

# Shadows of Christ in the Old English “Exodus”

TATYANA SOLOMONIK-PANKRASHOVA

Institute of Language, Literature and Translation Studies,  
Vilnius University, Kaunas Faculty  
*rebecca\_solo@yahoo.com*

This paper aims at unveiling the allegory of Christ the Redeemer in the Old English *Exodus*, a poem composed by an unknown poet and sometimes attributed to Cædmon. In his imitation of the Scriptures, the poet is imposing his *artes poetriae* upon the narrative structure of the Book of *Exodus*, so that his *artes poetriae* is entwined with exegesis. The symbolic exodus of the Israelites from Egypt is imbued with the Old Testament narrative – the Offering of Isaac, alludes to the forthcoming New Testament events, and uncovers the Trinitarian motif. It is the poetic images that conceal the hidden mysteries of the Scriptures as if with a veil, so that the *sensus spiritualis* has to be carefully unravelled, for this kind of knowledge is not for everyone. The enigmatic mode of the poem is grasped through *epektasis*, leading the heart – *per Christum* – into the contemplation of the Tabor Light and the Ineffable Beauty.

**Keywords:** *allegoresis*, poetic image, *epektasis*, the Old Testament narrative, the Old English „Exodus“.

## Introduction

The Material World imbued with the *logoi* is yet the palest copy of the World of Ideas. It is the Platonic distinction between the copy and the original, the sensible symbol and the Divine enigmas clothed in its raiment, the *sensus literalis* and the *sensus spiritualis* that is a prerequisite for the interpretation and the imitation of the Holy Scriptures. The present paper aims at revealing the allegory of personification in the Old English *Exodus*. The object of the research is the representation of Christ through uplifting poetic imagery. The novelty of the research lies in enhancing

theological reasoning of Old English Biblical verse. Most previous research in the field focused on the poetic vocabulary, cultural transmission and literary criticism in the context of Old English Biblical poetry. Thus, *Rewriting the Old Testament in Anglo-Saxon Verse* by Samantha Zacher (2014) offers literary, theoretical, and cultural engagement with the Old English poetic texts, *Old English Biblical Verse* by Paul Remley (1996) specifies distinctive readings of Old English texts associated with liturgical lections and catechetical paraphrases, *The Text of the Old Testament in Anglo-Saxon England* by Richard Marsden (1995) deals with the transmission of

the Vulgate Old Testament in Anglo-Saxon England.

Meanwhile, for Origen of Alexandria (ca. 185–254) three senses of the Scriptures manifest themselves as follows: the first – superficial or literal – sense allows for “sensual” perception, the second sense – for the perception of the soul, and the third – the most remote one – for the perception of the spirit (cf. *On First Principles* IV, 11–12). The third sense – the *sensus spiritualis* – is the most enigmatic and, hence, the fundamental (one) in the Scriptures<sup>1</sup>. For the pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (ca. 650–725), the uplifting towards the Divine or *theurgy*<sup>2</sup> is initiated by the Beauty of the object of contemplation, cf.:

Now there are two reasons for creating types for the typeless, for giving shape for what is actually without shape. First, we lack the ability to be directly raised

up to conceptual contemplations. We need our own upliftings that come naturally to us and which can raise before us the permitted forms of the marvellous and unformed sights. Second, it is most fitting to the mysterious passages of Scripture that the sacred and hidden truth about the celestial intelligences be concealed through the inexpressible and the sacred and be inaccessible to the *hoi polloi*. Not everyone is sacred, and, as Scripture says, knowledge is not for everyone<sup>3</sup>.

