttur meum eius ore suffocatur et ne signare me possim, squamis eius mea brachia comprimuntur. Cum que hoc ille pallens, tremens et moriens diceret, coeperunt fratres uehementius orationibus insistere, et oppressum draconis praesentia suis precibus adiuuare.</p>	<p>Mense autem iulio nuper elapso, huius quam nostis pestilentiae cladē percussus est, qui ad extremum ueniens, urgeri coepit ut animam redderet. Et ultima iam corporis parte praemortua, uitalis uirtus in solo pectore et lingua remanserat. Fratres aderant, eius que exitum, in quantum Deo largiente poterant, oratione tuebantur. At ille subito ad deuorandum se draconem uenire conspiciens, magnis coepit uocibus clamare dicens: Ecce draconi ad deuorandum datus sum; propter uestram praesentiam deuorare me non potest. Quid mihi moras facitis? Date locum ut ei deuorare me liceat. Cum que hunc fratres ut signum sibi crucis imprimeret admonerent, respondebat uirtute qua poterat dicens: Volo me signare, sed non possum, quia a dracone premor. Spumae oris eius faciem meam liniunt, guttur meum eius ore suffocatur. Ecce ab eo mea brachia comprimuntur, qui iam et caput meum in suo ore absorbit. Cum que hoc ille pallens, tremens et moriens diceret, coeperunt fratres uehementius orationibus insistere, et oppressum draconis praesentia suis precibus adiuuare.</p>	<p>In hac autem pestilentia quae nuper huius urbis populum magna ex parte consumpsit, percussus in inguine est perductus ad mortem. Cum que extremum spiritum ageret, conuenerunt fratres, ut egressum illius orando protegerent. Iam corpus eius ab extrema fuerat parte praemortuum, in solo tantummodo pectore uitalis adhuc calor anhelabat. Cuncti autem fratres tanto pro eo coeperunt enixius orare, quanto eum iam uidebant sub celeritate discedere, cum repente coepit eisdem fratribus assistentibus adnisi quo poterat clamare et orationes eorum interrumpere, dicens: Recedite, recedite. Ecce draconi ad deuorandum datus sum, qui propter uestram praesentiam deuorare me non potest. Caput meum in suo ore iam absorbit. Date locum ut non me amplius cruciet, sed faciat quod facturus est. Si ei ad deuorandum datus sum, quare propter uos moras patior? Tunc fratres coeperunt ei dicere: Quid est quod loqueris, frater? Signum tibi sanctae crucis imprime. Respondebat ille ut poterat, dicens: Volo me signare, sed non possum, quia a dracone premor. Cum que hoc fratres audirent, prostrati in terram cum lacrimis coeperunt pro ereptione illius uehementius orare.</p>	<p>[4] Cum repente coepit eisdem fratribus assistentibus clamare, atque cum magnis uocibus orationes eorum interrumpere, dicens: “Recedite. Ecce draconi ad deuorandum datus sum, qui propter uestram praesentiam deuorare me non potest. Caput meum in suo ore iam absorbit. Date locum, ut non me amplius cruciet, sed faciat quod facturus est. Si ei ad deuorandum datus sum, quare propter uos moras patior?” Tunc fratres coeperunt ei dicere: “Quid est quod loqueris, frater? Signum tibi sanctae crucis imprime”. Respondebat ille cum magnis clamoribus, dicens: “Volo me signare, sed non possum, quia squamis huius draconis premor.”</p>
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<p>Cum repente liberatus, magnis coepit uocibus clamare dicens: Ecce discessit, ecce exiit, ante orationes uestras fugit draco qui me acceperat. Mox autem seruiturum se Deo et esse monachum deuouit, atque a tempore illo nuncusque febribus premitur, doloribus fatigatur. Morti quidem subtractus est, sed adhuc plenius uitae restitutus non est. Quia enim longis et diuturnis iniquitatibus pressus est, longo languore fatigatur et durum cor ignis purgationis durior concremat, quia diuina dispensatione agitur ut prolixiora uitia aegritudo prolixior exurat. Quis illum umquam seruari ad conuersionem crederet? Quis tantam dei misericordiam considerare sufficiat? Ecce iuuenis prauus draconem uidit in morte, cui seruiuit in uita; nec uidit ut uitam funditus perderet, sed ut cui seruierrat sciret, sciendo resisteret, ipsum que resistendo superaret, et eum a quo prius non uidens tenebatur, uidit postea ne teneretur.</p>	<p>Cum repente liberatus, magnis coepit uocibus clamare dicens: Ecce discessit, ecce exiit, ante orationes uestras fugit draco qui me acceperat. Mox autem seruiturum se Deo et esse monachum deuouit, atque a tempore illo nuncusque febribus premitur, doloribus fatigatur. Morti quidem subtractus est, sed adhuc plenius uitae restitutus non est. Quia enim longis et diuturnis iniquitatibus pressus est, longo languore fatigatur et durum cor ignis purgationis durior concremat, quia diuina dispensatione agitur ut prolixiora uitia aegritudo prolixior exurat. Quis illum umquam seruari ad conuersionem crederet? Quis tantam dei misericordiam considerare sufficiat? Ecce iuuenis prauus draconem uidit in morte, cui seruiuit in uita; nec uidit ut uitam funditus perderet, sed ut cui seruierrat sciret, sciendo resisteret, ipsum que resistendo superaret, et eum a quo prius non uidens tenebatur, uidit postea ne teneretur.</p>	<p>Et ecce subito coepit melioratus aeger quibus ualebat uocibus exsultare, dicens: Gratias Deo, ecce draco qui me ad deuorandum acceperat fugit. Orationibus uestris expulsus est, stare non potuit. Pro peccatis meis modo intercedite, quia conuerti paratus sum et saecularem uitam funditus relinquere. Homo ergo qui, sicut iam dictum est, ab extrema corporis fuerat parte praemortuus, reseruatus ad uitam, toto ad Deum corde conuersus est. Longis et continuis in conuersatione eadem flagellis eruditus, atque ante paucos dies excrecente corporis molestia defunctus est. Qui iam draconem moriens non uidit, quia illum per cordis immutationem uicit.</p>	<p>[5] Cumque hoc fratres audirent, prostrati in terra cum lacrimis coeperunt pro ereptione illius uehementius orare. Et ecce subito coepit aeger cum magnis uocibus clamare, dicens: "Gratias Deo. Ecce draco, qui me ad deuorandum acceperat, fugit. Orationibus uestris expulsus est, stare non potuit. Pro peccatis meis modo intercedite, quia conuerti paratus sum et saecularem uitam funditus relinquere". Homo ergo qui, sicut iam dictum est, ab extrema corporis fuerat parte praemortuus, reseruatus ad uitam toto ad Deum corde conuersus est, et postquam mutatus mente diu est flagellis adtritus, tunc eius anima carne soluta est.</p>
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Homilia in Euangelia xix, §7 (trans. adapted from Hurst 1990, 83-85)

I tell you something, brothers, which happened recently. So that if you perceive from your hearts that you are sinners you may love the mercy of the almighty God all the more. During this year a certain brother came to my monastery, which is situated next to the church of the blessed martyrs John and Paul, to lead the monastic life. He was received with faith, but he himself led the monastic life more faithfully. His

brother [α : born of the same father and mother] followed him into the monastery in body but not in heart. Despising the life and dress of a monk, he dwelt in the monastery as a guest; and fleeing the life of the monks by his conduct, he could not withdraw from the monastery because he had no other occupation or means of sustenance. His wickedness was a burden to all, but everyone put up with him patiently out of respect for his brother. He was proud and insecure. He did not know if there was any life to follow after this present age, but he scorned anyone who wished to preach to him about this. Accordingly, he lived in the monastery like a layman, frivolous in his speech, unpredictable in his likings, puffed up in mind, neatly dressed, dissipated in his actions. But during the month of July just passed he was stricken with the plague that you know about. As he approached the end of his life he began to be assailed by the thought that he was rendering up his soul. As the rest of his body was failing, he had strength only in his breast and tongue. His brothers were present and they were supporting his departure by their prayers as far as God granted them to do so. Suddenly he perceived a dragon coming to devour him. He began to shout in a loud voice, "Get back, get back! I'm being given up to a dragon to be devoured, but on account of your presence it cannot do it. Why do you stop it? Give it room so it can devour me!" When his brothers urged him to mark himself with the sign of the cross, he replied

α : with loud cries and said: "I want to sign myself but I cannot, because the dragon's scales are holding me down. The foam from its mouth is spread over my face, my throat is suffocated by his mouth and I cannot sign myself; my arms are squeezed together by his scales."

