

Patterns of Wisdom in the Old English Poem *Andreas*

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Abstract

The Old English poem *Andreas* was composed in a culturally unique milieu. Similarly to the diction and imagery of *Beowulf*, the poet of *Andreas* also combines Christian images with the heroic ethos of the Anglo-Saxon world. In the poem, the apostle Andreas is sent by God on a challenging mission to Mermedonia, a heathen and dangerous land, in order to rescue the apostle Matthew and convert the man-eating inhabitants of the island. The paper explores the patterns of wisdom in the poem, focusing on the contexts in which words 'wise' and 'wisdom' occur in the text. The paper attempts to suggest possible observations about the patterns of wisdom discovered in the studied poem.

Key words

Old English poetry, *Andreas*, wisdom, analysis

Introduction

The story of the Anglo-Saxon poem *Andreas* is set in the age of the apostles, shortly after the Ascension of Christ, and starts with the Apostle Matthew's mission to Mermedonia, an island of cannibals. Shortly after his arrival there, Matthew is captured, blinded and imprisoned, awaiting his death. Desperate in his cell, Matthew receives a vision which tells him about Andreas (unless the form 'Andrew' occurs in the sources, 'Andreas' is used generally throughout the paper) who shall soon come to rescue him. The story then shifts to Andreas who also receives a vision; in his case God commands him to go to Mermedonia. First, he hesitates, but assured about the urgency of the mission, he sets on a journey in the company of his disciples. On the shore he finds a ship with three men. They are Jesus with two angels disguised as sailors. During the journey, Andreas does not recognize Jesus and this ignorance creates narrative tension and generates conversations *with* Jesus *about* Jesus in the text. After his arrival to Mermedonia, Andreas miraculously releases Matthew and his co-prisoners. Nevertheless, the true purpose of the mission is not yet accomplished. To convert the heathens, he first has to undertake severe and extremely cruel treatment. God, however, stays by his side and Andreas ultimately convinces Mermedonians to change their way of life and become Christians.

Poetic works of the Early Middle Ages tend to show how the poets reshaped foreign images and adapted them to new patterns of thought. Thus, originally

Christian narratives had been altered to correspond more closely to the domestic setting and its realia. An epic poem in Old Saxon called *The Heliand* is a clear example of a text whose author “rewrote and reimagined the events and words of the gospel as if they had taken place and been spoken in his own country and time, in the chieftain society of a defeated people, forcibly Christianized by Charlemagne: the Saxons” (Murphy, 1997, p. xiii). Similarly, the Old English *Andreas* originated in the milieu the imagery and spirituality of which was a complex blend of Christian, Norse, Greek, Latin and other traditions as well as of oral and written discourses, thus forming intricate set(s) of beliefs which might appear incompatible to the 21st century mind. On the intricacies of the oral and narrative textuality of the Anglo-Saxon poetry, see for instance Pasternack (2006).

Affinities between *Andreas* and *Beowulf* have been long attested. According to Stanley, “it seems likely that one Old English poet, the poet of *Andreas*, drew on *Beowulf*” (2000, p. 11). For further discussion, see Stanley (2000, p. 8-11) and Orchard (2005, p. 163-165). *Andreas* can be thus interpreted as “a product of the fusion of Germanic and Mediterranean cultural influences” (Davis, 2005, p. 178).

The primary source of the Old English poem *Andreas* is the apocryphal *Acts of Andrew and Matthias* extant in many versions including the texts in Latin, Greek and Old English. The brief prose version of the story can be found in the Old English *Blickling Homilies* and in the prose *Life* by Aelfric of Eynsham. According to Magennis, “[t]he *Andreas*-poet is enthusiastic in transposing the legend of St Andrew into the medium of Germanic heroic poetry” (2006, p. 177); although, it needs be noted, “[w]e do not know the specific source of *Andreas* and we also do not know how *Andreas* and *The Life of St Andrew* are related” (Kries, 2002, p. 5). Magennis also points out that “[t]he theme of the journey is particularly brought out in this version of the legend” (2006, p. 175). The *Andreas* story has also a rich Eastern tradition of the Ethiopic, Coptic and Syriac provenance.