The Middle Ages discriminate between allegorical composition, allegorical commentary on the Scriptures, and allegorical interpretation of classical heritage<sup>4</sup>. „Scriptural *allegoresis* insists upon an allegorical meaning grounded in the symbolism of events, both historical and spiritual, and not only *in verbis*, that is, in the grammatical-rhetorical function of human discourse” so that two types of allegory, that of the poets (*integumentum*) and that of the theologians (*allegoria*) are made distinct<sup>5</sup>. “Allegorical interpretation (*allegoresis*) proposes itself as the unveiling of the Scriptural text; yet, paradoxically,

1 Boyarin, D. Origen as Theorist of Allegory: Alexandrian School. *The Cambridge Companion to Allegory*, ed. by R. Copeland and P. T. Struck. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 39.

2 „*Theurgy*, like all *praxis*, was the utilization of sensible objects, but concerned itself not with their matter but with the inherent power which they were supposed to derive from the *sympatheia* which binds the whole universe together, the sensibles to the intelligibles and the intelligibles to the gods. Christianity has been unaffected by this side of Neoplatonism, for Christians had already adapted *praxis* in their own way to the practice of the virtues.” Theology comprises both *theoria* and *praxis*, cf. Sheldon–Williams, I. P. The Greek Christian Platonist Tradition from the Cappadocians to Maximus and Eriugena, Part IV. *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, ed. A. H. Armstrong. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 458.

3 Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. The Celestial Hierarchy. *The Complete Works*, trans. by C. Luibheid. New York: Paulist Press, 1987, pp. 143–93, CH II, 2.

4 Michel Zink cited in Copeland, R., Melville, S. Allegory and Allegoresis, Rhetoric and Hermeneutics. *Exemplaria* 3, 1, 1991, pp. 159–187, p. 163.

5 cf. the commentary on Martianus Capella by Bernardus Silvestris, in Edouard Jeuneau, “Note sur l’École de Chartres,” *Studi medievali* 5 (1964), p. 856, *Ibid*.

such an interpretation, aiming to “save” or recuperate/re-consider the text is itself an act of placing a veil over the *visibilia* of the text, a covering of the text so that it can be hermeneutically “recovered”<sup>6</sup>

A part of hermeneutical endeavour to relate the Old Testament with the New Testament is typology. Typology is embedded in the inner-biblical structure, as it allows for reading the Old Testament as a Christian. With reference to Jean Daniélou, typology is “spiritual” or “figurative” exegesis<sup>7</sup>.

The Old English scriptural verse exhibits itself as *imitation* of Scripture, a second creation, wherein the Old Testament narrative is entwined with the New Testament – the *Trinitarian* – motif that calls for versatility and hermeneutic skills to scrutinise. “The story told in *Exodus*, the second poem of the *Junius* manuscript<sup>8</sup> is at the heart of Jewish history, for it tells of the very survival of the race. The biblical version of the events covered in the poem is given very concisely in *Exodus* 13, 20–14, 31<sup>9</sup>.” The ramification of the Old English *Exodus* consists in the intricate poetic

design of the ekphrasis of *Exodus*, with special emphasis on the great marvels of God performed through the name of Christ personified as Moses, accompanied by the grace of the Holy Spirit. It is *theurgy* that unravels in the sensible symbols/dissimilar similitudes the ineffable vision of the Mysteries of the Word.

### “Gehyre se ðe wille”

The beginning of the Old English *Exodus* (lines 1–7) is enframed by the call for attention. The first line invokes a poetic formula common in the context of Germanic and Anglo-Saxon poetry: *Mark!* (*Hwæt!*) and the subsequent merism *from far and near* (1) (*feor and neah*), for the whole earth has heard men tell the judgments of Moses to the generations. The poet continues with a veneration of *the wide fame of Moses wondrous laws* (3) (*Moyses domas wræclico wordriht*), an allusion to the Pentateuch (Torah) and the wondrous Laws of God the Creator, Who shelters from danger those who follow His Laws and leads them to the Promised Land. The short prologue ends with yet another common poetic formula – *Hear now who will!* (7) (*Gehyre se ðe wille!*<sup>10</sup>); cf.: *Mark!*

*The whole earth* has heard men tell  
the judgments of Moses to the generations

6 Ibid., p. 171.

7 Jean Daniélou, cited in Ninow, F. *Indicators of Typology within the Old Testament: The ‚Exodus‘ motif*. Peter Lang, 2001, p. 82.