β : with what strength he had left, saying: "I want to sign myself, but I cannot, because the dragon is holding me down. The foam from its mouth is spread over my face, my throat is suffocated by his mouth. Lo, my arms are squeezed together by him, who has already swallowed even my head!"

As he was saying these things, pallid, trembling and dying, his brothers began to press on more insistently with their prayers, to help with their entreaties the poor man overwhelmed by the dragon. Suddenly he was set free! He began to shout with a loud voice, saying: "See, it has departed, it has gone away. The dragon which took me has fled from before your prayers." And he soon vowed that he would serve God and be a monk, and from then until now he has been overcome with fever and beset with sorrows. He was indeed saved from death, but he has still not been fully restored to life. Because he was held by oppressive and long lasting wickedness, he is beset by oppressive ill health. A harder fire of purification is completely consuming his hard heart, and by divinely-arranged plan a very protracted illness is entirely burning away his protracted vices. Who would have believed that he would be preserved to change his way of life? Who could have pondered enough the great mercy of God? A wicked young man at the time of his death saw the dragon he had served during his lifetime. The object of this vision was to prevent its utterly destroying his life. He

would know whom he had been serving, by knowing him, might oppose him and by opposing him might overcome him. He saw the one who had held him while he was unseeing, so that afterwards he might not be held.

Homilia in Euangelia xxxviii, §16 (trans. Hurst 1990, 354-55)

Two years ago a certain brother came by the grace of conversion to my monastery, which is situated beside the church of the blessed martyrs John and Paul. He was tested according to the rule, and eventually received. His brother followed him into the monastery, not from any desire for conversion but out of affection for him. Now the one who had come to lead the monastic life was most agreeable to the brothers, but his brother was very different in his way of life and habits. He lived in the monastery from necessity rather than of his own free will. Although he was unruly in all his actions, everyone bore with him calmly for his brother's sake. He was frivolous in his speech, misguided in his actions, careful about his dress, careless about his way of life. He could not bear it if anyone spoke to him of monastic life. His life had become a burden to all the brothers, but, as I have said, they all put up with him for the sake of his brother. He was scornful if anyone spoke to him about his bad behaviour; not only did he hate doing good deeds, but even hearing about them. By swearing, by anger, by scoffing, he declared that he would never come to the practice of monastic life. In the plague that recently killed a large part of the people of this city, his groin was affected, and he came close to death. As he was breathing his last, the brothers gathered to palliate his departure by their prayers. His body had lost all feeling in its extremities, and only the life-giving breath remained in his chest. As the brothers saw that his end was coming nearer, they began to pray more strenuously for him. Suddenly he began to cry out with all the strength he could muster to the brothers standing about him, and to interrupt their prayers saying: "Get back! I've been given up to a dragon to be devoured, but it cannot devour me because of your presence. It already had my head in its mouth! Give it room, that he may no longer torture me but may accomplish what it is about to do. If I've been given up to it to be devoured, why are you holding it back?" Then the brothers began to say to him: "What are you saying, brother? Sign yourself with the cross!" He answered as well as he could, "I want to sign myself but I can't because the dragon prevents me." When the brothers heard this they fell prostrate on the ground; with tears they began to pray more urgently for his release. Suddenly the sick man became better! He began to rejoice with what strength he had: "Thanks be to God! See the dragon which had undertaken to devour me has fled, he has been driven away by your prayers, he couldn't stay! Now intercede for my sins, because I am ready to be converted and to abandon completely my worldly way of life." And so the man who, as I described him, had lost all feeling in his extremities, was restored to life, and turned with all his heart to God. Instructed by long and continuous suffering during his sickness, he died a few days later, when his illness had grown worse. This time he saw no dragon as he died, because he had conquered it by his change of heart.

Dialogi IV.xl.2-5 (trans. Zimmerman 2002, 244-45)

I recall giving an example of this in my sermons to the people. I mentioned the case of Theodore, a very restless young man, who entered my monastery with his brother under force of circumstances rather than of his own free will. He was always irritated when any spiritual lesson was brought home to him. He could not bear doing good or hearing about it. In fact, he would become angry or sarcastic and swear that he had never intended to put on the religious habit or become a monk. During the plague which recently carried off a large part of the population of this city, Theodore became dangerously ill, with the disease lodging in his abdomen. When he was about to die, the brethren gathered round the bed to offer their prayers for his safe departure from this life to the next. The extremities of his body were now cold with death up to his breast, where the lifeblood was still pulsating warmly. Seeing the end approaching rapidly, his brethren became more fervent in their prayers. Suddenly, the sick man interrupted them. “Stand back!” he shouted, “I have been cast out to be devoured by the dragon. Your presence keeps him from doing so, but he has already taken my head into his jaws. Stand back! Don’t make him torture me any longer. Let him finish me off, if that is what I am destined for. Why do you make me suffer this suspense?” The brethren tried to quiet him. “What is it you are saying?” they asked. “Bless yourself with the sign of the cross.” In answer, he shouted excitedly, “I want to bless myself, but cannot because the dragon is holding me in his coils!” Hearing this, the brethren fell prostrate in prayer and, adding tears to their petitions, begged insistently for his release. Suddenly, with a sigh of relief, the sick brother cried happily, “Thanks be to God! The dragon who tried to devour me has fled. He could not stand the attack of your prayers. And now please beg God to forgive my sins, for I am ready to live like a real monk and fully determined to abandon my old, worldly ways.” After recovering from the partial death of his body, this monk offered his life generously to God. With a complete change of heart, he now welcomed afflictions and endured them for a long time until his soul was finally freed from the body.

b)

<i>Homelia in Euangelia</i> xxxviii, §16 (Étaix 1999, 376-78, ll. 436-82)	<i>Dominica XXI post Pentecosten</i> (CH I. 35, 483-84, ll. 219-58) ¹
Ante biennium frater quidam in monasterium meum, quod iuxta beatorum martyrum Iohannis et Pauli ecclesiam situm est, gratia conuersationis uenit, qui diu regulariter protractus, quandoque susceptus est. Quem frater suus ad monasterium non conuersationis studio, sed carnali amore secutus est. Is autem qui ad conuersationem uenerat ualde fratribus placebat; at contra frater illius longe a uita eius ac moribus discrepabat. Viuebat tamen in monasterio necessitate potius quam uoluntate.	Cwyð nu sanctus gregorius. þæt sum broþer gecyrde to anum mynstre þe he sylf gestapelode; and æfter regollicre fadunge munuchad underfeng; Ðam fyligde sum flæsclic broþer to mynstre; na for gecnyrdnysse goddre drohtnunge; ac for flæsclicere lufe; Se gastlica broþer eallum þam mynstermunecum þearle þurh goddre drohtnunge gelicode. and his flæsclica broðer micclum his lifes þeawum mid þwyrnysse wiðcwæð;

¹ Abbreviations have been silently expanded and *punctus elevati* have been replaced by semicolons.