The study of analogues has shown that there exist many differences in details and poetics of the texts (see especially Friesen’s *Visions and Revisions: The Sources and Analogues of the Old English Andreas*, 2008, and Lipsius’ *Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten und Apostellegenden*, 1883, p. 543-622).

Our present knowledge of the exact origin of *Andreas*, alike other Old English poems, is limited. Scholars still debate its background and generally regard the text to be a translation. They see direct connections with the Greek *Praxeis Andreou kai Mattheia*. However, as Garner observes, “many favor the idea of a lost Latin intermediary to explain discrepancies between the Greek [...text...] and the Old English *Andreas*” (2007, p. 54).

In their comparative studies of *Andreas* and other versions of a story, scholars noted particularities present only in the Anglo-Saxon text. For instance, Magennis

discussing the place and setting mentions that “[t]he symbolic and emotive dimension to the treatment of place and setting in *Andreas* is, as far as we can tell, entirely the contribution of the Old English poet: there is no such dimension apparent in the Old English prose *Life of St Andrew*, which is thought to be a translation of a Latin version close to that used by the *Andreas*-poet, or in the ‘Casanatensis’ version, the Latin version with most details in common with *Andreas*” (2006, p. 173). Harbus assumes that “[b]ecause we have an Old English prose version, as well as the Latin and Greek prose accounts with which to compare *Andreas*, changes attributed specifically to the poetic context, rather than to vernacular translation, can also be identified” (2012, p. 114).

While the comparative approaches can certainly contribute to better understanding of a particular version, the objective of this paper is not to trace similarities and differences between various versions, but it seeks instead to close-study the Anglo-Saxon verse as found in the late 10th century *Vercelli Book* (on the history of the manuscript and the dating of *Andreas*, see Davis, 2005, p. 178, and Schaar, 1967, p. 12-24). The perused approach is based on the assumption that the diction and imagery of *Andreas* is authentic and culturally conditioned; i.e. that the diction is not a mere translation but rather an imaginative reworking of the pre-text not to be read exclusively as a story set in the period of the Apostolic age of early Christians but as the *Anglo-Saxon transformation* of the story (cf. Boenig, 1991, p. 104: “the text of the Old English poem *Andreas* tends toward a rewriting of its source informed by the master code of doctrinal controversy”. Similarly to this, *Hamlet*, the story of which goes back to the Anglo-Saxon times - is read primarily as expressing the poetics of the Renaissance England.

The focus of the study is based on the importance of the concept of wisdom in Old English literature (see Cavill, 1996; and Colton, 1914) which was particularly influenced by the Christian context in which the Old English texts originated and operated. *Andreas* is a poem embedded in the Christian thought which regards wisdom as a fundamental aspect of God and one of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. Considering the ultimate significance of wisdom within the Christian tradition, the main aim of the article is to trace possible ‘patterns’, ‘templates’ or ‘regularities’ in the use of the concept in the studied poem.

‘Wisdom’ and Being ‘Wise’ in Old English

Merriam-Webster’s dictionary defines wisdom in three major instances.

1) a) accumulated philosophic or scientific learning (knowledge); b) ability to discern inner qualities and relationships (insight); c) good sense (judgment); d) generally accepted belief;

- 2) a wise attitude, belief, or course of action;
 3) the teachings of the ancient wise men (acc. to Meriam Webster Dictionary).

Concerning the notion of wisdom in literary works, it is possible to distinguish direct and indirect references. By direct references I mean explicit uses of words such as 'wise' and 'wisdom'. Implicit occurrences are more subject to a reader's interpretation and depend on the context.

