Hapax Legomena in the Old English *Exodus*:

An Etymological Study

Heather Freeman

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Advisors:

Professor Roberta Frank

Professor Dianne Jonas

<u>Abstract</u>

This essay serves as an attempt to examine various hapax legomena in the Old English poem *Exodus* from an etymological perspective in order to more conclusively determine its date of composition. *Exodus* is somewhat unique among Old English epic poems in its proportion of hapax legeomena, having over 150 examples in under 600 surviving lines. Its date of composition is of particular scholarly interest due to its disputed relationship with the more famous epic *Beowulf* (which includes an identical long-line). This essay explores those hapax legomena in the work whose etymologies are the most heated sources of debate in Anglo-Saxon scholarship: namely, seven of the eight monomorphemic, or at least non-compound, hapaxes as well as one particularly controversial compound. Findings are rather inconclusive, due to the relative dearth of linguistic data on the subject, but a lack of strong data supporting any evidence of borrowings from Old Norse does not rule out the possibility of an early date of composition. This, coupled with a few other findings, means that one might tentatively speculate that such a possibility is not only plausible, but may in fact probable.

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1.0 Introduction

For many scholars, the Old English poem *Exodus* stands out as one of the most innovative and interesting examples of Anglo-Saxon epic poetry. Peter Lucas, in his preface to his edition of the poem, exclaims that, "Stylistically it is perhaps *the* most outstanding Old English poem, showing a use of metaphor and a fusion of disparate concepts (such as abstract and concrete, literal and allegorical) unparalleled in Old English poetry" (1977, p. ix). Linguistically, it is one of the richest and most creative epic poems, with over 150 hapax legomena in its surviving 590 lines (it was presumably some 700-800 lines long when transcribed, but the a few leaves have been lost from the manuscript). Historically, there has been a heated scholarly debate over the dating of the Old English *Exodus*, because while the Junius manuscript in which it appears can rather conclusively be dated to around 1000 C.E., the composition of the poem may have been as early as the mid-eighth century (Lucas, 1977, p.1, 71). Its date of composition is particularly interesting because of a few parallels it shares with the most famous Old English epic poem, *Beowulf* (including an identical long-line, numerous thematic resonances, and a handful of linguistic echoes), which has led to a critical dispute about which work came first. This essay proposes to examine a subsection of the numerous hapax legomena in *Exodus* from an etymological, historical linguistic perspective in order to determine if any conclusive (or probable) conclusions can be formed about the dating of the poem based on these unique linguistic forms. The subsection discussed will consist primarily of those hapax legomena that are either monomorphemic or are at least

non-compound terms[1] (since the great majority of the hapax in Exodus are

compositionally transparent compounds, many of which may safely be assumed to be

poetic coinages), though the compound *hildecalla* will also be examined due to its

widespread identification in the literature as a key crux in the poem.[2] The eight terms

explored in the essay have been selected because of the myriad of scholarly controversies

surrounding their etymologies (whereas the majority of the hapax legomena not discussed

are compositionally transparent compounds and thus possess straightforward,

unambiguous etymologies that would not be particularly useful in dating the poem). The

central thrust of the essay will be to determine whether any of the hapax legomena can be

conclusively demonstrated to be borrowings from Old Norse, since such a demonstration

would necessitate assigning the date of the composition of *Exodus* to a later period in

Anglo-Saxon history (and would thus almost unequivocally mean that *Beowulf* was the

earlier poem).[3] Thus, etymological study of the numerous hapax legomena in *Exodus*

may serve as an important step in any attempt to more conclusively date the poem and,

consequently, to determine the true nature of its relationship with *Beowulf*.

2.0 Background

2.1 General Overview of *Exodus*

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[1] Of which there are, by my count, eight. This essay will only discuss seven in any detail, because the eighth non-compound hapax legomenon *læst*, meaning "performance," is discussed almost nowhere in the literature or in glossaries.

[2] For a complete list of the hapax legomena in Exodus, see Appendix I.

[3] This conclusion stems from the fact that borrowings from Old Norse into Old English could only have begun occurring at the earliest after the first Viking invasions in 793 C.E., though such forms would most likely not have been adopted until a more lasting Scandinavian presence was established in England with the Danish invasions of the late ninth century (Mitchell & Robinson, 2001, p. 120-21).

The Old English *Exodus* is a 590-line poem transcribed for the most part in the late West Saxon dialect of Old English, though it does contain traces of the Anglian dialect in certain constructions (Lucas, 1977, p.35). Almost all epic poetry in Old English is recorded in a predominantly late West Saxon dialect (since the manuscripts in which they appear are all from roughly the same late period). The fact that *Exodus* exhibits traces of the Anglian dialect (which is a term covering both Mercian and Northumbrian sub-dialects) strengthens already sound evidence that the manuscript in which it appears may have been written from a West Mercian exemplar (p. 39), but any substantive conclusions about the poem's original dialect are impossible to reach.[4] In other words, looking at the poem from a dialectical perspective does little to illuminate its origins.

Approaching the poem on a thematic level proves similarly frustrating, though the biblical content of *Exodus* does strongly support the notion that the poet either was living in a monastery or had access to a monastery's library. As Lucas suggests, "the poem reflects a knowledge of biblical exegesis" (p. 55), and such familiarity with patristic texts in Anglo-Saxon England would presumably have been available only to members of a monastic order (p. 72). The poem itself primarily recounts the events described in chapters 13 and 14 of the biblical book *Exodus*, in which the enslaved Israelites flee Egypt, are led by God through the desert, and are pursued by the Egyptians. The Old English epic provides a distinctly Anglo-Saxon reading of these events, however, as the

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[4] Lucas mentions "the possibility that there was a general OE poetic *koiné* of a mixed dialect character and that poems were written or transmitted in the 'literary dialect'" (1977, p. 38-39). This would certainly account for some of the textual aberrations (see 3.8 in this essay for a further discussion of this possibility), but, as Lucas acknowledges, it is also possible that the poem was composed in a Northumbrian dialect and then partially transferred into late West-Saxon (p. 39).

poet recasts the climactic, miraculous flight of the Israelites across the divinely parted

Red Sea as an intense, bloody battle between the "seafaring" Israelites and the "land-

loving" Egyptians. Divine intervention is temporarily transformed into a more pagan

sense of warrior culture, as shields are raised and speeches made inciting the "troops" to

do battle against their enemy. All of these figures are traditional Anglo-Saxon tropes for

battle, but it is interesting, if arguably a bit jarring, to find them inserted into a biblical

epic. However, the poet does return to the biblical roots of the tale by inserting

numerous digressions about the biblical patriarchs (including a somewhat lengthy

account of the story of Abraham and Isaac and a brief mention of Solomon building the

temple) and allusions to Christ. This dichotomy between newly imported Christian

doctrines and a much older Anglo-Saxon warrior ethic extends to the thematic level as

well. While Lucas states that, "the central theme is Salvation by Faith and Obedience"

(p. 61), one could equally argue that the central theme of the poem is "salvation" through

might and conquest, particularly as the poem ends with the striking interpolation of the

plundering of the Egyptian corpses along the riverbank. Ultimately, the tension between

these two thematic strands could be seen as typical of the early Christian Anglo-Saxon

mindset.