<p>Et cum in cunctis actibus peruersus existeret, pro fratre suo ab omnibus aequanimiter tolerabatur. Erat enim leuis eloquio, prauus actione, cultus uestibus, moribus incultus; ferre uero non poterat si quisquam illi de sancti habitus conuersatione loqueretur. Facta autem fuerat uita illius cunctis fratribus uisu grauis, sed tamen, ut dictum est, pro fratribus sui gratia erat cunctis tolerabilis. Aspernabatur ualde si quis sibi aliquid de prauitatis suae correptione loqueretur. Bona non solum facere, sed etiam audire non poterat. Numquam se ad sanctae conuersationis habitum uenire, iurando, irascendo, deridendo testabatur. In hac autem pestilentia quae nuper huius urbis populum magna ex parte consumpsit, percussus in inguine est perductus ad mortem. Cum que extremum spiritum ageret, conuenerunt fratres, ut egressum illius orando protegerent.</p> <p>Iam corpus eius ab extrema fuerat parte praemortuum, in solo tantummodo pectore uitalis adhuc calor anhelabat. Cuncti autem fratres tanto pro eo coeperunt enixius orare, quanto eum iam uidebant sub celeritate discedere, cum repente coepit eisdem fratribus assistentibus adnisi quo poterat clamare et orationes eorum interrompere, dicens: Recedite, recedite. Ecce draconi ad deorandum datus sum, qui propter uestram praesentiam deorare me non potest. Caput meum in suo ore iam absorbit. Date locum ut non me amplius cruciet, sed faciat quod facturus est. Si ei ad deorandum datus sum, quare propter uos moras patior? Tunc fratres coeperunt ei dicere: Quid est quod loqueris, frater? Signum tibi sanctae crucis imprime. Respondebat ille ut poterat, dicens: Volo me signare, sed non possum, quia a dracone premor.</p> <p>Cum que hoc fratres audirent, prostrati in terram cum lacrimis coeperunt pro ereptione illius uehementius orare. Et ecce subito coepit melioratus aeger quibus ualebant uocibus exsultare, dicens: Gratias Deo, ecce draco qui me ad deorandum acceperat fugit. Orationibus uestris expulsus est, stare non potuit. Pro peccatis meis modo intercedite, quia conuerti paratus sum et saecularem uitam funditus relinquere. Homo ergo qui, sicut iam dictum est, ab extrema corporis fuerat parte praemortuus, reseruatus ad uitam, toto ad Deum corde conuersus est. Longis et continuus in conuersatione eadem flagellis eruditus, atque ante paucos dies exrescente corporis molestia defunctus est. Qui iam draconem moriens non uidit, quia illum per cordis immutationem uicit.</p>	<p>He leofode on mynstre for neode. swiðor þonne for beterrunge; He wæs gegaf-spræce. and þwyr on dædum. wel besewen on reafe and yfel on þeawum; He nahte geþyld; gif hine hwa to goddre drohtnunge tihte; Wearð þa his lif swiþe hefityme þam gebroþrum. ac hi hit emlice forbæron for his broþer godnysse; he ne mihte nan þing to gode gedon; ne he nolde nan god gehyran; Ða wearð he færlice mid sumre cope gestanden. and to deaþe gebroht; Ða ða he to forþsiþe ahafen wæs. þa comon þa gebroðra to þy ðæt hi his sawle becwædon; He læg acealdod on nyþewardum lymum; on þam breoste anum orþode þa gyt se gast; Ða gebroðru ða swa miccle geornfullicor for him gebædon; swa micclum swa hi gesawon þæt he hrædlice gewitan sceolde; He þa ferlice hrymde þus cweþende; Gewitað fram me; efne her is cumen an draca þe me sceal forswelgan; ac he ne mæg for eower andwerdnysse; Min heafod he hæfð mid his ceafum befangen rymað him þæt he me leng ne geswence; Gif ic þysum dracan to forswelgenne geseald eom hwi sceal ic ælcunge þrowian for eowerum oferstealle; Ða gebroðra him cwædon to. hwi spreost þu mid swa micelre orwennysse. mearca þe sylfne mid tacne þære halgan rode; He andwyrde be his mihte; Ic wolde lustbære mid tacne þære halgan rode me bletsian; ac ic næbbe þa mihte. for þan ðe se draca me þearle ofþrihð; Hwæt þa munecas þa hi astrehton mid woþe to eorþan. and ungunnon geornlicor for his hreddinge þone wealdendan god biddan; Efne þa færlice awyrpte se adia cniht. and mid blissindre stemne cwæð;</p> <p>Ic þancie gode; efne nu se draca þe me forswelgan wolde is afliged þurh eowerum benum; he is fram me ascofen and standan ne mihte ongean eowerum þingungum; Beoð nu mine þingeras biddende for minum synnum; for þan ðe ic eom gearo to gecyrrenne to munuclicere drohtnunge. and woruldlice þeawas ealle forlætan; His cealdan leomu þa geedcucedon and he mid ealre heortan to gode gecyrde; and mid langsumum broce on his gecyrrednysse wearð gerihltæced and æt nextan on þære ylcan untrumnysse gewat; Ac he ne geseah þone dracan on his forðsiþe; for þan ðe he hine oferswyðde mid gecyrrednysse his heortan;</p>
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Homilia in Euangelia xxxviii, §16 (trans. Hurst 1990, 354-55)

Two years ago a certain brother came by the grace of conversion to my monastery, which is situated beside the church of the blessed martyrs John and Paul. He was tested according to the rule, and eventually received. His brother followed him into the monastery, not from any desire for conversion but out of affection for him. Now the one who had come to lead the monastic life was most agreeable to the brothers, but his brother was very different in his way of life and habits. He lived in the monastery from necessity rather than of his own free will. Although he was unruly in all his actions, everyone bore with him calmly for his brother's sake. He was frivolous in his speech, misguided in his actions, careful about his dress, careless about his way of life. He could not bear it if anyone spoke to him of monastic life. His life had become a burden to all the brothers, but, as I have said, they all put up with him for the sake of his brother. He was scornful if anyone spoke to him about his bad behaviour; not only did he hate doing good deeds, but even hearing about them. By swearing, by anger, by scoffing, he declared that he would never come to the practice of monastic life. In the plague that recently killed a large part of the people of this city, his groin was affected, and he came close to death. As he was breathing his last, the brothers gathered to palliate his departure by their prayers. His body had lost all feeling in its extremities, and only the life-giving breath remained in his chest. As the brothers saw that his end was coming nearer, they began to pray more strenuously for him. Suddenly he began to cry out with all the strength he could muster to the brothers standing about him, and to interrupt their prayers saying: "Get back! I've been given up to a dragon to be devoured, but it cannot devour me because of your presence. It already had my head in its mouth! Give it room, that he may no longer torture me but may accomplish what it is about to do. If I've been given up to it to be devoured, why are you holding it back?" Then the brothers began to say to him: "What are you saying, brother? Sign yourself with the cross!" He answered as well as he could, "I want to sign myself but I can't because the dragon prevents me." When the brothers heard this they fell prostrate on the ground; with tears they began to pray more urgently for his release. Suddenly the sick man became better! He began to rejoice with what strength he had: "Thanks be to God! See the dragon which had undertaken to devour me has fled, he has been driven away by your prayers, he couldn't stay! Now intercede for my sins, because I am ready to be converted and to abandon completely my worldly way of life." And so the man who, as I described him, had lost all feeling in his extremities, was restored to life, and turned with all his heart to God. Instructed by long and continuous suffering during his sickness, he died a few days later, when his illness had grown worse. This time he saw no dragon as he died, because he had conquered it by his change of heart.