Regarding direct references, the following examples can be found: Someone is characterized as *wise* (details do not have to be always provided; an adjective may be a part of the name), words of wisdom and wise speech in general which also includes sharing of wisdom and counseling and wise deeds.

Old English vocabulary offers several instances for the words 'wise' and 'wisdom' (the following list has been compiled from the entries at online *Old English Translator*).

These include:

- **gléaw** (penetrating, keen, prudent, wise, and skilful): **cræftgléaw** (sage-minded, science-learned), **ferhþgléaw** (wise, prudent) and **ferhþgléaw** (prudent in mind, sagacious), **foregléaw** (foreseeing, provident, wise, prudent), **fréagléaw** (very wise), **gléawhycgende** (thoughtful, wise, prudent), **gléawhycgende** (thinking wisely), **gléawhýdig** (thoughtful, wise, prudent), **gléawhýdig** (wise of thought, heedful, prudent, sagacious), **gléawlic** (wise, prudent, skilful, diligent), **gléawmód** (wise, sagacious), **gléawmód** (of wise mind), **hreðergléaw** (wise, prudent); **gléawnes** (wisdom, prudence, skill, penetration, diligence, sign, token), **gléawscipe** (wisdom, thoughtfulness, diligence, proof, indication, test), **gléawscipe** (sagacity, wisdom);
- **snotor** (clever, prudent, intelligent, discerning, wise, sagacious), **foresnotor** (very wise), **fóresnotor** (highly sagacious), **forþsnotor** (very wise), **gearusnotor/ gearusnottor** (very skilful, very wise), **snotornes/ snotorness** (wisdom, prudence, sagacity); **snytrian** (to be clever, wise; to become clever, become wise), **snyttru** (wisdom, cleverness, prudence, sagacity, intelligence), **snyttrucræft** (wisdom, sagacity, prudent skill);
- **wisdōm** (wisdom, discretion), **wisdom** (wisdom, knowledge, learning, experience), **wis** (wise, learned, sagacious, cunning, sane, prudent, discreet, experienced, wise man), **ginnwised** (very wise), **léodwita** (wise man, elder chief), **rædwita** (counsellor, adviser one wise in counsel), **rúnwita** (adviser, counsellor, wise man, a privy councillor, one acquainted with a person's secrets, one acquainted with mysteries, a sage), **þeódwita** (one of the wise men of a nation), **þeódwita** (1. one of the wise men of a nation one whose knowledge fits him for a place on the councils of the nation senator 2. a man of great wisdom or learning a sage learned man 2a. used of a poet 2b. used of a

- historian or philosopher or man of science, **úpwita** (a person distinguished for wisdom or learning), **wisnes** (teaching wisdom), **wiswyrðan** (to be wise in speech), **wita** (sage philosopher wise man adviser councilor elder senator witness accomplice), **witega/ witega/ wítga/ wítiga** (wise man, lawyer, prophet, soothsayer, prophecy), **witig/ wittig** (having knowledge, wisdom, sense, sagacious, wise), **witigness** (sagacity, prudence), **witolnes** (wisdom);
- **fród** (wise, old); **fróðian** (to be wise);
 - **hygecræft** (power of mind, wisdom), **hygeoræft** (mental power, intellect wisdom);
 - **gerád** (reckoning, account, condition, stipulation, intention, reason, wisdom, discernment, accuracy);
 - **lársmiþ** (wise man, counsellor);
 - **leódrúne** (a witch, wise woman), **leóðorún** (wise counsel given in song).

Wisdom in *Andreas*

In the following, a survey of all occurrences of words related to the concept of wisdom in *Andreas* is listed. Translations by Kemble, Kennedy and Hostetter supplemented with a short analysis and characterisations of the subject [9] are added to provide a more complex understanding of the use (in case of other quotations, unrelated to wisdom, the translation by Kemble is provided).

The survey adheres to the order in which the words and expressions denoting wisdom are found in the poem. Altogether, there are 29 cases analysed which refer to eleven subjects.