8 „The *Junius* manuscript (Oxford, Bodleian Library, *Junius 11*), named after the Dutch scholar who studied it and Publisher its contents in the seventeenth century, contains three Old English poems on Old Testament themes, *Genesis*, *Exodus*, and *Daniel*, along with *Christ and Satan*, which develops some of these themes from the perspective of the New Testament.” cf. Marsden, R. *The Cambridge Old English Reader*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 130.

9 Ibid.

10 „*Hwæt!*

We feor and neah	gefrigen habað
ofer middangeard	Moyses domas,
wræclico wordriht,	wera cneorissum, –
in uprodor	eadigra gehwam
5 æfter bealuside	bote lifes,
lifigendra gehwam	langsumne ræd, –
hæledum secgan.	<i>Gehyre se ðe wille!</i> ”

and the wide fame of his wondrous  
 laws –  
 after this bitter journey the blessing of  
 life  
 5 beyond the skies for each blissful soul,  
 for each of the living a lasting design –  
 this we have heard. *Hear now who  
 will!*<sup>11</sup>

(lines 1–7)

The transformation from rhetorical poetics to hermeneutics rests in the portrayal of Moses as an emblematic hero, Christ *per se*. The lines 8–10 of the poem are accurately reflected in the line 31 by a pattern of chiasmic repetition (8–10; 31). There is in additional echoic repetitive variation (8–25; 10–31), cf.: “The God of armies *exalted* the man with His own might” (Weroda drihten, soðfæst cyning, mid his sylfes miht *gewyrðode*); likewise, „The Wise Lord had strengthened the host’s commander with true might, and *made exalted* Pharaoh’s enemy” ([Witig drihten] hæfde he þa geswiðed soðum cræftum and *gewurðodne* Faraones feond). Meanwhile, the lines below allude to God’s appearance to Moses in the burning bush, cf.:

This was the first time  
 that the God of hosts *held speech with  
 Moses*

*He told him* many true wonders there,  
 25 how the wise Lord had fashioned  
 this world,  
 the earth’s orb and the sky above,  
 established a kingdom; and *He uttered  
 His name*,  
 unknown then still by the sons of men,

11 Love, D. The Old English Exodus. A Verse Translation. *Neophilologus* 86. Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002, p. 621–39.

though to the fathers’ wise race much  
 was known<sup>12</sup>.

(lines 22–29)

The burning bush is a symbol of the Virgin Mary, a type of the Incarnation; its uncreated brilliance alludes to the manifestation of God – Light from Light – in the flesh; cf.:

From this we learn also the mystery of the Virgin: The light of divinity which through birth shone from her into human life did not consume the burning bush, even as the flower of her virginity was not withered by giving birth. That light teaches us what we must do to stand within the rays of the true light: sandaled feet cannot ascend that height where the light of truth is seen, but the dead and earthly covering of skins, which was placed around our nature at the beginning when we were found naked because of disobedience to the divine will, must be removed from the feet of the soul<sup>13</sup>.

The typological reading of the *mythos* of the Old English *Exodus* allows for the hermeneutical uncovering of the *sensus spiritualis* in the scene of the Revelation

12 “ða wæs forma sið  
 þæt hine weroda god wordum nægde,  
 þær he him gesægde soðwundra fela,  
 25 hu þas woruld worhte witig drihten,  
 eorðan ymbhwyrft and uprodor,  
 gesette sigerice, and his sylfes naman,  
 ðone ylðo bearn ær ne cuðon,  
 frod fædera cyn, þeah hie fela wiston.”  
 (lines 22–29)

13 St. Gregory of Nyssa. De Vita Moyses. *Cistercian Studies* 31. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Studies, Paulist Press, 1978, II, 21–22.

of God to Moses (cf. Exodus 3, 15) as the Transfiguration of Christ (cf. Matthew 17, 5), the luminosity of the burning bush being the glimpse of God's glory shining out of Jesus before his Crucifixion, Resurrection, and the symbolic Exodus of humanity from sin.