Dominica XXI post Pentecosten (CH I. 35), ll. 219-58 (Translation adapted from Thorpe 1844, I, 533-35)

St. Gregory now says, that a certain brother entered into a monastery which he himself had founded, and after regular probation received monkhood. A worldly brother followed him to the monastery, not for desire of a good life, but for fleshly love. The spiritual brother, through his good life, was exceedingly liked by the monks of the monastery; and his worldly brother with perverseness greatly contradicted the usages of his life. He lived in the monastery rather from necessity than for bettering. He was idle of speech, and perverse in deeds; appearing well in attire, and evil in morals. He had no patience, if any one exhorted him to a good course. Hence his life was very irksome to the brothers, but they endured it calmly on account of his brother's goodness. He could do nothing good, nor would he hear any good. He was then suddenly seized with some disease, and brought to death. When he was raised up for departure, the brothers came that they might pray for his soul. He lay chilled in his lower limbs: in his breast alone the spirit yet breathed. The brothers then prayed for him the more fervently, the more they saw that he would quickly depart. He then suddenly cried, saying thus: "Depart from me. Lo, here is a dragon come which is to swallow me, but he cannot for your presence. He has seized my head in his jaws. Give place to him, that he may no longer afflict me. If I am given to this dragon to be swallowed, why should I suffer delay through your presence?" The brothers said to him: "Why do you speak with such great despair? Mark thyself with the sign of the holy cross." He answered as he was able: "I would joyfully bless myself with the sign of the holy cross, but I don't have the strength, for the dragon sorely oppresses me." Whereupon the monks prostrated themselves with weeping to the earth, and began more fervently to pray to the almighty God for his salvation. Lo, then, the sick man suddenly started, and with exulting voice said: "I thank God: behold now the dragon which would swallow me is put to flight through your prayers. He is driven from me, and could not stand against your intercession. Be now my intercessors, praying for my sins; for I am ready to turn to monastic life, and to forsake all worldly practices." His cold limbs then revived, and he turned with all his heart to God, and by long sickness in his conversion was justified, and at length died of the same disease; but he didn't see the dragon at his departure, for he had overcome him by the conversion of his heart.

c)

<p><i>Dialogi IV.xl.2-5</i> (de Vogüé 1980, III, 140, l. 6 - 142, l. 46)</p>	<p><i>Old English Dialogues</i>, IV.xl (Hecht 1965, 324, l. 4 - 325, l. 16)</p>	<p><i>Dominica XXI post Pentecosten</i> (CH I. 35, 483-84, ll. 219-58)²</p>
<p>[2] Nam is de quo in omeliis coram populo iam narrasse me memini, inquietus ualde Theodorus nomine puer fuit, qui in meum monasterium fratrem suum necessitate magis quam uoluntate secutus est. Cui nimirum grauis erat si quis pro sua aliquid salute loqueretur. Bona autem non solum facere, sed etiam audire non poterat. Numquam se ad sanctae conuersationis habitum uenire, iurando, irascendo, deridendo testabatur. [3] In hac autem pestilentia, quae nuper huius urbis populum magna ex parte consumpsit, percussus in inguine est perductus ad mortem. Cumque extremum spiritum ageret, conuenerunt fratres, ut egressum illius orando protegerent. Iam corpus eius ab extrema fuerat parte praemortuum; in solo tantummodo pectore uitalis adhuc calor anhelabat. Cuncti autem fratres tanto pro eo coeperunt enixius orare, quanto eum iam uidebant sub celeritate discedere. [4] Cum repente coepit eisdem fratribus adsistentibus clamare, atque cum magnis uocibus orationes eorum interrumpere, dicens: 'Recedite. Ecce draconi ad deuorandum datus sum, qui propter uestram praesentiam deuorare me non potest.</p>	<p>Soðlice se swiðe unstillan cniht, þam wæs nama Theodorus, be þam ic geman þæt ic sæde iu in þam folclarum beforan þam folce, se cniht wæs in minum mynstre & fylgde his agnum bræðer ma for nede þonne for his agnum willan. Þam wæs swyþe hefig, þæt gif hwilc man aht spræc to him be his agenre Hæle, nalæs þæt an, þæt he ne mihte don þa god, þe hine man lærde, ac eac swylce he ne mihte hi na gehyran, ne he næfre ne mihte cuman to ðam hade þære halgan liflade, ac for swa & spræc ealling swergende & yrsiende & bysmriende. Ða gelamp hit on þam mancwealme, þe nu niwan of mycclum dæle fornam þæt folc þissere burge, þæt he wearð drepen in þa sceare & þy wæs gelæded to deaþe. & þa þa he sceolde alætan þæt nihste oroð & agyfan his gast, þa gesomnodon þider þa broðru hi to his forðfore & woldon hine scyldan mid heora gebedum & fore gebiddan. & þa eallinga of þam mæstan dæle his lichama wæs ær dead, buton þæt an, þæt þa gyt in þam breoste anum fnæs hwylchugu liflic hætu þæs oreþes, þa þa broðra ongunnon swa mycclæ geornlicor for hine gebiddan, swa mycclæ ma swa hi gesawon, þæt he hrædlice sceolde beon gewiten. Ða færinga ongan se ilca cniht clypian to þam ætstandendum broðrum & mid hludum stefnum toslat & amyrdre þara broðra sangas & gebedu þus cwepende: gaþ la onweg.</p>	<p>Cwyð nu sanctus gregorius. þæt sum broþer gecyrd to anum mynstre þe he sylf gestapelode; and æfter regollicre fadunge munuchad underfeng; Ðam fylgde sum flæsclic broþer to mynstre; na for gecnyrdnyssse goddre drohtnung; ac for flæsclicere lufe; Se gastlica broþer eallum þam mynstermunecum þearle þurh goddre drohtnunge gelicode. and his flæsclica broðer micclum his lifes þeawum mid þwyrnyssse wiðcwæð; He leofode on mynstre for neode. swiðor þonne for beterunge; He wæs gegafspræce. and þwyr on dædum. wel besewen on reafe and yfel on þeawum; He nahte geþyld; gif hine hwa to goddre drohtnunge tihte; Wearð þa his lif swiþe heftyme þam gebroþrum. ac hi hit emlice forbæron for his broþer godnyssse; he ne mihte nan þing to gode gedon; ne he nolde nan god gehyran; Ða wearð he færllice mid sumre coþe gestanden. and to deaþe gebroht; Ða ða he to forþsiþe ahafen wæs. þa comon þa gebroðra to þy ðæt hi his sawle becwædon; He læg acealdod on nyþewardum lymum; on þam breoste anum orþode þa gyt se gast; Ða gebroðru ða swa micclæ geornfullicor for him gebædon; swa micclum swa hi gesawon þæt he hrædlice gewitan sceolde; He þa ferlice hrymde þus cwepende;</p>

² Abbreviations have been silently expanded and *punctus elevati* have been replaced by semicolons.