2.2 The Junius Manuscript

Exodus appears in the Junius manuscript, which is one of four surviving major

manuscripts containing Old English poetry (along with the Exeter Book, the Vercelli MS,

and the Beowulf MS), and which also contains the epic poems *Genesis* (both A and B),

Daniel, and *Christ and Satan*. Most scholars confidently date the Junius manuscript to

about 1000 C. E., though some of the illustrations found therein may have been added much later (Lucas, 1977). The manuscript is unique in that it is almost entirely written in one scribal hand (except for *Christ and Satan*, which was written by two other scholars and was probably inserted a few decades after the remainder of the manuscript was compiled), and thus one might be able to assume a certain level of consistency in the type of errors (or lack thereof) found in *Genesis*, *Exodus*, and *Daniel*. It is generally assumed that the scribe was copying from a pre-assembled exemplar of these three works, and the stylistic differences among them also guarantee that they were originally composed by different authors. The manuscript is also unique in its use of punctuation: unlike most of the other Old English manuscripts, the Junius scribe assiduously marked the beginnings and endings of almost all half-lines. This is noteworthy because almost all Old English epic poems were written out without any line breaks, filling all available space on the expensive vellum on which they were transcribed, and most (such as *Beowulf*) only have sporadic punctuation. Also, according to Lucas, "evidently some considerable care was taken to place the point correctly" (1977, p. 22). He calculates that the scribe only makes 25 errors (either placed incorrectly or omitted), while correctly marking the divide between half-lines 1158 times (p. 22). Thus, *Exodus* is an ideal poem to look at in terms of any metrical analysis, since one does not have to rely solely on editorial assumptions about rhythm and line divisions.

The manuscript is also noteworthy because of its vast amounts of blank space, allotted presumably for a plan of illustrations that were begun (at least at the beginning of *Genesis*) but never completed. Each section break in Exodus begins at the beginning of a new leaf, which would suggest that the scribe had a fair amount of leeway in terms of

arranging the text when allotting room for drawings. This observation would suggest that Exodus is, in some ways, an ideal text in which to analyze hapax legomena, since one can analyze if and when the otherwise scrupulous scribe divides various compound hapax terms across a line break (which occurs occasionally) or across a manuscript line (which occurs more often). Thus, one might be able to determine, in a qualified sense, whether such hapax legomena were truly perceived as distinct lexical compounds or whether they were still parsed as two completely separate constituents. Thus, in many ways, the Junius manuscript is unique among the corpus of Old English epic poems, and its singular qualities contribute to Exodus's suitability to be the subject of more rigorous linguistic study (particularly since such study has been focused most often on works, such as *Beowulf*, which are not, in terms of original documentation, particularly well-suited to such inquiries).

2.3 A Crux: Which came first, *Beowulf* or *Exodus*?

One of the primary reasons that the dating of *Exodus* is so important in Anglo-Saxon studies is because of the similarities it shares with the more famous epic poem *Beowulf*, which "is usually assigned to the eighth century" (Lucas, 1977, p. 69). Brodeur summarizes these findings as follows: "in proportion to its length, *Exodus* contains a much greater number of poetic compounds, and of verses, in common with *Beowulf* than does any other poem" (Brodeur, cited in Lucas, 1977, p. 71). The most prominent of these shared features is line 58 of *Exodus, enge anpadas, uncuð gelad* ("a narrow lonely path, an unknown course"), which describes the path on which Moses is leading the Israelites, occurs as line 1410 of *Beowulf*, in which it is used to describe the path to the

mere in which Grendel and his mother lived. Critics have argued about whether this line was borrowed from *Beowulf* by the *Exodus* poet or vice-versa, though none have been able to provide conclusive evidence one way or the other. Irving even suggests, somewhat provocatively, that "the oral-formulaic theory . . . would surely explain the coincidence . . . as accident rather than as evidence of borrowing either way, thus writing finis to an ancient controversy" (cited in Lucas, 1977, p.70-71), but it is likewise impossible to provide solid evidence in support of this theory. Additionally, Irving's perspective seems rather difficult to maintain in the face of further links between the pair of poems.

In addition to the same long-line, *Exodus* and *Beowulf* share extremely similar half-lines: *Exodus* 214b, *somod ætgædere*, and *Beowulf* 387b and 729b, *samod ætgædere* (meaning "together").[5] This echo provides further evidence that one of the poets would seem to have known the work of the other, though, again, one cannot tell from this information in which direction the influence flowed. The poems can arguably be thematically linked as well, particularly if one compares their endings. *Beowulf* concludes with the death of its titular hero, who has died in the attempt to kill a giant *wyrm* who is the guardian of an anciently cursed treasure hoard. Beowulf's dying words are a meditation on how useful the treasure will be for his people, who will presumably be at the mercy of invaders after the death of their king. However, the poem's final lines detail how *Wīglāf* insists that all of the cursed treasure be buried in the giant funereal *burh* ("barrow") built for Beowulf, after which the warriors ride and sing dirges of lament

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[5] Some scholars have described the half-lines as "identical" (Brodeur, 1968, cited in Lucas, 1977, p.70), but, as Lucas points out, "the lines are only very alike." However, one cannot overlook the fact that the lines are essentially the same (particularly when one considers the possibility of scribal error and any incorrect transcription of a vowel).

and loss both for Beowulf and for the loss of their traditional way of life.[6] *Exodus* similarly ends with the appearance of a great deal of treasure as the victorious Israelites ransack of the Egyptian corpses (a shocking Anglo-Saxon interpolation presumably originating with the poet). While the poem does not conclude with an explicit sense of loss or societal decay, one can perhaps sense its latent resurgence in this brief return to a more traditional Anglo-Saxon discourse on warrior culture. In a poem written from an ostensibly Christian perspective about an explicitly biblical narrative, this bloodthirsty, materialistic ritual almost cannot help but foreshadow God's chastisement of the Israelites in later chapters of the biblical *Exodus* (in addition perhaps to drawing parallels between the pagan, militant Anglo-Saxons and the doubting Israelites). Thus, both *Beowulf* and *Exodus* could be said to end with images of decay and loss, perhaps indicating that they were both composed during the early days of Christianity in England. Lucas assumes that "it is probable that the two poems were first composed in the same general period" (p. 71), but this is by no means universally accepted in Old English scholarship (see Irving, Hofmann, etc.). One can conclude with some degree of certainty that there does seem to be an explicit link between the poems, but basic literary analysis can do little to determine which poem was the precursor text.

3.0 Data and Analysis

3.1 *ægnian*

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[6] In other words, the poem ends with a lament over the loss of traditional Anglo-Saxon warrior culture, since Beowulf's death comes about because his callow young band of retainers flee when he is in need of aid.