### The Image of the Tabernacle not Made with Hands

On their Exodus from Egypt the Israelites (or an individual soul) are protected from "the surging fire of heaven" – the sun – by a *soaring cloud* (75) (*wederwolcen widum*) and a *sail* (81) (*segle*) extended over the path of the sun, cf.:

There holy God  
shielded His folk from the frightful  
heat:  
arched a roof-beam over the burning  
heaven,  
spread a sacred canvas against the  
scorching air –  
75 a soaring *cloud* had split heaven  
and earth asunder with its awesome  
mass,  
directing the troops as it drank the  
surging  
fire of heaven.  
80 God had stretched  
in his wisdom a *sail over the sun's course* –  
though no man could have made out  
the mast-ropes  
or the sail-yard cross that shipped it  
there,  
no man on earth for all his craft,  
85 or how *the mighty pavilion* was  
pitched  
when He gave this glory to grace the

Lord's  
faithful followers<sup>14</sup>.

(lines 71–88)

The sun represents temptation, various passions of soul (πάθος), cf. the *Song of Songs* (1, 6):

"... but shame was brought upon me  
because the sun changed my appearance  
from radiance to darkness:  
'for the *sun* has looked upon me.'"

A sail extended over the path of the sun is a symbol of Christ, who will bestow redemption, cf.:

The second song of ascents contains a blessing for the person whose help is from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth: he will not be burned by the sun during the day. And the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 4, 5), predicting the establishment of the Church, describes it as a certain procession. He brightens the story by saying that daughters are borne upon shoulders, children are carried in covered cha-

14 „þær halig god  
wið færbyrne                    folc gescylde,  
bælce oferbrædde            byrnendne heofon,  
halgan nette                    hatwendne lyft.  
75 Hæfde *wederwolcen*        widum fædmum  
eorðan and uprodor          efne gedæled,  
lædde leodwerod,            ligfyr adranc,  
hate heofontorht.            Hæleð wafedon,  
drihta gedrymost.            Dægsceades hleo  
80 wand ofer wolcnum;        hæfde witig god  
sunnan siðfæt                segle ofertolden,  
swa þa mæstrapas            men ne cuðon,  
ne ða seglrode                geseon meah-ton,  
eorðbuende                    ealle cræfte,  
85 hu afæstnod wæs          *feldhusa mæst*,  
siððan he mid wuldre        geweorðode  
þeodenholde.                þa wæs þridða wic  
folce to frofre."

(lines 71–88)

riots and burning heat is warded off by parasols. Through these symbols Isaiah describes a life lived in virtue. He demonstrates by a youthful age the newly born and guileless; by umbrellas, however, Isaiah scribes relief from the heat which is appropriate to souls due to their self-control and purity. We learn by these examples that the soul betrothed to God must be borne upon shoulders – not trodden upon by the flesh, it is seated upon the body’s mass<sup>15</sup>.

In the poem, the Trinitarian motif – the Father contemplated in the Son AND in the Holy Spirit<sup>16</sup> uncovers the grace of Jesus Christ and the communion of the Holy Spirit – the *sail* and the *cloud* – that exhibit themselves as a protection from the passions of the flesh.