<p>Caput meum in suo ore iam absorbit. Date locum, ut non me amplius cruciet, sed faciat quod facturus est. Si ei ad deuorandum datus sum, quare propter uos moras patior?' Tunc fratres coeperunt ei dicere: 'Quid est quot loqueris, farter? Signum tibi sanctae crucis inprime'. Respondebat ille cum magnis clamoribus, dicens: 'Volo me signare, sed non possum, quia squamis huius draconis premor.' [5] Cumque hoc fratres audirent, prostrati in terra cum lacrimis coeperunt pro ereptione illius uehementius orare. Et ecce subito coepit aeger cum magnis uocibus clamare, dicens: 'Gratias Deo. Ecce draco, qui me ad deuorandum acceperat, fugit. Orationibus uestris expulsus est, stare non potuit. Pro peccatis meis modo intercedite, quia conuerti paratus sum et saecularem uitam funditus relinquere'. Homo ergo qui, sicut iam dictum est, ab extrema corporis fuerat parte praemortuus, reseruatus ad uitam toto ad Deum corde conuersus est, et postquam mutatus mente diu est flagellis adtritrus, tunc eius anima carne soluta est.</p>	<p>Nu ic eom geseald þysum dracan to forswelganne, ac he ne mæg me forswelgan for eowre andweardnesse. Nu he hæfþ beginen in his muðe min heafod & forswolgen. Ac alyfaþ him þa stowe, þæt he me ma ne ceowe ne ne cwelmie, ac þæt he mote gedon þæt he donde is. For hwan la þrowige ic þa ylðingce for eowrum þingum, nu ic eom him geseald to forswelganne? Þa broðor ongunnon cweþan to him: hwæt is þæt, broðor, þæt ðu sprecest? Segna þe & sete þe on þæt tacen ðære halgan rode. & mid hludum cleopungum cwæð: ic wille me segnian, ac ic ne mæg, forðon þe ic eom forseted & forðrycced mid þam scyllum þisses dracan. Þa sona swa þæt geherdon þa gebroðra, hi astrehton hy on eorðan & ongunnon wepende bidden þæs cnihtes generenesse. Þa færinga ongan se ylca cniht mid miclum stefnum cleopian & cweþan: drihten Gode ic secge þancas, þæt ðes draca nu fleah for eowrum gebedum, se me hæfde underfongen to forswelgenne, ac he hwæðre aweg adrifen ne mihte her gestandan. Ðingiað la nu for minum synnum, forðam þe ic eom gearu, þæt ic wille gecyrrian to rihte & eallinga forlætan þis woruldlice lif. Soðlice, Petrus, se ylca man, se ðe fulneah wæs of mæstum dæle þæs lichoman ær dead, swa swa hit ær gesæd wæs, ði him wæs þæt lif on gehealden, to ðon þæt he wære gecyrred mid ealre heortan to Gode. & ða æfter ðan þe he on his mode gehwerfed wæs, he læg lange geswenced mid metrumnesse, & ða swa wearð onlysed his sawul of þam lichoman.</p>	<p>Gewitað fram me; efne her is cumen an draca þe me sceal forswelgan; ac he ne mæg for eower andwerdnyssse; Min heafod he hæfð mid his ceafum befangen rymað him þæt he me leng ne geswence; Gif ic þysum dracan to forswelgenne geseald eom hwi sceal ic ælcunge þrowian for eowerum oferstealle; Ða gebroðra him cwædon to. hwi sprecest þu mid swa micelre orwennysse. mearca þe sylfne mid tacne þære halgan rode; He andwyrde be his mihte; Ic wolde lustbære mid tacne þære halgan rode me bletsian; ac ic næbbe þa mihte. for þan ðe se draca me þearle ofþrihð; Hwæt þa munecas þa hi astrehton mid wope to eorþan. and ongunnon geornlicor for his hreddinge þone wealdendan god biddan; Efne þa færllice awyrpte se adlia cniht. and mid bliissindere stemne cwæð; Ic þancie gode; efne nu se draca þe me forswelgan wolde is afliged þurh eowerum benum; he is fram me ascofen and standan ne mihte ongean eowerum þingungum; Beoð nu mine þingeras biddende for minum synnum; for þan ðe ic eom gearo to gecyrrenne to munuclicere drohtnunge. and woruldlice þeawas ealle forlætan; His cealdan leomu þa geeducedon and he mid ealre heortan to gode gecyrde; and mid langsumum broce on his gecyrrednyssse wearð gerihtlæced and æt nextan on þære ylcan untrumnyssse gewat; Ac he ne geseah þone dracan on his forðsiþe: for þan ðe he hine oferswyðde mid gecyrrednyssse his heortan;</p>
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Dialogi IV.xl.2-5 (trans. Zimmerman 2002, 244-45)

I recall giving an example of this in my sermons to the people. I mentioned the case of Theodore, a very restless young man, who entered my monastery with his brother under force of circumstances rather than of his own free will. He was always irritated when any spiritual lesson was brought home to him. He could not bear doing good or hearing about it. In fact, he would become angry or sarcastic and swear that he had never intended to put on the religious habit or become a monk. During the plague which recently carried off a large part of the population of this city, Theodore became dangerously ill, with the disease lodging in his abdomen. When he was about to die, the brethren gathered round the bed to offer their prayers for his safe departure from this life to the next. The extremities of his body were now cold with death up to his breast, where the lifeblood was still pulsating warmly. Seeing the end approaching rapidly, his brethren became more fervent in their prayers. Suddenly, the sick man interrupted them. "Stand back!" he shouted, "I have been cast out to be devoured by the dragon. Your presence keeps him from doing so, but he has already taken my head into his jaws. Stand back! Don't make him torture me any longer. Let him finish me off, if that is what I am destined for. Why do you make me suffer this suspense?" The brethren tried to quiet him. "What is it you are saying?" they asked. "Bless yourself with the sign of the cross." In answer, he shouted excitedly, "I want to bless myself, but cannot because the dragon is holding me in his coils!" Hearing this, the brethren fell prostrate in prayer and, adding tears to their petitions, begged insistently for his release. Suddenly, with a sigh of relief, the sick brother cried happily, "Thanks be to God! The dragon who tried to devour me has fled. He could not stand the attack of your prayers. And now please beg God to forgive my sins, for I am ready to live like a real monk and fully determined to abandon my old, worldly ways." After recovering from the partial death of his body, this monk offered his life generously to God. With a complete change of heart, he now welcomed afflictions and endured them for a long time until his soul was finally freed from the body.

Old English Dialogues, IV.xl (my translation)

Indeed, the very restless boy – whose name was Theodore, with whom I once dealt in the homilies [delivered] in public – the boy was in my monastery and followed his own brother more for need than of his own will. To him was very burdensome if anyone said anything to him about his own salvation, not only that he couldn't do any good that one taught him, but he couldn't even hear them at all, nor could he ever come to the condition of the holy office, but he behaved so and always spoke swearing and raging and mocking. Then it happened in the pestilence that lately plundered a large portion of the people of this city, that he was struck in the groin and thereby led to death. And then, when he was about to breathe his last breath and give up his spirit, then the brethren [of the monastery] gathered thither to his departure and they wanted to shield him and encourage his departure with their prayers. And then most of his body was already dead, with the sole exception that in his breast alone still panted some lively heat of the breath; thereupon the brethren began

to pray for him so much more eagerly, the more the more they saw that he would be gone soon. Suddenly, the same boy began to call the brethren standing by and interrupted and hindered the brethren's chants and prayers with loud cries saying thus: "Lo, go away! I am now given to this dragon to swallow (me), but he cannot swallow me because of your presence. Now he has put my head in his mouth and swallowed [it]. Give him way so that he won't gnaw and torment me anymore, but he can do what he is bound to do. Lo, why do I suffer a delay because of your gathering, now that I am given to him to swallow [me]?" The brethren began to say to him: "What is it that you are talking about, brother? Sign yourself and put yourself under [the protection of] the sign of the holy cross." And he said with loud cries: "I want to sign myself, but I cannot because I am oppressed and crushed by the scales of this dragon." Then, as soon as the brethren heard that, they prostrated themselves on the ground and began to pray weeping for the boy's protection. Then suddenly the same boy began to call out with loud cries and say: "I give thanks to the Lord God that this dragon now fled before your prayers, [he], who had seized me to swallow [me], but he [was] nevertheless driven away and could not stay here. Lo, intercede now for my sins, because I am eager to convert to the [monastic] rule and give up this worldly life entirely." Indeed, Peter, to the same man who had previously been almost dead in most of his body, just as it was said before, life was therefore retained, in order that he may convert wholeheartedly to God. And then after that he had converted in his heart, he long lay afflicted with illness, and then his soul was released from the body.

Dominica XXI post Pentecosten (CH I. 35), ll. 219-58 (Translation adapted from Thorpe 1844, I, 533-35)

St. Gregory now says, that a certain brother entered into a monastery which he himself had founded, and after regular probation received monkhood. A worldly brother followed him to the monastery, not for desire of a good life, but for fleshly love. The spiritual brother, through his good life, was exceedingly liked by the monks of the monastery; and his worldly brother with perverseness greatly contradicted the usages of his life. He lived in the monastery rather from necessity than for bettering. He was idle of speech, and perverse in deeds; appearing well in attire, and evil in morals. He had no patience, if any one exhorted him to a good course. Hence his life was very irksome to the brothers, but they endured it calmly on account of his brother's goodness. He could do nothing good, nor would he hear any good. He was then suddenly seized with some disease, and brought to death. When he was raised up for departure, the brothers came that they might pray for his soul. He lay chilled in his lower limbs: in his breast alone the spirit yet breathed. The brothers then prayed for him the more fervently, the more they saw that he would quickly depart. He then suddenly cried, saying thus: "Depart from me. Lo, here is a dragon come which is to swallow me, but he cannot for your presence. He has seized my head in his jaws. Give place to him, that he may no longer afflict me. If I am given to this dragon to be swallowed, why should I suffer delay through your presence?" The brothers said to him: "Why do you speak with such great despair? Mark thyself with the sign of the holy cross." He answered as

he was able: “I would joyfully bless myself with the sign of the holy cross, but I don’t have the strength, for the dragon sorely oppresses me.” Whereupon the monks prostrated themselves with weeping to the earth, and began more fervently to pray to the almighty God for his salvation. Lo, then, the sick man suddenly started, and with exulting voice said: “I thank God: behold now the dragon which would swallow me is put to flight through your prayers. He is driven from me, and could not stand against your intercession. Be now my intercessors, praying for my sins; for I am ready to turn to monastic life, and to forsake all worldly practices.” His cold limbs then revived, and he turned with all his heart to God, and by long sickness in his conversion was justified, and at length died of the same disease; but he didn’t see the dragon at his departure, for he had overcome him by the conversion of his heart.