1. Matthew

The first person described as '*modes glawne*' (143) ('*the prudent of mind*'/ '*wise of heart*'/ '*wise-minded*') is the apostle Matthew awaiting his death in the Mermedonian prison. The expression follows the description of the Mermedonians ('*wælgædige*' 135a, '*greedy of slaughter*'; '*caldheorte*' 138a, '*the coldhearted*') and can be interpreted as an attempt to highlight the contrast between a Christian and his heathen tormenters.

2. Andreas

As one might expect, most references to wisdom are related to Andreas, the protagonist of the poem. Interestingly, several references are found in Andreas' conversation with Jesus on the ship and shortly afterwards (see also part 3 which lists references to the wisdom of Jesus). As has been mentioned already, during the journey, Jesus's identity is hidden, which provides the possibility of dramatic irony since – in contrast to Andreas – the narrator and a reader both know that Andreas actually addresses Jesus.

In the example (A) Andreas responds to Jesus's question whether it is usual to travel without food and money to pay for the journey. The example (B) introduces Andreas's address to his disciples, who were afraid of the sea and Jesus suggested that Andreas should tell them a story to calm them down. Andreas tells them how Jesus had calmed the sea miraculously when they had been in distress before. In the example (C), the narrator introduces Andreas's speech to Jesus; Andreas is about to ask to teach him the crafts of the sailing. In examples (D) and (E) Jesus asks Andreas what he thinks might have been the reason for the Jews not to believe that he is God's son (D) and, in the example (E), Jesus wants to know about the secrets that Jesus revealed and taught to his disciples.

Examples (F) and (G) are connected with Andreas's arrival to the island of cannibals and his realization that Jesus with his angels guarded him and his disciples during the journey. Example (F) simply describes Andreas as 'wise'; there is no specific context or reasoning provided. In (G), Andreas's disciples tell him about the miracle they experienced during the last part of the journey; as they were taken by eagles to heaven and could see Andreas with other apostles in God's glory. In (H), Andreas is described as 'wis hæleð' before he explains his regrets about – according to him – inappropriate way of talking to Jesus.

It should be pointed out that in all cases cited below, wisdom is closely connected to the oral discourse, specifically to the wise speech. Antonia Harbus mentions in relation to cognitive metaphors: "The underlying metaphor of the mind as a storehouse of words or wisdom that can be unlocked, is at times expressed in emphatic collocations that alliteratively connect wisdom, mind and words: Andreas, 'wis on gewitte, wordhord onleac' (Andreas 315), 'wise in mind, unlocked the wordhoard'" (2012, p. 36-37).

(A)

'Ða him Andreas ðurh ondsware, wis on gewitte,/ wordhord onleac' (315-316)

'Then to him Andres/through his answer,/ wise in wit,/unlocked the treasure of words'

'Then Andrew gave answer unto Him and, wise of heart, revealed his secret thought'

'The Andrew, sage in his senses, unlocked his word-hoard/ as an answer for the sailor'

(B)

'Ogan þa gleawlice gingran sine,/ wuldorspedige weras wordum trymman' (427-428)

*'Then intelligently began he his disciples,/ men gloriously blest,/ with words confirm'
 'And he began to comfort his followers, his glorious thanes, with words of wisdom'
 'Then Andrew wisely began to strengthen his disciples with words,/ his glory-speeding men'*

(C)

*'Ongan ða reordigan rædum snottor,/ wis on gewitte, wordlocan onspeonn' (469-470)
 'Then began to speak the prudent of council,/ wise of wit/ he unlocked the locks of words'
 'Wise of rede he spake, sage of soul unlocked his secret thought'
 'Then he began to speak, keen of counsels, wise in his wits,/ to unfasten his word-chest'*

(D)

Andreas described as *'þances gleaw'* (557a) ('wise of thought' / 'wise of heart' / 'wise in thought') by Jesus.

(E)

Andreas described as *'wis hæleð'* (624a) ('wise man' / 'man of wisdom' / 'wise warrior') by Jesus.