The Old English hapax legomenon *ægnian* appears in Exodus as an uninflected, infinitival weak verb that is tentatively glossed in the supplement to J. R. Clark Hall's *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* as meaning "to oppress" (reprint 2007). In Peter Lucas's edition of the poem (1977), though, *ægnian* is defined as "to thrash," which, while in the same general semantic vein as Clark Hall's earlier definition (since one could argue that thrashing is a physical means or type of oppression), actually represents a very different interpretation of the word's etymological roots. Apparently almost no scholar takes *ægnian* to be a completely unique, etymologically opaque or aberrant word, but they seem to be divided over their classification of it as a variant of one of a few distinct verbs. However, it must be said that the definition found in Clark Hall is most likely based primarily on context deduced from the surrounding lines of the poem (*Exodus* 264-65):

> *Þæt hie lifigende   leng ne moton*
>
> that they.N living.N.pl long not can.fut.pl
>
> 'So that they, while living, will not long be able to'
>
> *ægnian mid yrmðum   Israhela cyn*
>
> "oppress(?)" with miseries.D.pl Israel's.G tribe.A
>
> 'oppress(?) the tribe of Israel with miseries'

Clearly, since ægnian takes the dative "with miseries," it would seem to require an extremely negative definition.

Clark Hall's definition "oppress," however, also recalls an argument put forward towards the beginning of the twentieth century by Kock (as cited in Irving, 1953) that *ægnian* is a scribal error resulting from transposed letters (or some unattested dialectical

instance of metathesis) and should read *ængian*, which Kock believed to be a variation of

engan (or *ge-engan*), which is widely attested (particularly in adjectival form as *enge*,

which itself appears in *Exodus* line 56 and in *Genesis B*) and means "to oppress, to vex."

However, one could make a case for the unlikelihood of this scribal transposition (and

almost certainly for any aberrant metathesis), since both the æ- and e- variants would

then be attested in the same work. While possible, there are more persuasive arguments

that make less of an appeal to scribal error and which make a good deal of sense

historically and semantically.

In 1912, Bright insisted that *ægnian* (which he emends to a lengthened □*gnian*[7])

was a variation on *āgnian* (based upon attested orthographic variation between *āgan* and

□*gan*, *āgen* and □*gen*, and other minimal pairs), which he defines as "own, control as a

possession" (1912). This is somewhat close to Clark Hall's definition of *ægnian* in his

supplement,[8] but it does shift the emphasis from the violence perpetuated by the

Egyptians on the Israelites to the mere fact of their enslavement (which may evoke such

violence but does not explicitly recall it). However, Irving found this interpretation so

persuasive that he shifted his support for this reading away from an endorsement of

Kock's viewpoint (1972).

On final explanation is offered by Lucas himself, who terms "previous

explanations of the manuscript form" "little more than guess-work" (1971, p.283). He

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[7] Since length tended not to be systematically marked in Old English manuscripts, this is not necessarily even an emendation.

[8] Though, interestingly, he lists the definition "enslave," supposedly applicable solely in the context of *Exodus*, under the entry for āgnian, which has a semantic range from "usurp" all the way to "adopt." (In other words, it appears Clark Hall at least initially adopted Bright's interpretation, then perhaps had second thoughts when completing his supplement.)

proposes that *ægnian* should be emended to *ægnan* (without a diphthong), suggesting that

the hapax resulted from a scribal substitution similar to the one that resulted in the

appearance of both *neosan* and *neosian* ("to seek out, etc.") in the manuscript of *Beowulf*.

Of course, *ægnan* is only present in the corpus as a plural noun glossing the Latin *paleae*

and *quisquiliae* and thus has commonly been taken to mean "chaff" or "straw" (DOE

ægne). Lucas suggests that his hypothetical verb *ægnan* descends from Proto-Old

English *a□unjan-* (with double i-umlaut leading to ægnan), since Pr.OE *a□un-* is,

according to the *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology,* the stem of "awn" (meaning

the bristly part of a piece of grain) in modern English. In this way, he arrives at the

definition of ægnan as "winnow" or "thresh" and thus the modern gloss of "thrash"

(which, in modern usage, has lost much of its resonance with the idea of harvest).

Lucas's explanation is ingenious, to say the least, and he emphasizes its salience with the

idea that "the resulting expression is a metaphor not uncharacteristic of this poem" (1977,

p.112), presumably referring to the resonance between the Israelites' status as slaves and

ægnan's dual signification of reaping and physically punishing. However, it would be

difficult for one to determine whether Lucas or Bright has arrived at the correct

conclusion with respect to the origins of the hapax *ægnian*, which is indisputably present

in the manuscript. While emendation to either *ægnan* or *āgnian* may in fact be necessary

(as it frequently is in Old English lexicography), one could also propose that the poet (or

even the scribe) used ægnian as a portmanteau of sorts between the two similar-sounding

verbs, thereby blending the meanings of "enslave" and "thrash" (or "thresh"). This

possibility seems all the more likely in a poem fraught with hapax legomena formed by

creating unique and sometimes semantically opaque compounds.

3.2 *bælc*

The etymology of *bælc* proves to be quite interesting from the perspective of any attempt to date the poem in which it occurs. As with *ægnian*, many scholars have entered the fray to try and conclusively determine how exactly this hapax legomenon got into the corpus, but, as is usually the case, no real consensus has been reached. The word appears in an early passage in *Exodus* in which the narrator describes one of the ways in which God protects the Israelites (Exodus 71b-74):

> *þær halig God*
>
> There holy.sg God.N
>
> 'There holy God'

wið færbryne   *folc gescylde,*

against terrible-heat.D   people.A shielded.pret.sg

'shielded the people against the terrible heat'

bælce oferbrædde   *byrnendne heofon,*

"<u>central beam</u> (?)".D.sg covered-over.pret.sg burning heaven.A

'covered over the burning sky with a <u>central roof-beam/ceiling(?)</u>'

halgan nette,   *hatwendne lyft.*

holy.D net.D.sg torrid.A air.A.sg.

'the torrid air with a holy net.'

As one can perhaps see, the debate among scholars attempting to pinpoint the etymology of *bælce* (or *bælc*, to use its presumed uninflected form) centers around semantic issues: namely, *bælc* must represent something which can be used to "cover over." This poses a

slight problem for those, like Lucas, who maintain that the hapax means "central beam" (as in the central beam of the Tabernacle's roof) (1977, p.88), though this problem can easily be remedied by presuming a semantic expansion in the word from referring solely to the supporting "beam" of a roof toward later referring to the entire ceiling.