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<i>Dialogi</i> IV.xl.10-12 (de Vogüé 1980, III, 144, l. 80 – 146, l. 105)	<i>Old English Dialogues</i> , IV.xl (Hecht 1965, 326, l. 21 – 327, l. 19)
<p>[10] Est etiam nunc apud nos Athanasius, Isauriae presbiter, qui diebus suis Iconii rem terribilem narrat euenisse. Ibi namque, ut ait, quoddam monasterium ‘Ton Galathon’ dicitur, in quo quidam monachus magnae aestimationis habebatur. Bonis quippe cernebatur moribus at in omni actione sua compositus, sed, sicut ex fine res patuit, longe aliter quam apparebat fuit. Nam cum se ieiunare cum fratribus demonstraret, occulte manducare consueuerat. Quod eius uitium fratres omnino nesciebant. Sed corporis superueniente molestia, ad uitae extrema perductus est. [11] Qui cum iam esset in fine, fratres ad se omnes, qui monasterio inerrant, congregari fecit. At illi tali, ut putabant, uiro moriente, magnum quid ac delectabile se ab eo audire crediderunt. Quibus ipse adflictus et tremens compulsus est prode- re, cui hosti traditus cogeatur exire. Nam dixit: ‘Quando me uobiscum ieiunare credebatis, occulte comedebam. Et nunc ecce ad deorandum draconi sum traditus, qui cauda sua mea genua pedesque conligauit, caput uero suum intra meum os mittens, spiritum meum ebibens abstrahit’. [12] Quibus dictis statim defunctus est, atque ut paenitendo liberari potuisset a dracone quem uiderat, expectatus non est. Quod nimirum constat quia ad solam utilitatem audientium uiderit, qui eum hostem cui traditus fuerat et innotuit et non euasit.</p>	<p>Eac is nu mid us Athanasius se mæssepreost Licania þære mægðe, se sæde, þæt on his dagum gelumpe þær swyþe ondrysnlicu wise. He cwæð, þæt þær wære sum mynster, þe is haten Tongalatan, & in þam wæs sum munuc, se wæs hæfd & wened fram mannum mycelre arfæstnesse, & he wæs gesewen godra þeawa, & on ælcum his weorca he wæs geglænged, swylce he god wære, ac swa hit on ænde eft wearþ cuþ feorr on oþre wisan, þonne he ær aeteowed wæs. Witodlice þonne he sceolde fæstan mid oðrum broþrum, he dyde þonne gelicost, ac hwæþre he gewunode, þæt he æt in his deogolnessum, swa swa he ana wiste, & þone leahtor nyston na þa oðre broðra. Ac þa æt nehstan ofercumendre þæs lichaman untrumnesse he wearð gelæded to his lifes ændedæge. & þa þa he wæs æt his ænde, he dyde, þæt þa broþra wæron ealle gesamnode to him, þe in þam mynstre wæron. & hi þa wendon & gelyfdon, þæt hi sceoldon æt þyllicum were sweltendum hwæthuga mycclis & wynsumlices fram him gehyran. & he þa se munuc swa geswænced & beofiend wæs genyded, þæt he meldode þam broðrum & cypde, hwylcum feonde he wæs ge-seald þa, & fram hwylcum he wæs genyded, þæt he sceolde ut gan. Soðlice he cwæð þus beforan heom eallum: þa þe ge gelyfdon, þæt ic fæste mid eow, ic æt deogollice swa ge nyston, & nu forþ on ic eom seald þysum dracan to forswelganne, se hafað gebunden mid his tægle mine cneowu & mine fet, & his heafod is onsænded in minne muð, & drincende min orod he tyhþ him to minne gast. Gecwedenum þisum wordum he wæs sona forðfered. Witodlice he mihte beon alysed ær fram ðam dracan mid hreowsunge & dædbote, & ða ne mihte na beon alysed, þa þa he gebad butan dædbote, þæt he þone geseah æt his ænde. Forþon þæt is cuð butan tweon, þæt he geseah þa gesihþe þam mannum to nyttesse, þe hit gehyrað & ongytaþ, & na him sylfum to ænigre helpe, se cyðde þam broðrum þone feond, þam he wæs ge-seald, & he him sylfa þone na ne gedygde ne ne bebearh.</p>

Dialogi IV.xl.10-12 (trans. Zimmerman 2002, 246-47)

One of our fellow priests, Athanasius of Isauria, tells of a terrifying incident that took place in Iconium during his lifetime. In the monastery called Ton Galathon was a monk reputed for his sanctity and revered for his nobility of character. In all his actions he was most circumspect. But, as the outcome proves, he was not all he appeared to be. He made his brethren believe he was fasting while in reality he used to eat in secret, a vice of which his brethren were entirely unaware. Then he became seriously ill, and when he was face to face with death he asked to have the entire community gather round him. In view of his reputation, they expected in all sincerity to hear a noble and inspiring message from his lips. But, trembling in his wretchedness, he was forced to reveal that after he would be delivered into the power of Satan. "You thought all along that I was fasting with you," he said "but, unknown to you I took food secretly. For this reason I have been handed over to the dragon to be devoured. His tail is now coiled around my feet and knees and, with his head to my mouth, he is stealing the breath of life from me." Death followed at once, without leaving him time to repent and thus free himself from the dragon that appeared to him so vividly. It was clearly for the benefit of the bystanders that he saw the dragon into whose power he was delivered. He could point him out to others but for himself there was no escape.

Old English Dialogues, IV.xl (my translation)

Now, there is also with us Athanasius, the priest of the province of Licania, who said that in his days something very terrible happened there. He said that there was a certain monastery which is called Ton Galaton and in it was a certain monk that was esteemed and believed by men of great virtue, and he was considered of good morals, and on each of his actions he was composed, as if he was good, but as it became known afterwards at [his] death, [he proved to be] far different than he had appeared before. Indeed, when he should have fasted with the other brothers, he [apparently] did [just] like [them], yet he was used to eating in his secret places, so that he alone knew, and the other brothers had no clue of his sin. But then at the last he was led to the final day of his life by an illness that overcame the body, and when he was about to die, he caused the brethren, that lived in the monastery, to gather all around him. And then they went and believed that beside such a dying man they should hear something great and delightful from him. And then the monk was so afflicted and shaking that he was compelled to reveal [his sins] to the brethren and told [them] to which fiend he had surrendered and by which he was [so] oppressed that he had to die. Indeed, in front of them all he said so: "When you believed that I fasted with you, I ate secretly so that you didn't know, and henceforth I am given to this dragon to swallow [me]; he has bound my knees and my feet with his tail, and he is pushing forth his head into my mouth, and sucking my breath he is drawing to

him my [living] spirit.” Saying these words, he soon passed away. Indeed, he might have been released from the dragon before with repentance and penitence, but then he couldn’t be released at all when he prayed without [doing] penance after that he had seen him [the dragon] at the end of his life. Because it is plain and certain that he saw the vision for [other] men’s sake, so that they may listen and understand, and not for any help to himself; he told the brethren about the fiend, to whom he was prey, and he himself didn’t flee him [the dragon] nor did he guard himself [against the dragon].