(F)

Andreas described as *'wisa'* (843b) ('the wise man' / 'the sage' / 'wise man') when he comes to Mermedonia.

(G)

"We ðe, Andreas, eaðe gecyðað/ sið userne, þæt ðu sylfa miht/ ongitan gleawlice gastgehygdum." (859-861)

"We to thee Andrew joyfully proclaim/ our adventure, that thou mayst thyself/ prudently understand it/ in the thoughts of thy spirit."

"We will declare fully our journey unto thee, Andrew, that thou thyself mayest wisely know it in thy heart."

"We shall gladly reveal to you, Andrew, our journey,/ so that you can wisely understand it in your own soul's thoughts."

(H)

Andreas described as *'wis hæleð'* (919a) ('the wise man' / 'the wise warrior' / 'the man of wisdom') by the narrator.

There are three more situations in which Andreas is described as ‘wise’. Reference (I) is from a speech of a Mermedonian man who suggests to other Mermedonians to consider the significance of Andreas’s religious beliefs. The speech comes after the miraculous melting of Mermedonians’ weapons which could not harm Andreas. The man is, however, silenced because ‘*deoful ætywde, wann ond wliteleas, hæfde weriges hiw*’ (1168b-1169, ‘*a devil appeared, wan and colourless he had the look of one accursed*’).

In the example (J), Andreas is ‘*wis, wundrum gleaw*’ when he addresses the marble pillar and asks it – through God’s intervention – to bring forth water and deluge the city. In the example (K), he is described as ‘*gleawmod*’ when he leaves the Mermedonian prison.

(I)

Andreas described by a heathen man after his miraculous deeds:

"Ne hele se ðe hæbbe holde lare,/ on sefan snyttro! Nu is sæl cumen,/ þrea ormæte, is nu þearf mycel/ þæt we wisfæstra wordum hyran." (1164-1167)

"Let him not hide it who hath a beneficial counsel,/ wisdom in mind! Now is the occasion come,/ an immeasurable plague; now is it very needful/ that we of the wise the words should obey!"

"Let him that hath good counsel, wisdom in heart, hide it not away. For now is come an evil plight, menace measureless; now is there bitter need that we hear word of discerning men."

"Let no one conceal good /lore that holds it in the pith of his prudence. Now the time/ is come, this threat extraordinary—there is now great need/ that we listen to the words of wise-fast men!"

(J)

Andreas described as ‘*wis, wundrum gleaw*’ (1497a) (‘*wise and wondrous prudent!*’ ‘*sage and wise in wonders*’/ ‘*wise and wonderfully sagacious*’)

(K)

Andreas described as ‘*gleawmod*’ (1579) (‘*firm of mind*’/ ‘*wise of heart*’/ ‘*wise-minded*’) when he leaves prison.

3. Jesus

All references to Jesus as wise and to his wisdom are part of the conversation he held with Andreas during their journey. Quotes (A) and (B) refer to Andreas’s plea to Jesus to teach him sailing. In the second example (B), Andreas’s speech – which is not directly cited here – mentions Jesus’s young age as a contrast to his

experience and wisdom. The same characteristic is also pointed out in the example (C).

(A)

"Næfre ic sælidan selran mette, / macræftigran, þæs ðe me þynceð, / rowend rofran, rædsnotterran, / wordes wisran." (471-474b)

"Never I a sailor better met with, / more powerful, as me thinks, / a more famous rower, one more prudent of council, / one wiser of word"

"Never did I meet better shipman or one of greater craft than thou seemest unto me, never more stalwart rower, or one of better rede, or wiser word."

"It strikes me that I have never / met a better sea-farer, a robust rower more counsel-prudent, / nor more learned in his speech."

(B)

"Æghwylces canst / worda for worulde wislic andgit." (508b-509)

"in every matter thou art knowing / of words for worldly converse, / thou hast an intelligent understanding."