A *mighty pavilion* (85) (*feldhusa mæst*) is the symbol of the Tabernacle not made with hands, that is Christ, who is not only “the sail over the sun’s course”, but also the power and wisdom of God. The mythos of the Old English *Exodus* simultaneously evokes three layers of meaning/narrative – the actual story of *Exodus* and the signs of the divine grace – the cloud and the sail; Moses’ ascent to the Mount Sinai, to the Holy of Holies of the Tabernacle, and Christ as the Tabernacle not made with hands, the temple of Wisdom, established in the soul pure from any sin, cf.:

Christ who is the power and the wisdom of God, who in his own nature

15 *The Commentary on the Song of Songs by Gregory of Nyssa*, ed. W. Jaeger and H. Langerbeck, *Grigorii Nysseni in Canticum Canticorum*. Leiden, 1960, vol. 6, p. 52.

16 Maspero, G. *Trinity and Man. Gregory of Nyssa’s ‘Ad Ablabium’*. Brill: Leiden, Boston, 2007, p. 164.

was not made with hands, yet capable of being made when it became necessary for this tabernacle to be erected among us. Thus, the same tabernacle is in a way both unfashioned and fashioned, uncreated in preexistence but created in having received this material composition [viz., the Incarnation, my parenthesis]<sup>17</sup>.

Meanwhile, Isaac is yet another shadow of Christ in the Old English *Exodus*. The insertion into the Old English *Exodus* of the scene of the sacrifice of Isaac’s might have amplified the motif of the triumph of faith, for Isaac is sacrificed in the triumph of God, cf. The figure of repetition – *anaphora* – *firm faith* (423) (*fæste treowe*), and “*more faith*”/stronger pledge (426) (*maran treowe*) sustains this claim, cf.:

‘Do not slay, Abraham, your own child,  
420 your own son with your weapon.  
The truth is witnessed,  
now that the King of all creatures has  
tried you:  
you have held firm your faith in the Lord  
and kept the covenant – that will  
come to blessings  
for you and your own for all your days,  
425 unfailing till the end of life.  
Could the son of man need a stronger  
pledge<sup>18</sup>?’

(lines 419–26)

17 St. Gregory of Nyssa. *De Vita Moyses*. II, 174.

18 “Ne sleh þu, Abraham, þin agen bearn,  
420 sunu mid sweorde! Soð is gecyðed,  
nu þin cunnode cyning alwihta,  
þæt þu wið waldend wære heolde,  
*fæste treowe*, seo þe freoðo sceal  
in lifdagum lengest weorðan,  
425 awa to aldre unswiciendo.  
Hu þearf mannes sunu *maran treowe*?”

The typology of the sacrifice of Isaac prefigures the Passions of Christ, who entered into time through *φιλανθρωπία*. The sacrifice of Isaac by his father and his subsequent reacquiring mirrors the offering of Christ by the Father, the Passions of Christ, and the Resurrection of Christ. In the words of Tertullian, the types of the Passion – *sacramentum* – were to be foreshadowed in Prophecy, concealed – *obumbrandum*, and revealed by the grace of God<sup>19</sup>.

It is Christ who leads the Israelites/the soul from the yoke of Pharaoh's bondage, sin and death, through the symbolic baptismal font – the Red Sea – to “the crown of graces”. Pharaoh is the opponent of God, the Devil personified, whereas “the Pharaoh's army– those horses, chariots and their drivers, archers, slingers, heavily armed soldiers, and the rest of the crowd in the enemies' line of battle—are the various passions of the soul by which man is enslaved<sup>20</sup>”. The “poetic grammar” of the Old English *Exodus* – the kenning *sword-wolves* (182) (*heorowulfas*), the epithet *greedy for slaughter* (163) (*hilde grædige*), and the poetic formulae – *the raven, the eagle, and the wolf* (*beasts of battle*) – is overlaid upon the Old Testament narrative, cf.:

The horn-billed raven hailed the skies  
over doomed men, dark picker of the  
slain;  
battle-fowl screamed greedy for  
slaughter,  
the dewy-feathered ones; wolves  
chanted

19 Daniélou, J. S. J. *From Shadows to Reality*. London: Burns and Oates, 1960, p. 123–24.

20 St. Gregory of Nyssa. *De Vita Moyses* II, 122.

165 a hideous evensong eager for flesh,  
reckless beasts, riding the track  
of the foe-men's army for a feast of  
death<sup>21</sup>.