One of the arguments concerning the presence of *bælc* in *Exodus* takes an even greater semantic leap, and thus it has been much more quickly dismissed among scholars. In *Some of the Hardest Glosses in Old English*, Meritt argues that *bælc* is a scribal error and should read *blæc*, the Old English adjective for "black," which, he argues, can and has been used as a noun in the corpus (to mean "black matter") (1968, p.18).[9] Meritt suggests this emendation based on comparisons to the Old English prose version of *Exodus*, which refers to the cloud-pillar (assumed by almost all readers to be the metaphorical reference of *bælc*) as *þæt swearte tacn* ("that dark/dusky portent"). However, this reading forces one to lose the resonance *bælc* seems to have with a physicalized, substantial edifice or building of some sort. In other words, Meritt seems to introduce the oft-conjured specter of scribal error needlessly to create a reading that would make the partially metaphorical *bælc* even more abstract and opaque (i.e., a "black thing").

Irving proposed, along with Holthausen, that *bælc* may be a variation or corruption of the Anglian *bælge*, which itself ostensibly comes from the Early West Saxon word *bielge*, which means "skin" or "hide" (Irving, 1959, p.10; 1972, p.299). Irving and Holthausen base their argument on the fact that *bælce* is in apposition with the *halgan nette*, and thus Irving argues that *bælce* must be somehow "stretchable" (1972, p.

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[9] According to Meritt, the term occurs twice in Napier's *Old English Glosses* to translate *atramentum* in one of the works of Aldhelm.

299). Once again, though, this emendation may be needless, since Lucas provides a rather compelling, extremely well-researched case for leaving the hapax in its original form.

In order to defend any retention of the manuscript form, Lucas must initially account for the rather anomalous presence of the front vowel *æ* before the liquid *l* (in Old English, breaking or retraction usually occurs to yield *ea* or *a,* respectively). He does this by pointing out that such linguistic processes apparently only occur when the liquid is velarized and that, in the case of *bælc*, the liquid is somewhat palatal (coming as it does after a palatalized *k*).[10] Essentially, Lucas then argues that *bælce* was correctly transcribed by the scribe of the Junius manuscript and that it comes from an unattested Germanic **balkuz* (meaning "partition"), rather than from any borrowing of the Old Norse *bálkr* (1970; 1977). He states that bælc can be accounted for as a native development in Old English derived from the Germanic form and related to the modern English "balk" or "baulk," even though the OED surmises that "the relation . . . is doubtful" (OED "balk, baulk, n.1). This is rather noteworthy because, as Irving suggests, "ON *bálkr* . . . has usually been adduced to help explain this puzzling word" (1959, p. 10). Relying on the explanation of Scandinavian borrowing, however, would seem to force one to determine the date of the composition of Exodus to be quite a good deal later than the mid-eighth century, since widespread borrowings from Old Norse only happened in later centuries (Campbell 1959). Lucas's view not only allows one to retain the possibility that *Exodus* was composed around the same period as *Beowulf* ostensibly was (though even this claim is slightly problematic), but it seems to support such a possibility.

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[10] Here Lucas appeals to Campbell's explanation that "In final position, k . . . [was] palatalized after OE front vowels . . ." (Campbell 1962, p. 174).

Lucas suggests that *bælc* was semantically confused with the similarly derived *balca*,[11] and he therefore concludes that *bælc* eventually took on the meaning of "beam." He suggests that this meaning could have stretched from "roof-beam" to "roof" since, in various dialectical uses in modern English, "balk" has seemingly taken on this meaning (1970, p. 305). He then goes on to argue that *balc*, which is only present in late Old English, and which is most often brought up as evidence that the Old Norse *bálkr* was borrowed at some stage in the etymological development of modern English's "balk," is actually a blend of the older forms *bælc* and *balca*. This reading has in its favor both an adherence to the original manuscript form and a fairly persuasive solution to another linguistic crux (whether *balc* is a native development or a Scandinavian borrowing). Thus, one would have to conclude that, barring further linguistic discoveries, this is the most likely enumeration of the etymology of *bælc*.

3.3 *bland*

Very little has been written in English about this rather fascinating hapax legomenon, and many seem to suspect that it is merely a corrupted form of some sort or other. It occurs at the end of a problematic passage at the end of Moses's speech inciting the Israelites to wage battle against the pursuing Egyptians (an interesting Anglo Saxon interpolation into the traditional Biblical story) (*Exodus* 307-309):[12]

> *nalles hie gehyrdon   haliges lare*
>
> "not at all" they.N despise.pret.pl   holy.G.sg   counsel.A

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[11] He suggests that *balca*, which presumably means "ridge" or "beam," derives from Germanic **balkon*, "beam," which he takes to be related to **balkuz*.

[12] As Lucas notes, "the passage [in its entirety] may well be corrupt" (1977, p.117).

'not at all did they despise the counsel of the holy one'

siððan leofes leoþ   *læste* near

when beloved.G.sg song.N performance.D nearer

'when, nearer to [the time of] performance, the song of the dear one,'

sweg swiðrode   *ond sances <u>bland</u>.*

voice.N subsided.pret.sg and song.G.sg <u>blending</u>.N

'[his] voice and the <u>blending</u> of song subsided.'

Bland's presence in the poem is interesting because it is the only time in the entire Old

English corpus that this bare stem is used in a nominalized form. *Blandan* and *ge-*

blandan, strong verbs upon which *bland* may have been fashioned (assuming, of course,

that it is not an example of scribal error or some other corrupted form), occur a total of

six times in the corpus: once in Riddle 40 as *blende*,[13] three times as a gloss of the Latin

inficere (as *blondu, geblond,* and *geblende*), once in *Andreas*, and another time in the

Exeter Book. Ge-bland also occurs in nominalized form twice (DOE).

The editors of the *OED* seem to assume that *bland* ("mixture") might indeed have

been formed from the stem of the Old English verb *blandan* ("to mix," which is cognate

with Gothic and Old Saxon *blandan)*, but they only admit one example of the Old

English verb in the corpus (in Riddle 40) (Bland, v[1]). Thus, they maintain that the

occurrence in Middle English (which evolved into Modern English "blend") of *blend-en*

(a weak verb meaning to "mix" or "intermingle") could not have been based upon the

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[*] *Læst* is also a hapax legomenon, presumably meaning "performance" or "action,"
though it has garnered even less attention in scholarly literature than has *bland.*
[13] Though, as the *Dictionary of Old English* suggests, *blende* could be a manifestation of
an otherwise unattested weak verb **blendan*, which would also mean "to mix," (though
this weak verb otherwise means "to blind" in Old English) (Blandan, DOE).

