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Feminine Heroism in the Old English *Judith*¹

Christine Thijs

Introduction

The *Judith*-poet went to some lengths in order to ensure acceptance of Judith's role as a killer, even though her victim is the army general besieging her people, for the text would miss its aim if the readers were to 'feel differently about a woman doing something consciously cruel because of society's expectations of the "gentle", nurturing sex'². Perhaps the perception that fatal violence is more monstrous when committed by a woman is the reason why many critics have found a literal interpretation of the story of Judith (considered apocryphal by Protestants,³ but belonging to the Old Testament canon for Catholics, including Anglo-Saxons, as attested by Ælfric⁴), less plausible than an allegorical reading; a female hero who seeks out and decapitates the enemy with his own sword is not compatible with the still wide-spread image of Anglo-Saxon peace-weaving and cup-bearing ladies.⁵ Some recent scholarship, including the work of Sklute, Enright and Eshleman, has interpreted the peace-weaver as an influential diplomat in military and political issues, as opposed to the woman being merely the 'deposit' in a marriage between rivalling clans.⁶ Queens, like *Wealhtheow* in *Beowulf*, can arguably be interpreted as central figures maintaining power and cohesion within a warband. The universality of this political role among Germanic chieftains' wives has been demonstrated by Enright.⁷ Nevertheless, representations of women themselves physically engaging in bloodshed are very exceptional in Anglo-Saxon literature. Indeed, the very words *wepman*, and *wæpnedman* for 'man', as opposed to *wifman* for 'woman', suggest that martial activity was really a male business.

Author and Audience

No one can ever wholly escape the Platonic cave of his/her contemporaneity and thus the reader approaches everything through the lenses provided by the prejudices, emotional and mental frameworks of the 'Great Narratives' with which he/she grew up. In the same way, the author's life experience, of which gender is a large component, has a significant impact on the content, form and agenda of the text. As Klinck concludes in her study of poetic markers in relation to the gender of an author, there is no evidence suggesting the anonymous works are female- rather than male-authored, because there are no reliable tests.⁸ However, there is no reason to exclude the possibility – as is in principle the case with all anonymous work – that the Old English *Judith*-poet was a woman.⁹

Male or female, the author would in all probability have envisaged a mixed audience; there is no justification for assuming that a text was written for a single sex audience unless the content explicitly indicates this. Shepherd suggests that the Old English *Judith* may have been intended as a 'mirror for Princesses', which supports the notion of an active rather than a merely passive role for female royalty.¹⁰ In this context it should be remembered that Hrabanus Maurus, Alcuin's Frankish student, dedicated his commentary on the biblical Book of Judith to the Frankish Empress Judith. In fact, four scholars have suggested that the Old English *Judith* was written specifically in honour of Æðelflæd, Lady of the Mercians, who, after the death of her husband Æthelred of Mercia, successfully led the Mercian army into battle against the Vikings between 915 and 918.¹¹ While female military leaders were certainly rather exceptional, female writers – albeit of Latin rather than Old English – such as Eadburg, Bucge, Leoba, Ælflæd, and Berhtgyd should not be considered exceptions in an otherwise male world of literary production, but rather as a few known names confirming the notion of a much larger group of female authors than is usually acknowledged.¹²

Against an Exclusively Allegorical Reading

How shall we interpret *Judith*: as an allegory of the Church, Ecclesia, in accordance with Hrabanus Maurus,¹³ as the exemplum of triumphant virginity, following Aldhelm's and Ælfric's interpretation,¹⁴ or as a literal or even historical narrative with a real woman as protagonist?