(lines 161–67)

A picturesque description of the destruction of the Egyptian army, *an awful reward* (507) (*deop lean*) assigned to the unrighteous condemns pride in the persona of Pharaoh, for Pharaoh has found that God was greater than he was. The poet declares that “the just Ruler made clear his mind *through Moses' hand*” (479–80) (oðþæt soð metod *þurh Moyses hand* modge rymde). The Moses hand is a dissimilar symbol of the Hand of the Most High, the material form and shape given to the divine nature, which is shapeless in itself, inasmuch as by veiling the “Holy of Holies” the dissimilar symbols exalt the divine things<sup>22</sup>.

### Knowledge is not for Everyone

In his homiletic deviation from the mythos of the Old Testament *Exodus*, the poet claims that the Treasury of Scripture knowledge – *a copious good* (525) (*ginfaesten god*) is not for everyone; it can be unlocked through Christ, who is *life's interpreter* (523) (*lifes wealhstod*) and the Wisdom of God, cf.:

21 Hreoþon herefugolas, *hilde grædige*,  
deawigfeðere ofer drihtneum,  
wonn wælceasega. Wulfas sungon  
165 atol æfenleoð ætes on wenan,  
carleasan deor, cwyldrof beodan  
on laðra last leodmægnes fyl.

(lines 161–67)

22 Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. *The Celestial Hierarchy. The Complete Works*, trans. by C. Luibheid. New York: Paulist Press, 1987, pp. 143–93, CH II, 5.

If *life's beholder* [interpreter, my parenthesis], bright in the bosom, bone-house's warden, wishes to unlock  
525 a *copious good* with the keys of the spirit:

then the secret is won, *wisdom springs forth*.

For it has *wise words* in its keeping, and eagerly longs to bring light to our minds

so we need not fail of God's fellowship, the Maker's mercy<sup>23</sup>.

(lines 523–30)

The souls "trodden upon by the flesh" are not introduced into the hidden mysteries of the Word – those who think that they can know Him who "has made the shadows his hiding place"<sup>24</sup>. Christ is the One who interprets the divine silence. *Theurgy*/the soul's uplifting towards the divine begins with the stage of illumination, being followed by the dark sanctuary, the Holy of Holies of the Tabernacle – the veneration of the Word in the hidden inner-chamber of one's heart/soul (*mod*), which only can be unlocked with the *keys of the spirit* (525) (*gastes cægon*), through the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Likewise, the Great Moses "slips into the inner sanctuary of divine knowledge

and passes on to the tabernacle not made with hands. For truly this is the limit that someone reaches who is elevated through such ascents<sup>25</sup>. The soul that has become the vehicle of the Word emanates Wisdom, cf. *Wisdom springs forth* (526) (*ræd forð gæð*).

The ascent to the Holly of Holies of the Tabernacle is accompanied by the *fair song* (567) (*fægerne sweg*) of the heavenly trumpet, yet only the purified ear becomes keen on music that declares the Glory of God, cf.:

*trumpets rang out rejoicing beautifully, banners trailed. The tribes were on land; the pillar of glory had guided the host, the holy people, in God's protection*<sup>26</sup>.

(lines 566– 69)

The *pillar of glory* (568) (*wuldres beam*) marks the presence of the Holy Spirit. The ascent-descent motif is woven into the fabric of the Old English *Exodus*. The descent of Christ through the Incarnation, his Resurrection and Ascension to the right hand of the Father (cf. John 3, 13) is followed by the descent of the Spirit of Comfort from the Father (cf. John 14, 26), so that "through the assumption of the flesh the son of man might be able to ascend to that place, whence the Son of God had descended<sup>27</sup>", viz. the ascension is akin to imitation, *imitatio Christi*, his Passions and the Resurrection.