"wisely hast thou understanding of each man's word before the world"

"You know the wise sense of every word for this world."

(C)

"wis on gewitte ond wordcwidum. / Ic æt efenealdum æfre ne mette / on modsefan maran snyttro." (552-554)

"wise is he in wit and sayings of words. / I from one of his age never met / in mind with greater prudence!"

"wise in wit, with gifts and skill of speech. Never of equal age did I meet any man more sage of soul"

"wise in his wits and word-sayings. I have never met among his / even-elders one more wise in his heart's understanding."

The next example (D) is part of Jesus's discourse on the ignorance of Jews (described as *'frætre þeode'*, 571a, *'the proud people'*, see also the example 2) who despite the miracles Jesus made did not recognize him as God's son. Since the identity of Jesus is here still not known to Andreas, this reference to wisdom is ironical, since Jesus talks about his own wisdom.

(D)

'Æbelinge weox / word ond wisdom' (568b-569a) ('in the prince grew word and wisdom' / 'the Prince waxed great in word and wisdom' / 'The noble one increased in word and wisdom')

In example (E), Andreas addresses Jesus with a question why does he ask him about secret teachings of Jesus. Andreas seems to be losing his patience with Jesus's constant inquiries into Andreas's past spent with Christ (see example 2).

(E)

"Hwæt frinest ðu me, frea leofesta, wordum wrætlicum, ond þe wyrda gehwære þurh snyttra cræft soð oncnawest?"

"What askest thou of me, best beloved lord,/ with cunning words? and thou every hap/ through power of wisdom thyself truly knowest!"

"Why dost thou question me, most dearest prince, in wondrous words, when thou thyself dost know the truth of each event, by reason of thy wisdom's power?"

"What are you asking me, most beloved lord, in elaborate words, when you perceive the truth of each word by the skill of the wise?"

In example (F), Andreas repeatedly praises Jesus's wisdom of speech.

(F)

'Edre him Andreas agef ondsware:/ "Nu ic on þe sylfum soð oncnawe,/ wisdomes gewit, wundorcræfte/ sigesped geseald, (snyttrum bloweð,/ beorhtre blisse, breost innanweard),/ nu ic þe sylfum secgan wille/oor ond ende, swa ic þæs ædelinges/ word ond wisdom on wera gemote/ þurh his sylfes muð symle gehyrde.' (643-652)

'Now I in thee thyself truly acknowledge/ wit of wisdom in wondrous power,/ success in glory given: wisely bloweth/ in bright bliss the breast within.'

'Now do I clearly see in thee thyself wisdom's wit of wondrous power, triumphant fortune granted; thy breast doth flower within with knowledge and with radiant bliss. Now will I tell to thee end and beginning, even as I did hear the word and wisdom of that Prince, in the assembly of men, from his own lips.'

'At once Andreas gave back answer: "Now I perceive/ the sense of wisdom and truth itself in you—/ triumphant capability given you with miraculous skill/ the inward breast, bright in bliss flourishes from wise men—/ now I wish to tell you alone of the beginning and the end,/ ever as I heard that nobleman's words and wisdom/through his own mouth in the moot of men.'

(G)

Jesus is described as *'hygeþances gleaw'* (817b) ('wise of thought'/'wise of heart'/'wise of mind-thought') by Andreas. This is another example of Andreas's 'inappropriate' and 'daring' speech in addressing Jesus, when he says that Jesus's acts and teachings cannot be fully comprehended by any man, including the addressee (ironically, Jesus himself).

4. Men listening to Jesus

The reference occurs in Andreas's speech addressed to Jesus who asked him about Jesus's deeds. Andreas describes how Jesus used to preach and people rejoiced when they heard him. Those who came to listen to him are characterised as wise:

'snottre selerædend' (659) (*'prudent, wise in council'*/ *'wise hall-possessors praising God'*/ *'hall-counselors of the wise'*)

5. An angel made of stone turned alive

The magical stone episode is connected with the miracle which Jesus made to convince his listeners about his noble family history and divine origin. Jesus noticed a graven image of an angel and he turned the image alive; the sculpture (angel) and its speech are described as 'wise'. The angel then addresses the gathering and testifies to Jesus's ancestry. (The whole story is narrated by Andreas.)