Old English *bland*, since "this was all but obsolete already in OE." (Blend, v[2]). They suggest that *blend-en* was an "adoption" or borrowing of the Old Norse *blanda* (or, to be more precise, a borrowing from its singular present conjugation *blend* or *blendr*).[14] In their definitions of *bland* as a noun used in late Old and early Middle English (bland n[1], n[2]), they also list the Old Norse *bland* and *blanda* (apparently both nominal forms) as etymological precursors. One wonders, however, if all of these appeals to Scandinavian borrowings are particularly necessary, especially if one takes the appearance of the noun *bland* in *Exodus* as a valid hapax legomenon. In other words, one could certainly posit an etymology of the Middle English form *bland* partially based upon (or at least strengthened in terms of frequency of use by) the native, attested Old English form. One could even explain Modern English "blend" as a native development based upon the i-umlaut form of the strong verb *blandan* (OE *blendan* meant "blind," never "mix"), perhaps strengthened by its similarity to the Old Norse form but certainly not necessarily descended from it exclusively. Such an explanation would strengthen the hypothesis that *Exodus* was composed at a rather early date, since its use of *bland* would therefore pre-date any Scandinavian incursions on the word (though it would be particularly interesting, if not entirely surprising given the poem's plethora of hapax, if the poet of *Exodus* himself nominalized the form). All such conjecture is tenuous, to say the least, however, since substantive linguistic evidence supporting either Scandinavian borrowing or native evolution has not been found.

3.4 *gin*

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[14] Interestingly, they never seem to suggest that OE *blandan* was an ON borrowing (presumably since it is such a common Germanic form).

In most annotated editions of *Exodus*, *gin* is frequently identified as a hapax legomenon and then granted no more than a simple gloss in the dictionary. No scholar has proposed an emendation, yet almost none have examined the singular noun etymologically. Perhaps this is because it occurs in an a-line whose b-counterpart is a rather notorious crux. It is necessary to look at the phrase in its poetic context (*Exodus* 427-31):

Ne behwylfan mæg   heofon ond eorðe

Not confine can.pres.sg heaven.N and earth.N

'Heaven and earth cannot confine'

His wuldres word,   widdra ond siddra

His.G glory.G words.A.pl extensive.compr and vast.compr

'his words of glory, more extensive and vast'

Þonne befæðman mæge   foldan sceattas,

Than enclose can.subj.pl earth.G.sg expanse.N.pl

'than the expanses of the earth could enclose'

eorðan ymbhwyrft   ond uprodor,

earth.G.sg circuit.N.sg and sky.N.sg

'the circuit of the earth and the sky,'

garsecges <u>gin</u> ond þeos geomre lyft.[*]

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[*] Critical debate centers around *geomre*; as Lucas writes, "there seems to be no particular reason why the air should be described as sad, unless it is an allusion to the motif of this life as transitory . . . " (1977, p.130). Cosijin proposes emendation to *eormenlyft* ("air of men") (cited Irving, 1953, p.91), while Irving himself proposes *gēape lyft* ("extensive air") (p. 90). However, the poet could easily have been appealing to what Lucas terms "the motif of this transitory life," and thus there may be no need for any emendation at all.

sea.G.sg <u>vastness.N</u> and this sorrowful.N.sg air.N

'the <u>vastness</u> of the sea and this sorrowful air.'

Gin (like *bland* in some ways) is unique because it is the only nominalized occurrence of *gin-* based words in Old English.

Ginne, meaning "vast," is a fairly common Old English adjective (there are nine occurrences according to the DOE), and the related verbs *ginian*, *geonian*, and *gānian* (meaning "to open the mouth wide," "to gape") appear over 50 times in the corpus. Therefore, one can see that *gin* in *Exodus* probably stems from one of these widely used forms, though it is impossible to tell for certain whether it was a nominalization of the adjectival or verbal form (or whether it developed from a common proto-Old-English ancestor along with such forms and only survived textually in *Exodus*). According to Bergener, *gin* is related to the Old High German and Old Norse nouns *gin*, both of which mean "the mouth of a beast" (1928, p.105). Thus, one can understand the otherwise opaque semantic link between the modern glosses of the Old English verbal forms and the more general, abstract gloss of the nominal form (since, in *Exodus* at least, the meaning of *gin* seems to have lost any semantic echoes of "mouth"). One might thus surmise that the Old English verbal form stems from the same common Germanic ancestor as the OHG and ON forms (since, with so many occurrences both early and late in the Old English corpus, it is doubtful that the OE form was a direct borrowing from ON). Since, as Bergener states, "the adj. is only recorded in OE" (1928, p. 105), one might go on to conclude that the adjective was fashioned on the verbal form, semantically broadening from "wide mouth" to "wide." Since the nominal form in *Exodus* also lacks this specific semantic component, one might then be tempted to assume that it is

fashioned on the adjectival form. In this way, one can see why it was probably not borrowed directly from the Old Norse noun *gin*, even though the pair is phonologically identical. Once again, these conclusions strengthen the hypothesis that *Exodus* certainly could have been composed in the eighth century (or, at least, they do not provide any convincing evidence that it was written much later).

3.5 *nēp*

According to Lucas, the hapax legomenon *nēp* is "a notorious crux" for Old English scholars (1977, p. 134), and according to Irving, it "baffles explanation" (1953; p. 93). Many believe it is related to the Old English compound *nēpflōd* (meaning "low tide"), which occurs a handful of times in the corpus, but the context in which it appears in Exodus has led some to hesitate in drawing this link (Exodus 469b-471a):

> *Mægen wæs on cwealme*
>
> Troop.N.sg was.pret.sg. in death.D.sg
>
> 'In death, the troop was'
>
> *fæste gefeterod, forðganges <u>nep</u>*[*]
>
> firmly fettered.pp forth-going.G.sg <u>without-power</u>
>
> 'fettered firmly, <u>powerless</u> to go forth'
>
> *searwum ascæled.*
>
> armor/skill.D.pl bound.pp

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[*] In the manuscript, *nep* does not have a long vowel. Lucas records it as such in his edition of the poem, though he lists *nēp* in his glossary. Thomas assumes "it is not necessary to assume vowel-length . . . since the scansion of the half-line is exactly paralleled in *helpendra pað*, line 488" (1917, pp. 344-45). Usually, though, most scholars refer to the hapax as *nēp*, presumably based on comparison with *nēpflōd*.

'bound in armor/skills.'

Bright suggested emending the phrase *forðganges nep* to *forðganges weg* ("the path of

forth-going") (1912, p. 18), while Murkens suggested changing *nep* to *neh* ("near") (cited

in Lucas, 1977, p.134). However, both emendations create semantic difficulties later in

the text, and one could easily argue that no emendation is necessary (Lucas, 1977, p.134).

While the cited passage in which *nēp* occurs does not involve water imagery, the

entire narrative event takes place as the waters of the Red Sea surge around the Egyptians

(*flod* is used five lines earlier). Thus, one could certainly argue that *nēp* is purposefully

employed in this context, perhaps to remind the reader or listener of its usual collocation

with *flōd*. In other words, the poet might be creating a subtle trope comparing the dying

Egyptian troop and a very weak, low, or "neap" tide (the tide in which there is the least

difference between low and high water marks) (neap, adj. and n[1], *OED*).

While linking *nēp* to modern English's "neap" (used solely as a tidal adjective or

noun) may provide a compelling case for not emending the manuscript form, it does not

provide any help with respect to deducing the hapax legomenon's etymological roots.