The hierarchical ordering sustains different allegorical levels, viz. the poet

23 gif onlucan wile beorht in breostum, 525 *ginfæsten god* Run bið gerecenod, hafað wislicu wile meagollice þæt we gesne ne syn metodes miltsa.

*lifes wealhstod, banhuses weard, gastes cægon. ræd forð gæð, word on fæðme, modum tæcan godes þeodscipes*

(lines 523– 30)

24 Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. The Mystical Theology. *The Complete Works*, trans. by C. Luibheid. New York: Paulist Press, 1987, pp. 133– 43, MT I, 2–3.

25 St. Gregory of Nyssa. *De Vita Moyses*. II, 167.

26 *sungon sigebyman,* (segnas stodon), on *fægerne sweg* ["fair song"]; folc wæs on lande, hæfde *wuldres beam* werud gelæded, halige heapas, on hild godes.

(lines 566– 69)

27 [https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/eq/2007-1\\_023.pdf](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/eq/2007-1_023.pdf)



who speaks of the mysterious and hidden wisdom of God (cf. Corinthians 2, 7), the chaste soul introduced into the hidden mysteries of the Scriptures, and the kingdom of heaven unlocked by the key of faith.

## Conclusions

Upon His descent into the world of senses the Word of God clothed itself in myriad symbols as a concession to the imperfection of human apprehension of the inaccessible sight of the divine. Likewise, the poet of the Old English *Exodus* conceals his *allegoria* under the veil of poetic images – sensible symbols – that undergo certain

hermeneutic transfer, for the poet speaks of Christ (and the Holy Trinity) under the Old Testament Law the Germanic heroic ethos being imbued with Christian lore. When the veil – the *sensus literalis* – is taken away, poetic images sparkle with “a copious good” and reveal the Image outside the limits of human language and human understanding, for the *sensus spiritualis*, as the poet states, is not for everyone. The reader is invited to transcend oneself and contemplate the hidden image *per Christum*, inasmuch as the poet himself is imitating Christ, his wise words – the Wisdom of God, his allegorical narrative – the Scriptures.

## References

- Boyarin, D. Origen as Theorist of Allegory: Alexandrian School. *The Cambridge Companion to Allegory*, ed. by R. Copeland and P. T. Struck. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Copeland, R., Melville, S. Allegory and Allegoresis, Rhetoric and Hermeneutics. *Exemplaria* 3, 1, 1991, pp. 159–187.
- Daniélou, J. S. J. *From Shadows to Reality*. London: Burns and Oates, 1960.
- Love, D. The Old English *Exodus*. A Verse Translation. *Neophilologus* 86. *Kluwer Academic Publishers*, 2002, p. 621–39.
- Marsden, R. *The Cambridge Old English Reader*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Maspero, G. *Trinity and Man*. *Gregory of Nyssa's 'Ad Ablabium'*. Brill: Leiden, Boston, 2007.
- Ninow, F. *Indicators of Typology within the Old Testament: The 'Exodus' motif*. Peter Lang, 2001, p. 82.
- Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. The Celestial Hierarchy. *The Complete Works*, trans. by C. Luibheid. New York: Paulist Press, 1987, pp. 143–93.
- Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. The Mystical Theology. *The Complete Works*, trans. by C. Luibheid. New York: Paulist Press, 1987, pp. 133–43.
- Sheldon-Williams, I. P. The Greek Christian Platonist Tradition from the Cappadocians to Maximus and Eriugena, Part IV. *The Cambridge History of*
- Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, ed. A. H. Armstrong. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- St. Gregory of Nyssa. De Vita Moyses. *Cistercian Studies* 31. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Studies, Paulist Press, 1978.
- The Commentary on the Song of Songs by Gregory of Nyssa*, ed. W. Jaeger and H. Langerbeck, *Grigorii Nysseni in Canticum Canticorum*, Leiden, 1960, vol. 6.