The fact that the unique texts of *Beowulf* and *Judith* survive in the Nowell codex (later bound together with the Southwick codex in London, British Library, MS Cotton Vitellius A. xv), has led to the two texts often being studied in conjunction.¹⁵ Moreover, the hand that copied *Judith* is identical to the one which copied the second part of *Beowulf* (l. 1939 to the end). With regard to sword-wielding females, Chance suggests that the *Beowulf*-poet 'perhaps agrees that a female protagonist can avert horrible consequences for her warlike behavior only when she functions as a heroic emblem of the Church or like the warrior of Christ battling the Devil – like Judith, Juliana, and Elene in the religious epics'.¹⁶ However, the extent to which elements in *Beowulf* can be adduced in support of interpretations of *Judith* should not be overestimated. Indeed, doubts can be raised as to whether the two texts were connected in any way (other than the scribal overlap) during Anglo-Saxon times.¹⁷

Patristic and medieval commentators widely used allegorical readings, and these greatly influenced Anglo-Saxon poets, whose allegorical use of animals is illustrated amply by such texts as *The Phoenix*, *The Panther*, and *The Whale*. In narrative texts, such as *Beowulf* and *Judith*, there is, however, the danger that the more straightforward interpretation becomes neglected or even denied. The abstraction resulting from a purely allegorical interpretation reduces the characters to religious types to such an extent that they are no longer human. Shepherd entirely opposes an allegorical reading: '[O]f all the surviving [Old English poetic] treatments of the Bible, *Judith* is the one most empty of theological and typological implication'.¹⁸ Supportive of a literal narrative reading is the 'cinematographic' narrative technique used for the battle scene; this very Anglo-Saxon addition, in which the action is portrayed visually,¹⁹ is reminiscent of other heroic poetry such as the *Battle of Maldon* and the *Battle of Brunanburh*, neither of which can reasonably be viewed as religious allegories. This seems a strong indication that the poet intended to present a celebration of traditional epic qualities.

Griffith positively asserts that the characters are too real, too human to be reduced to types: 'Judith is wise, but not a typification of wisdom, and Holofernes is devilish, but not simply a mask of Satan', yet in his opinion the poet is sensitive to allegorical depiction in biblical commentaries but not writing in that tradition.²⁰ A considerable number of medieval discussions on the Old Testament book of Judith (including works by Ambrose, Jerome, Isidore, Hrabanus Maurus, Fulgentius, Prudentius, Dracontius, and Aldhelm) survive.²¹ Many contain a typological or allegorical reading. Griffith observes that the *Judith*-poet's

treatment of the source is similar to that of the *Exodus*-poet, yet that he/she 'avoids explicit reference to allegorical interpretations from patristic commentary' and instead creates a 'simple exemplum of the triumph of Christian faith over the power of evil'.²²

It has often been assumed that *Judith* is based solely on the Vulgate version, but Griffith's comparative analysis shows that the Old Latin Bible (*Vetus Latina*) offers, in many instances, a considerably fuller source for *Judith* than the Vulgate.²³ The poet may have had access to more than one Latin version. Until the Vulgate was firmly based on the recension which is best transmitted in the *Codex Amiatinus*, there was no standardisation. Irish Bibles exerted a great influence on some vernacular texts in Anglo-Saxon England. The liberties the poet took with his/her sources make it impossible to determine their precise identity. Furthermore he/she demonstrably incorporates images and symbolism occurring in Carolingian and Anglo-Saxon biblical commentaries,²⁴ and is generally considered to be a highly talented and individualistic poet making use of his/her sources in an integrated and discriminating way.

All this suggests a considerable level of formal learning, as well as intellectual sophistication, which makes it difficult to rule out an allegorical approach. The integration of the historical and the eternal, and the view that temporal conflicts are a participation in the spiritual battle between God and Satan, are in accordance with the Tyconian tradition of commentators (known in Anglo-Saxon England via Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana* and which heavily influenced Bede and many others). This approach to exegesis and historical thinking would later also form the basis for the concepts of the *miles Christi* and the Holy War. Swanton discusses the evolution from the early heroic culture, where comitatus was not yet based on race, national identity or possession of land, towards the late Anglo-Saxon and feudal position, where those situated outside one's own realm, and certainly outside the realm of Christianity, were considered as foreign, enemies, and even evil and satanic,²⁵ as is indeed the case with the portrayal of the Vikings in the *Battle of Maldon*, and *Ælfric's Life of St Edmund*.²⁶ In this climate St Martin's pacifist concept of the spiritual *miles Christi* ('Christi miles sum, pugnare mihi non licet')²⁷ rapidly changed towards that of a physical soldier of Christ, defending his native land and later even conquering new land, all in the name of Christ. As Swanton points out, '[e]cclesiastical opposition to "justifiable" bloodshed was increasingly muted'.²⁸ Anglo-Saxon monks were not supposed to engage in military conflicts but penalties were trivial when the action consisted of defence against Viking, and therefore heathen, invaders.