According to the OED, the etymology of "neap" is unknown, since it first appeared in

various manifestations in Swedish, German, and Danish only in the eighteenth or

nineteenth century (and was therefore probably borrowed into those languages from

English). Other than a few occurrences of *nēpflōd* and the hapax *nēp* in Old English,

"neap" did not appear in any form in English until the fifteenth century. As the OED

states, "connections with the Germanic bases of 'nip' an 'neb' have been suggested, but

are difficult to explain phonologically and semantically." Thus, even if one identifies *nēp*

with the initial component of *nēpflōd* and thereby arrives at a gloss of "without power,"

one is left with the larger question of how these forms arose (and how "neap" experienced a resurgence four centuries after ostensibly falling out of use).

One possibility not explored either by Lucas or by the compliers of the OED was suggested by Thomas nearly a century ago: namely, that the presence of modern Icelandic *hneppr*, meaning "scant," gestures toward *nēp*'s Scandinavian roots. According to Thomas, though, "the borrowing would be a very early one" (1917, p. 345).[15] Since no other alternative etymological explanations have been proposed, this seems like a rather persuasive, albeit not fully developed, argument. It is interesting that Thomas emphasizes the early date of any potential borrowing. Thus, while the origins of the hapax *nēp* remain a mystery to some degree (since, even if one accepts Thomas's hypothesis, one is left with only modern cognates and without even a reconstructed Scandinavian form), once again a later Scandinavian borrowing proves improbable.

3.6 *rēofan*

The hapax verb *rēofan* occurs a few lines before *nēp*, though it is not seen as quite the textual crux that the later hapax legomenon is. Only a few scholars have commented on its singular occurrence (and, in their respective editions of the poem, neither Irving nor Lucas even mentions it). It is found in the passage just preceding that cited in 3.5 in which the waters of the Red Sea crash down upon the pursuing Egyptians (*Exodus* 463b-65a):

Flod blod gewod:

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[15] One wishes he had elaborated on this conviction. Presumably he meant that since any earlier Scandinavian (or Old Norse) ancestor would be somewhat similar in form to its modern Icelandic counterpart, and since *nēp* is so different phonologically from *hneppr*, any borrowing would have necessarily occurred quite early (so as to ensure time for the phonological shift in Old English *to nēp*).

Flood.A.sg blood.N go pervade.pret.sg

'Blood pervaded the water'

randbyrig wæron <u>rofene</u>, rodor swipode

rampart.N.pl were.pret.pl <u>break.pp</u> sky.A.sg abated.pret.sg

'the ramparts were <u>broken,</u> the sky abated'

meredeaða mæst.

sea-death.G.pl great.suprl

'greatest of sea-deaths.'

Irving believes that *rēofan* (appearing in the above lines as the past participle *rofene*) was

an obsolete word by the time *Exodus* was composed (or at least by the time it was

transcribed), suggesting that it fell out of use except perhaps in one fossilized form.[16] In

his later article, Irving cites Hofmann's earlier invocation of the Old Norse *riúfa* (or

rjúfa), presumably suggesting that there may be a common ancestor shared by the pair or

that the aberrant Old English formulation may have been an early borrowing (1959, p.8).

According to Irving, *rēofan* may have fallen into disuse due to the much more

widespread use of the verb *reafian*, which means "to rob" or "to plunder" (and was

therefore semantically similar to *rēofan*).   It is from *reafian* that the modern English verb

"reave" is descended, though the Old English form has cognates in most Germanic

languages (Old Frisian, Old Saxon, Middle Dutch, etc.), all of which have a similar sense.

However, the OED suggests that for *reafian*, "the original sense is app[arently] that of

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[16] He cites the ostensibly similar case of *berofene*, which was common but only appeared
in the "formula" "*golde* ([or] *since*, etc.) *berofene*" (1959, p.8).

breaking, as in OE. *rēofan*" (reave, v[1]).[17] In other words, the compilers seem to be claiming that perhaps the semantics of *reafian* began to shift towards the more specific, intensified meaning of "to plunder" just after or while *rēofan* was falling out of use (such that the competition between the pair may have been more pronounced, in terms of semantic overlap, than previously thought). Thus, one would tend to agree with Irving's assessment that *rēofan* was certainly an older form, though whether it was an obsolete, fossilized form in the poet's vocabulary is impossible to determine. It is, however, interesting to note that no scholar treats this verbal hapax legomenon as a true coinage; all assume that it is a remnant of some form whose absence from the corpus is due either to an accidental gap or to the relative lateness of most Old English manuscripts. One might begin to suspect that *rēofan* is indeed evidence of a very early Scandinavian borrowing, since, as the editors of the *OED* point out, "in the sense of robbing or plundering the word is wanting in ON." (reave, v[1]). One might surmise that if the form had descended from another Teutonic ancestor, this later semantic sense would have already begun to develop (although one could equally assume simultaneous early development of the ON and OE cognates). Yet again, though, the dearth of hard linguistic evidence ensures that nothing can be conclusively determined. However, the presence of *rēofan* does indicate that either the poet was working with an older form or that the poem itself was composed at a fairly early date (before *reafian* replaced the earlier, more semantically limited, form completely).

3.7 *wīcan*

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[17] One wonders quite how they arrive at this conclusion, however, and how they account for its definitional shift.

Wīcan only occurs at the end of *Exodus*, within twenty lines of the hapax legomena discussed in 3.5 and 3.6, describing the same narrative event (*Exodus* 484-85a):

> *Wicon weallfæsten, wæges burston,*
>
> give way.pret.pl rampart.N.pl wave.N.pl crash.pret.pl
>
> 'The ramparts gave way, the waves crashed'
>
> *multon meretorras,*[*]
>
> melt.pret.pl sea-tower.N.pl
>
> 'the sea-towers dissolved,'

While this is the only instance of this verb in the Old English corpus, the very similar verb *ge-wīcan* occurs twice (in the third-person singular preterite *gewāc*) towards the end of *Beowulf*. Interestingly, no scholar seems to have commented on this coincidence, although it might seem to provide further evidence of a link of some sort between the two works (whether intentional or simply resulting from having been composed during the same period in the linguistic development of Old English is impossible to determine with any degree of certainty). The *OED* gives one of the few clues to the verb's etymology, listing it as a related word under the entry for the modern English noun "wicker" (wicker, n). According to the editors, "wicker" is of East Scandinavian origin, closely related to the Swedish form *vika*, which means "to bend," as well as to the Old English hapax legomenon. Thus, one might surmise that *wīcan* descends from some Scandinavian ancestor or was even borrowed from Old Norse (though the latter possibility seems

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[*] *Meretorras* is also a hapax legomenon, but it does not bear much comment because it is a semantically and compositionally transparent compound of *mere* ("sea") and *torr* ("tower"), and is presumably a poetic coinage.

unlikely considering the presence of *gewīcan* in B*eowulf*). Its semantic similarity with

the much more common Old English noun *wāc* and the verb fashioned from it (*wācian*),

which correspond to forms in other early Germanic languages and dialects, would seem

to strengthen this argument, since the more common forms are presumably developed

from a reconstructed Old Teutonic **waikwo-* and thus share a stem-vowel with similar

phonological features. Even in this instance of probable Scandinavian borrowing or

influence, though, one sees potential linguistic evidence for the early composition of

Exodus (particularly when one considers the appearance of the prefixed variant of the

hapax in *Beowulf*).