'frod fyrngeweorc' (737a) (*'the venerable antique work'*/ *'that ancient olden work'*/ *'the wise and ancient work'*)

'Wrætlic þuhte/ stiðhycgendum stanes ongin./ Septe sacerdas sweotolum tacnum,/ witig werede ond worde cwæð' (740b – 743)

'After came a voice/ loud through the hard one,/ the noise resounded;/ with words it blamed them:/ wondrous seemed/ unto the proud of heart/ the undertaking of the stone./ It taught the priests/ with manifest signs;/ wittily it rebuked them,/ and said with words'

'Then through the hard flint came a loud voice; his speech thundered and sounded forth (and wondrous seemed the action of the stone to those stout-hearted men).

Wisely He constrained with tokens manifest the seven priests and spake this word'

'The stone's first act seemed curious/ to the stiff-purposed. It instructed the priests in clear signs,/ wittily it restrained them and spoke in words'

6. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

After the angel's speech, Jesus sends him to the land of the prophets for further evidence to support his claims. The angel travels to Mambre and wakes up the Hebrew sages Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They are described by the following expressions:

'frode fyrnweotan' (784a) (*'the pious ancient sages'*/ *'aged counsellors'*/ *'sage elder-prophets'*)

'witigan' (801b) (*'prophets'*/ *'men of wisdom'*/ *'wit-full witnesses'*)

7. A Mermedonian

Cannibalistic Mermedonians plan to kill Matthew and other prisoners and eat their flesh. After Matthew and his co-prisoners are miraculously rescued, there is no human flesh available. For that reason, Mermedonians decide to cast lots and find among themselves the person who should offer his life. The lot falls on a man who is described as a sage (see the description below). (When the man finds out that he is supposed to offer his life, he cowardly suggests his son be sacrificed in his place.)

'ealdgesiða, se wæs uðweota' (1104b-1105a) ('one of the old comrades, who was a councilor' / 'an aged warrior, who was the sage' / 'one of the good old boys, one noted for his wisdom')

8. A man seeking God

In this example, any man who seeks aid and guidance of God is described as 'wise'. The reference, however, follows the miracle God made thanks to which Mermedonians' weapons could not harm Andreas since they melted like wax. Andreas's belief and trust in God is set as a universal lesson.

'Gode ealles þanc,/ dryhtna dryhtne, þæs ðe he dom gifeð/ gumena gehwylcum, þara þe geoce to him/ seceð mid snytrum.' (1150b – 1153)

'all thanks be to God/ the Lord of lords, because he giveth justice/ to every man that aid from him wisely seeketh'

'Thanks be to God, the Lord of lords, for all, that He giveth grace to every one of men of those who seek succour at His hand with wisdom.'

'Thanks be to God entirely, the Lord of Lords that gives judgment/ of every man, whoever wisely seeks his aid.'

9. A narrator referring to a wiser teller than himself

The example (9) illustrates humility of a narrator who praises God's, or eventually Jesus's wisdom and knowledge.

'Þæt scell æglæwra/mann on moldan þonne ic me tælige/ findan on ferðe, þæt fram fruman cunne/ eall þa earfeðo þe he mid elne dreah,/ grimra guða.' (1483b-1487a)

'that must a more learned/ man on earth than I repute myself/ invent in spirit, who from the beginning/ all the sufferings that he courageously endured,/ of fierce wars'

'That must a wiser man on earth than I esteem myself devise in heart, that he may know even from the beginning all the miseries of grievous strife that he bravely suffered.'