Appendix II

<i>Dialogi</i> , II.xxv.1-2 (de Vogüé 1979, II, 212, ll. 1-19)	<i>Old English Dialogues</i> , II. xxiv (Hecht 1965, 155a, l. 23 – 56a, l. 31)	<i>Old English Dialogues</i> - Revised version, II. xxiv (Hecht 1965, 155b, l. 23 – 56b, l. 31)	<i>XII Kalendas Aprilis. Sancti Benedicti Abbatis</i> (CH II. 11, 103, ll. 376-92)
<p>Quidam autem eius monachus mobilitati mentem dederat et permanere in monasterio nolebat. Cumque eum uir Deum adsidue corripere, frequenter admoneret, ipse uero nullo modo consentiret in congregatione persistere atque inportunis precibus ut relaxaretur inmineret, quadam die isdem uenerabilis pater, nimietatis eius taedio affectus, iratus iussit ut discederet. [2] Qui mox ut monasterium exiit, contra se adsistere apertore draconem in itinere inuenit. Cumque cum isdem draco qui apparuerat deorare uellet, coepit ipse tremens et palpitans magnis uocibus clamare, dicens: 'Currite, currite, quia draco iste me deuorare uult'.</p>	<p>Gregorius him andswarode: eac wæs Benedictes muneca sum, se wæs unstaðelfæst on his mode & nolde gewunian on þam mynstre. Mid þy se Godes wer hine genehhe þreade & cidde & eac gelomlice lærde, þæt he hit gebetan sceolde, he swa þeah nanum gemete him to þon hyran nolde, þæt he on þære gesomnunge þurhwunian wolde, ac fylgede þam halgan were mid gemaglicum bedum, þæt him wære alyfed ut to farenne. Ða sume dæge se ylca arwurða fæder wæs geswænced mid unluste his swiðlican geornnesse & þa yrre het, þæt he onweg gewite. Sona swa he þa eode ut of þam mynstre, he gemette on þam wege standan sumne dracan ongan hine mid geniendum muþe. & se draca þa dyde, swylce he him forswelgan wolde. Ða ongan se munuc forhtiende & bredetende mid mycclum stefnum clypian & cweþan: yrnað hider. Yrnað hider.</p>	<p>Gregorius cwæð, soðlice sum wæs eac Benedictes munuc, se wæs unstaðelfæst on his mode & nolde gewunian on his mynstre. Hine þa se Godes wer geneahhe þreade & gelomlice mynegode & lærde to his þearfe, ac he swa þeah na to þæs hwon ne geþwærode to þurhwunianne on þære gesamnunge, ac mid gemaglicum benum befealh þam halgan were, þæt him wære alyfed ut to farenne. Ða sume dæge se ylca arwurða fæder wearð geswenced mid gedrefednysse his swiðlican onhropes & þa yrre het, þæt he aweg gewite. Sona swa he of þam mynstre ut eode, þa gemette he on þam wege anne dracan him ongean standan mid giniendum muðe. Ða þa se ylca draca, þe him ætywde, wolde hine forswelgan, þa ongann he ofdrædd bifian & broddettan & mid mycelum hream clypian þus cwæðende, yrnað hider, yrnað, forþam þe þes draca wyle me forswelgan.</p>	<p>Sum oðer munuc wearð unstaðolfæst on his mynstre. and mid gemaglicum benum gewilnode þæt he moste of ðam munuclife. ac se halga wer him forwyrnde. and swiðe mid wordum ðreade his unstaðolfæstnysse; Æt nextan ða ða he swa fus wæs. ða wearð se halga wer gehathyrt ðurh his unstaððignysse. and het hine aweg faran; Hwæt ða se munuc ut gewat. and gemette sona ænne dracan him togeanes standende. mid gynigendum muðe. þæt he hine forswulge; Se munuc ða swiðe bifigende. and forhtigende hrymde; Yrnað. yrnað. for ðan ðe þes draca me forswelgan wile; Ða mynstermunecas urnon to.</p>

<p>Currentes autem fratres draconem minime uiderunt, sed tremenatam atque palpitantem monachum ad monasterium reduxerunt. Qui statim promisit numquam se esse iam a monasterio recessurum, atque ex hora eadem in sua promissione permansit, quippe qui sancti uiri orationibus contra se adsistere draconem uiderat, quem prius non uidendo sequebatur.</p>	<p>Forþon þe þes draca wile me forswelgan. Ða urnon þa gebroþru þider & nænigne dracan þær ne gesawon, ac ðone munuc byfiende & brodetendne hi eft gelæddon to þam mynstre. & he þa sona gehet, þæt he næfre of þam mynstre gewitan nolde, & he þa of þære ylcan tide þurhwunode on his gehatum. & þa swa se munuc geseah for þæs halgan weres benum him ongæn standan þone dracan, þæt wæs deofol sylf, þam he ær fylgde & hyrde, þeah þe he hine na ne gesawe.</p>	<p>Ða urnon þa broðru þyder & þær nænne dracan ne gesawon, ac hi þone munuc cwakiendne & brodetendne gelæddon ongean eft to mynstre. He þa þær rihte behet, þæt he næfre þanon forð of þam mynstre gewitan nolde, & he eac of þære ylcan tide on his behate þurhwunode. Witodlice for þæs halgan weres benum se munuc geseah him ongean standan þone dracan, þæt wæs sylf deofol, þam he fyligde ær, þeah þe he hine na ne gesawe.</p>	<p>and swa ðeah nateshwon þone dracan ne gesawon. for ðan þæt wæs se ungesewenlica deofol. ac hi læddon ðone munuc swa bifigendne binnon ðam mynstre; He ða sona behet. þæt he næfre siððan of ðam mynstre sceacan nolde. and he eac on ðam behate symle ðurhwunode; Þurh benedictes gebedum him wæs se ungesewenlica draca æteowod. ðam ðe he ær filigde. na geseonde;</p>
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Dialogi, II.xxv.I-2 (trans. Zimmermann 2002, 94-95)

One of Benedict’s monks had set his fickle heart on leaving the monastery. Time and again the man of God pointed out how wrong this was and tried to reason with him but without any success. The monk persisted obstinately in his request to be released. Finally, Benedict lost patience with him and told him to go. Hardly had he left the monastery grounds when he noticed to his horror that a dragon with gaping jaws was blocking his way. ‘Help! Help!’ he cried out, trembling, ‘or the dragon will devour me.’ His brethren ran to the rescue, but could see nothing of the dragon. Still breathless with fright, the monk was only too glad to accompany them back to the abbey. Once safe within its walls, he promised never to leave again. And this time he kept his word, for Benedict’s prayers had enabled him to see with his own eyes the invisible dragon that had been leading him astray.

Old English Dialogues, II. xxiv (my translation)

Gregory answered him: “There was also a certain monk of Benedict’s [monastery], who was fickle in his heart and didn’t want to live in the monastery. When the man of God often rebuked and scolded him and also frequently instructed [him] that he should make amends for it [= his desire to leave the monastery], nevertheless he [the monk] didn’t want to listen to him [Benedict] on any account, to the extent that he should remain in the community, but pursued the holy man with importunate requests so that he would be given

permission to leave. Then one day the venerable father himself was distressed with weariness at his excessive eagerness [to leave] and then angrily bade that he should go away. As soon as he went out of the monastery, he met on the way a dragon standing opposite him with a gaping mouth. And the dragon then acted as if he wanted to swallow him. Then the monk, fearful and trembling, began to call with loud cries and say: 'Run hither! Run hither! Because the dragon wants to swallow me'. Then the brethren ran thither and they didn't see any dragon there, but they led the monk trembling and shaking back to the monastery. And then he soon vowed that he would never leave the monastery, and he stayed fast in his promises ever after. And so the monk saw the dragon standing in front of him because of the holy man's prayers – the dragon that was the devil himself, whom he had previously followed and listened to, although he didn't see him at all."