3.8 *hildecalla*

The hapax legomenon *hildecalla* would initially seem to be a rather uninteresting,

compositionally transparent compound of *hilde* ("battle") and *–calla* (presumably akin to

the modern English "caller" or "crier"). On closer inspection, however, one discovers

that this ostensibly straightforward compound has proven quite important in determining

the possible date of the composition of *Exodus*. The hapax occurs as the b-line of the

first long-line of the fifth section, just as Moses is about to give his main speech to the

Israelites (*Exodus* 252-53):

> *Ahleop þa for hæleðum hildecalla*
>
> Leap.pret.sg then before men.D.pl   battle-herald.N.sg
>
> 'Then the <u>battle herald</u> leapt up in front of the men'

bald beodohata[*]*, bord up ahof,*

bold announcer-of-battle.N.sg, shield.A.sg up raise.pret.sg

'the bold announcer of battle, raised up his shield,'

The compound is at the center of much scholarly debate about whether *Exodus* was composed early or late in the development of Old English because it is one of two "call-" based terms found in the corpus. The other term is the verb *ceallian*, which is found in line 91 of the late poem *The Battle of Maldon*: *ongan ceallian þa ofer ceald wæter* ("then began to call out over the cold water"). These terms seem semantically linked as well, and Stanley suggests "OE *ceallian* seems to have had the specialized sense found only in descriptions of battles—cf. the meaning of *hildecalla*" (1969, p. 97).

Some scholars have attempted to explain the dearth of such "call-" based terms in Old English by hypothesizing a late borrowing from Old Norse (which would be an unproblematic explanation of the presence of *ceallian* in *The Battle of Maldon*, composed as it ostensibly was around the turn of the eleventh century). Some, including the compilers of the *OED*, suggest that *ceallian* was adopted from the Old Norse *kalla*, meaning "to cry, call, shout, [etc.]" (Call, v.). Hofmann seems to have been one of the originators of this claim, though he extended his hypothesis of ON borrowing to explain the occurrence of *hildecalla* in *Exodus* (cited in Irving, 1972, p. 307-8). In other words, Hofmann attempted to conclusively demonstrate that Exodus was composed much later than the eighth century. Both the *OED* and the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of English*

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[*] This appears as *beo/hata* (spanning a line division) in the manuscript. *Beodohata* would also be a hapax legomenon, but, while this term has proven a crux in terms of what word poet actually intended to use, it is beyond the scope of this essay to treat all such conjectures (since the term as used in the manuscript is almost certainly a result of scribal error and cannot therefore be explored etymologically in order to help date the poem itself).

Etymology[18] seem to concur with Hofmann's assessment of *ceallian* in their entries on

modern English "call," though neither mentions the "call-" based hapax in *Exodus*.

However, since it seems almost beyond doubt that *hildecalla* and *ceallian* stem from the

same etymological ancestor,[19] the dictionaries' entries seem tantamount to endorsing

Hofmann's late-composition hypothesis for *Exodus*.

However, many other scholars have argued that *ceallian* and the hypothesized

Anglian verb *callian* from which the second constituent of *hildecalla* was presumably

formed (Stanley, 1969, p.95) could certainly have been native to Old English. The OE

verb has cognates in most other Germanic branches (such as the Old High German form

challōn, meaning "talk" or "chatter"), all of which are presumably descended from a

proto-Germanic *kallōjan*, which is formed from the Germanic root *kal-*, which itself

can be traced back to the reconstructed Indo-European root *gol-* (call, *ODEE)*. Stanley

argues, along with Irving (1972, p.307-8) and Lucas (1977, p.111), that the widespread

presence of *callen* and *kallen* in Middle English in certain geographical regions of

England could certainly strengthen an argument for *ceallian*, and therefore *hildecalla*, as

native words (1969). He suggests that the Old Norse *kalla* was in fact cognate with Old

English *callian, and that its presence could have bolstered usage, particularly in northern

areas. While he does not offer any incontrovertible evidence about this hypothesis, he

does provide a persuasive argument that one cannot automatically assume the Old

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[18] The entry for "call" in the *ODEE* does qualify this assertion with the parenthetical
insertion that the development of "call" in Modern English from *ceallian* was "perhaps
only reinforced by" the ON form *kalla*.
[19] As Stanley suggests, "that *hildecalla* is written *–calla* and not *-cealla*, could be
explained either on the grounds that this hapax legomenon is part of the Old English
poetic vocabulary with its probably conscious retention of Anglian features, or on the
grounds that the second syllable of a compound does not bear the stress [which the
diphthong *ea* would make necessary]" (1969, p. 94).

English forms were Scandinavian borrowings. Thus, the presence of *hildecalla* in *Exodus* does not provide strong evidence supporting the idea that it was composed long after the eighth century. As Stanley states, "we seem to have no surer sign of Norse influence than is provided by *hildecalla*, and, though it might not be wise to date the poem as early, it would certainly be folly to date it as late on the basis of the Norse element in it" (1969, p. 95).

4.0   Conclusion

Of course, any etymological study of Old English hapax legomena is problematic. The dearth of material on each of the terms makes it nearly impossible to draw any unqualified conclusions as to their true origins, while the relatively small size of the Old English poetic corpus makes it similarly difficult to determine with any level of certainty which hapax are truly unique occurrences (and thus presumably poetic coinages) and which are merely so by dint of accidental gaps in the surviving material. Additionally, since almost all examples of Old English epic poetry only survive in a single manuscript form, one can never rule out the possibility that any hapax legomenon is merely the result of a scribal error.

Despite these qualifications, such analysis is necessary to the study of the Old English corpus, particularly considering that, by some accounts, nearly one-third of the surviving terms found therein are hapax legomena.[20] Etymological investigation seems particularly relevant in the case of the Old English *Exodus*, since it contains such a large proportion of such unique terms. This essay has attempted to begin such an investigation

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[20] According to Waldorf, who based his count on the Bosworth-Toller dictionary, there are 11,458 true hapax in the surviving Anglo-Saxon vocabulary (1953).

by examining the handful of non-compound hapax in the epic work in an effort to more conclusively determine the date of the poem's composition, but it by no means pretends to be exhaustive. Thus, any conclusions that can be draw are necessarily qualified. For instance, the dearth of hard evidence that any of the terms were borrowed from Old Norse (as some scholars have previously argued) certainly proves that *Exodus* is not necessarily a later poem. The fact that some of the hapax examined may in fact have been precursors of later Old English forms (particularly the case made for *rēofan*) would seem to provide a somewhat firm foundation for any hypothesis that the poem did have an early date of composition, but other explanations are certainly available for such phenomena.