*'That story a man of the world must find it in his heart,/ one more learned than I
account myself, one who might know/all those hardships and savage battles from
the beginning/ that Andrew endured with courage.'*

10. Plato

After the baptism of Mermedonians, Andreas appoints them a bishop whose name is Plato. Plato is described as *'wisfæstne wer, wordes gleawne'* (1648) (*'wise man prudent of speech'* / *'a man of wisdom, sage of speech'* / *'a learned man, wise of words'*). Andreas encourages Mermedonians to obey him and to attend to his teaching.

11. Wise Mermedonians

Tellingly enough, the last reference to wisdom in the poem is associated with the converted Mermedonians whose wisdom increases after their conversion due to the presence of Andreas among them. Andreas thus becomes a God's harbinger, and Mermedonian's hope in the fulfilment of God's plan:

'Cristenra weox/ word ond wisdom, syððan wuldres þegn,/ æþelcyninges ar, eagam sawon.' (1678 - 1679)

'Of the Christians waxed/ the word and wisdom, after they the thane of glory,/ the messenger of the noble King, with their eyes beheld.'

'The word and wisdom of the Christians prospered when they with eye beheld the thane of glory, the herald of the heavenly King.'

'The words and wisdom of these Christians had increased,/ since they had laid eyes upon Glory's thane, the messenger/ of the Worthy-King.'

Conclusion

In the Christian tradition, wisdom - besides its function as a major attribute of God - is also associated with prudence, one of the four cardinal virtues. The overview of the occurrences of the words denoting wisdom in *Andreas* has shown that most instances refer to Andreas and Jesus, and particularly to the spoken word (wise speech or counsel) or to the wise thought. This may be interpreted within the overall content of the poem as an author's attempt to highlight Andreas and Jesus as representatives of wisdom and exemplars of virtue and authority. As a result, they are naturally perceived as morally superior and serve as the models of perfection for other characters as well as for the audience of the poem. In some cases in the text, characters are described as 'wise' for their direct connection with Jesus and Andreas. This is, for example, the case of the men listening to Jesus (4), an angel made of stone who rebuked people (5) or a narrator referring to a wiser teller than himself (9). However, the situations in which the concept of wisdom mostly appears are concerned with the characters'

adherence to the wisdom of God. In this regard, the virtue of wisdom is mentioned in relation to Andreas and Jesus, to Matthew (1), the ancient sages (6), a man who seeks God (8), the converted Marmedonians (11) and it is a characteristic trait of Plato (10), too. In the case of a cowardly Mermedonian, who offers his son to be sacrificed instead of him, wisdom is related to the man's profession of a counselor and does not indicate moral superiority as it is in other uses of the notion.

To conclude, the concept of wisdom in *Andreas* is indeed based on a specific pattern. Ideologically, its use is defined by the framework of the Christian morality in which wisdom is identified with the wisdom of God. Wisdom is the perfection which is to be sought and desired. In the poem, wisdom becomes *the* virtue which determines characters' closeness to God and thus to the perfection as well. It is a key quality which construes individual characters as 'positive' or 'negative'. Significantly enough, wisdom is the virtue by which Plato and the converted Mermedonians are characterized. Their conversion is seen as a crucial moment which completely changes their status and position. It is also possible to observe the use of the concept of wisdom in association with the pragmatic function of the text. While the analysis has offered a "fragmentary" reading of the poem and mapped individual occurrences of the notion, it is obvious that the poem as a whole was meant to be a story the aim of which is to teach wisdom *per se*. Reading *Andreas* as a conversion narrative, a reader is instructed in the 'ultimate' wisdom of God and His deeds.

Though the Anglo-Saxon literature and culture may seem foreign to the modern mind; especially the continuity of the Christian tradition enables the modern readers to understand many of its characteristic features. The same conclusion can be suggested in regard to the concept of wisdom. Our present understanding of the notion is a result of the continuity of thought the history of which goes even further back than the medieval ages and the complex Anglo-Saxon culture is an essential part of this tradition.

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