Old English Dialogues - Revised version, II. xxiv (my translation)

Gregory said: "Indeed, there was also a certain monk of Benedict's [monastery], who was fickle in his heart and didn't want to live in his monastery. Then the man of God often rebuked and frequently impelled and instructed [him] to his benefit, but he [the monk] nevertheless didn't consent at all to remain in the community, but with importunate requests insisted with the holy man that he would be allowed to leave. Then one day the venerable father himself grew vexed with the distress of his excessive importunity and then angrily bade that he should go away. As soon as he went out of the monastery, then he met on the way a dragon standing opposite him with a gaping mouth. When the dragon himself, which appeared to him, wanted to swallow him, then he began to shake and tremble terrified and to cry loudly saying thus: 'Run hither! Run! Because the dragon wants to swallow me'. Then the brethren ran thither and they didn't see any dragon there, but they led the monk trembling and shaking back again to the monastery. Then he promised straightaway that he would never thenceforward go out of the monastery and he stayed fast in his promise ever after. Indeed, the monk saw the dragon standing in front of him because of the holy man's prayers – the dragon that was the devil himself, whom he had previously followed, although he didn't see him at all."

XII Kalendas Aprilis. Sancti Benedicti Abbatis (CH II. 11), ll. 376-92 (translation adapted from Thorpe 1846, II, 177).

Another monk was unsteadfast in his monastery, and with importunate prayers desired that he might go away from the monastery, but the holy man forbade him, and with words strongly reprov'd his unsteadfastness. At last, as he was so bent, the holy man was irritated by his unsteadiness and bade him leave. Thereupon the monk went out, and immediately found a dragon standing opposite to him, with gaping mouth, that he might swallow him. The monk then sorely trembling and

fearing, cried: "Run, run, for this dragon will swallow me". The monks ran to him, and yet didn't see any dragon, for it was the invisible devil: but they led the monk so trembling within the monastery. He then immediately promised that he would never after depart from the monastery; and he also ever continued in that promise. Through Benedict's prayers the invisible devil appeared to him, whom he had before followed without seeing.

Appendix III

<p><i>Homilia in Euangelia</i> xxv.8 (Étaix 1999, 213, l. 226 – 214, l. 248)</p>	<p><i>In Dominica Palmarum</i> (CH I. 14, 295-96, ll. 161-78)¹</p>
<p>Per Leviathan quippe, quod additamentum eorum dicitur, cetus ille deuator humani generis designatur, qui dum se diuinitatem homini addere spondit, immortalitatem sustulit; qui praeuaricationis quoque culpam, quam primo homini propinauit, dum se sequentibus pessima persuasione multiplicat, poenas eis sine cessatione coaceruat. In hamo autem esca ostenditur, aculeus occultatur. Hunc ergo Pater omnipotens hamo cepit, quia ad mortem illius Vnigenitum Filium incarnatum misit, in quo et caro passibilis uideri possit, et diuinitas impassibilis uideri non possit. Cumque in eo serpens iste per manus persequentium escam corporis momordit, diuinitatis illum aculeus perforauit. Pius uero eum in miraculis Deum cognouerat, sed de cognitione sua ad dubitationem cecidit, quando hunc passibilem uidit. Quasi hamo ergo fauces gluttientis tenuit, dum in illo esca carnis patuit, quam deuator appeteret; et diuinitas passionis tempore latuit, quae necaret. In hamo eius incarnationis captus est, quia dum in illo appetit escam corporis, transfixus est aculeo diuinitatis. Ibi quippe inerat humanitas quae ad se deuotorem duceret, ibi diuinitas quae perforaret, ibi aperta infirmitas quae prouocaret, ibi occulta uirtus quae raptoris faucem transfigeret. In hamo igitur captus est, quia inde interiit, unde momordit. Et quos iure tenebat mortales perdidit, quia eum in quo ius non habuit morte appetere immortalem praesumpsit.</p>	<p>Ne mihte se deað him genealæcan gif he sylf nolde. Ac he côm to mannum to ðy. þæt he wolde. beon gehyrsum his fæder oð deað. 7 mancynn alysan from þam ecan deaðe mid his hwilwendlicum deaðe; þeahhwæðere ne nydde he na þæt iudeisce folc tó his cweale. Ac deoful hi tihte to ðam weorce. 7 god þæt geþafode to alysednysse ealles geleaffulles mancynnes; We habbað oft gesæd 7 git secgað þæt cristes rihtwisnys. is swa micel þæt he nolde niman mancynn. neadunga of ðam deofle buton he hit forwyrhte; He hit forwyrhte þa ða he tihte þæt folc to cristes cweale þæs ælmihtigan godes; 7 þa þurh his unsceððian deaðe wurdon we alysede; fram þam ecan deaðe. gif we us sylfe ne forpærað; þa getimode þam reðan deofle. swa swa deð þam græðian fisce. þe gesihð þæt æs. 7 ne gesihð þone angel. þe on ðæm æse sticað; bið þonne grædig þæs æses. 7 forswylcð þone angel forð mid þam æse; Swa wæs þam deofle. he geseh þa mennyscnyse on criste. 7 na ða godcundnysse; Þa sprytte he þæt iudeisce folc to his slege. 7 gefredde þa ðone angel cristes godcundnysse þurh þa he wæs. to deaðe aceocod. and benæmed ealles mancynnes þara þe on god belyfað;</p>

Homilia in Euangelia xxv.8 (Translation by Hurst 1990, 195-96)

Leviathan, which means ‘their increment’, designates that fish-like destroyer of the human race which, when he promised to bestow divinity upon human beings, took away their immortality. He was the cause, in the first human being, of the sin of collusion; when by his evil persuasive powers he increases many times over the sins of those who come after, he heaps up punishment for them without end. On a fishhook, the food is evident, the barb is concealed. The all-powerful Father caught

¹ Abbreviations have been silently explanded and *punctus elevati* have been replaced by semicolons.

this fish-like creature by means of a fishhook, because he sent his only-begotten Son, who had become a human being, to his death. The Son had both a visible body which could suffer, and an invisible nature which could not. When, through the actions of his persecutors the serpent bit the food of his body, the barb of his divine nature pierced him. Earlier, indeed, he had recognized that he was God by his miracles, but he fell to doubting when he saw that he was capable of suffering. It is, then, as if the fishhook got caught in his throat as he was swallowing. The food of the Lord's body, which the destroyer craved, was visible on it; at the time of his passion his divine nature, which the destroyer would do away with, lay hidden. He was caught by the fishhook of the Lord's incarnation because while he was craving the food of his body, he was pierced by the barb of his divine nature. There was in the Lord a human nature which would lead the destroyer to him, and there was a divine nature which would pierce him; there was in him the obvious weakness which would entice him, and there was the hidden power which would pierce the throat of the one who seized him. Therefore was the destroyer caught by a fishhook, because the cause of his destruction was where he bit. And he lost the mortal human beings whom he rightfully held because he dared to crave the death of one who was immortal, over whom he had no claim.

In Dominica Palmarum (CH I. 14), ll. 161-78 (translation adapted from Thorpe 1844, I, 215-17)

Death could not have approached him if He Himself had not wanted it, but He came to men because He would be obedient to His Father till death, and redeem mankind from eternal death by His temporary death. Yet He didn't compel the Jewish people to slay Him, but the devil instigated them to the work, and God consented to it, for the redemption of all believing mankind. We have often said, and yet say, that the justice of Christ is so great, that He would not forcibly have taken mankind from the devil, unless he had forfeited them. He forfeited them when he instigated the people to the slaying of Christ, the Almighty God; and then through His innocent death we were redeemed from eternal death, if we do not destroy ourselves. Then it befell the cruel devil as it does the greedy fish, which sees the bait, and doesn't see the hook which sticks in the bait; then it is greedy after the bait and swallows up the hook with the bait. So it was with the devil: he saw the humanity in Christ, and not the divinity; he then instigated the Jewish people to slay him, and then felt the hook of Christ's divinity, by which he was choked to death, and deprived of all mankind who believe in God.