The dating of *Exodus* is linguistically and critically salient predominantly because of its disputed relationship with *Beowulf*, and thus coming any step closer to pinpointing its origins would be helpful in solving the larger mystery of its connection to that most famous of Anglo-Saxon epics. This mystery is a key crux in Anglo-Saxon scholarship, since its resolution would have far-reaching consequences on any modern evaluation of Old English poetic culture (how widely diffused certain poems were, whether there were commonly shared poetic lines that pre-date the epic poems that survive, how much of an influence *Beowulf* could have been in this cultural climate, etc.). For example, if it were somehow established that *Exodus* pre-dates *Beowulf*, one might more confidently assume that the *Beowulf* poet was familiar with the earlier work and quoted it, which might lead to an more wholesale reassessment of *Beowulf*'s intertextual echoes (a rather radical possibility when one considers how often the poem is treated in the critical literature). If *Exodus* was determined to have been composed after *Beowulf*, of course, then the opposite scenario would conceivably have taken place (which would in turn give weight

to the idea that *Beowulf* was in fact an important poem in Anglo-Saxon culture as well as, by default, in modern Anglo-Saxon studies). If the pair came from the same period, one might be tempted to hypothesize about the existence of a more general Anglo-Saxon poetic discourse, complete with common idioms, tropes, and themes. Thus, the dating of *Exodus* could have widespread ramifications throughout the field of Anglo-Saxon scholarship. Unfortunately, the findings of this study are inconclusive, though they tend to support an early date for the composition of *Exodus* (and thus reaffirm the hypothesis that the biblical epic could certainly have been composed before or around the same time as *Beowulf*). Perhaps a more comprehensive survey of all of the hapax legomena in the poem, together with a similar study of those in *Beowulf*, would yield more conclusive evidence in this matter, though, without further linguistic discoveries, it seems doubtful that any incontrovertible consensus will be reached by scholars.

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Appendix I

ādfȳr--fire of the funeral pyre
Afrisc—African, Ethiopian
angetrum—host
antwigðu—hesitation
ārēfian—remove, draw back
æflast—deviation of course
*ægnian—thrash
ærdēað—premature death
ærglæd—happy as of old
ætniman—take away, kill
*bælc—central beam in a roof, ceiling
beadosearo—war-gear
beadumægen—army
bealospell—bad news
bealubenn—serious wound
bēlegsa—terror of fire
beodohāta—announcer of battle
beorhtrodor—bright sky
bilswæð—wound
*bland—mixture, harmonization
blōdegesa—terror of blood
brimypping—sea-manifestation
brōðorgyld—retribution for brothers
cinberg—chin-guard (on helmet)
cnēowsibb—nation
dædlēan—recompense for actions
dædweorc—action
dægsceld—day-shield
dēaðdrepe—death-blow
dēaðstede—place of death
drihtnēas—dead troops
ealdwērig—accursed/malicious as of old
eallwundor—miracle
efngedǣlan—divide equally
eftwyrd—last judgment
eoferhold—boar-spear
fāmigbōsma—foamy-breasted
færbyrne—terrible heat
færwundor—sudden awe-inspiring
miracle
feorhgebeorh—saving of life
feorhlēan—reward for life saved
fērclamm—sudden terrifying clutch
ferhðbana—person who inflicts death

fēðegāst—warlike spirit
flōdblāc—flood-pale
flōdegsa—terror of the flood
flōdweard—guardian of the flood
folcswēot—host
folctalu—genealogy
folcgetæl—number of the people
forðhere—advancing army
frēobrōðor—own brother
frumcnēow—first generation
gārbēam—spear
gārhēap—band of armed warriors
gārwudu—spear
*gin—vastness
gūðcyst--troop
gūðmyrce—warlike border-dwellers
gūðþrēat—troop
gylpplega—valorous combat
grydwite—punishment inflicted through
(Moses's) rod
halswurðung—necklace, torque
handrōf—strong-armed
hātwende—torrid
hæðbrōga—heath-terror
hēahlond—hill
hēahtrēow—pledge, covenant
hēahþegnung—high service
heofonbēacen—heavenly sign
hefoncolu—scorching sun
heorawulf—warrior
heorufæðm—hostile embrace, deadly
clutch
hereblēað—cowardly
herefugol—bird of prey
herewōp—cry of an army
hildecalla—war-herald
hildespell—song of battle
hleahtorsmið—entertainer
hlencan—coat of mail
gehnēopan—drag down, crush
holmig—of the sea
holmweall—wall of sea-water
hreðerglēaw—prudent, wise
ingefolc—native people
ingemen—native warriors, land-men
īsernhere—mail-clad army

lāðsīð—hateful journey
*læst—performance
lēodscearu—nation
lēodwerod—people
līcwund—wound
līgf☐r—flaming fire
lyftedor—air-roof
lyftwundor—miracle of the air
mānhūs—place of wickedness
māðmhord—treasure hoard
mægenheap—powerful troop
mægenwīsa—leader
mæstrāp—halyard
mearchof—borderland dwelling
mearcweard—guardian of the (border-
)land
mearcþreat—army
merehwearf—sea-shore
meretorr--tower of sea-water
mēring—borderland
mihtmōd—strong passion
mōdhēap—bold troop
mōdwæg—wave
mūðhæl—salvation by word of mouth
*nēp—without power
nihtweard—night guardian
norðweg—northerly track
n☐dboda—messenger of unavoidable
distress
n☐dfara—fugitive, exile
oferteldan—cover
onnīed—oppression
oðfaran—escape
oðþicgan—take away
randgebeorh—rampart
*rēofan—break
rincgetæl—company of warriors
sæcir—undertow
sæfæsten—barrier of the sea
sælāf—sea-survivor
sæwicing—sailor
seglrōd—sailyard
segncyning—king
setlrād—course
sibgemæg—kinsman
sigeb☐me—trumpet of victory

sigetīber—sacrifice for victory
sigorweorc—victorious deed
sincald—perpetually cold
sīðboda—herald of the journey
spildsīð—journey of destruction
sūðweg—road to the south
sūðwind—south wind
geswelgan—devour
sweordwīgend—warrior
þeōdmægen—company
þræcwīg—violent combat
ungrund—measureless, immense
unhlēow—unprotective
wægfaru—passage through the seas
wægstrēam—sea
wælcēasega—raven
wælfæðm—deadly clutch
wælgryre—terror of death
wælnet—coat of mail
wederwolcen—cloud
wērbēam—covenant-pillar
wēstengryre—terror of the desert
*wīcan—give way
wīcsteal—camping-place
wīgblāc—bright in arms
wīglēoð—battle-cry
wītrod—path of battle
wiðfaran—escape
wræcmon—exile
ymbwīcigean—encamp around
☐ðholm—sea-water

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