In this light one can agree with Astell, who, contrary to many scholars, argues that the Christological allegory of the poem is perfectly compatible with a militaristic tropology, and this without requiring a deconstruction of the unity of the poem.²⁹ She points out that '[c]learly the English at the time of Bede and Ælfric had little difficulty in connecting the allegory of salvation, so often described as a battle against the foe, with actual defensive warfare against pagan invaders', and refers to the passage in Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* (I.20) where an army of Britons 'still wet with baptismal water and full of faith in the Easter triumph, advances under the leadership of Bishop Germanus against the vastly superior forces of the invading Picts and Saxons, and miraculously overcomes them'.³⁰ Furthermore, Ælfric recommends Judith as a role-model in the spiritual but also clearly in the literal and physical sense: 'eow mannum to bysne' – and again we should probably bear in mind that 'man' can apply to mixed groups of men and women – 'þæt ge eowerne eard mid wæpnum bewerian wið onwinnende here'.³¹ It does not change the case that Ælfric was referring to his own homily on the book Judith (with Judith as a model of chastity), rather than to the poem.

To reject entirely an allegorical reading of *Judith* would be to deprive the text of a depth that was certainly a plausible consideration for its author. Chance makes a strong case for allegorical readings of *Juliana*, *Elene*, and indeed also of *Judith*.³² Nelson suggests the reading of *Judith* as the 'story of a secular saint',³³ while Griffith also acknowledges the epic elements, referring to the poem as an 'amalgam of Christian saint's life and vernacular heroic form, exemplary in purpose, and perhaps for a secular audience'.³⁴ Along similar lines, Belanoff argues for Judith to be regarded at the same time as a sacred and as a secular heroine.³⁵ In my opinion, her sacred attributes allow the audience to associate her with allegorical representations, while her secular side roots her in the realm of convincing human characters. It is, however, impossible to state confidently that a poem with human and monstrous protagonists cannot, next to a literal narrative meaning, contain an allegorical level or 'allegorical moments'; the lack of consistency is not a conclusive counter-argument.

Feminine rather than Fe-male Heroism *Traditional heroes*

Hill defines Anglo-Saxon heroic poetry as 'a tradition of narrative poetry [. . .] which celebrates the mighty deeds of heroes, whose socially determined code of

honour is tested in circumstances commonly involving physical risk'.³⁶ The poem clearly refers to the epic tradition in form, diction and content, and Judith certainly performed a mighty deed: returning home with the head of the enemy leader Holofernes, she encouraged her people to such an extent that the men, who had previously not dared to fight, stormed the Assyrians' camp and won an easy victory. Infiltrating the Assyrian camp, with only her maid for company, carried the obvious risks of being injured, killed, or, worse, violated. In order to kill Holofernes she even willingly agreed to his desire that she enter his private tent. Swanton argues that there was no real threat to her chastity, since Holofernes was utterly impotent in his drunken stupor,³⁷ but that is very much a comment with the advantage of hindsight; upon entering the camp Judith must have been fully aware that every Assyrian represented danger to her body, her honour and ultimately her soul.

The only problem with applying Hill's definition of a hero to Judith is the socially determined code of honour. Did an Anglo-Saxon audience find it acceptable that a lady of her social status should behave in such a way? Even though 'Germanic secular literature has normally afforded a dignified and often instrumental role for women in its (admittedly male-dominated) heroic depictions of society',³⁸ sword-wielding women in the surviving literature are rarely positive characters or of aristocratic status. In the description of Grendel's mother the *Beowulf*-poet briefly refers to women in a martial context.³⁹ While it has been convincingly argued, as discussed above, that some high-placed Anglo-Saxon women had considerable influence on political and therefore, if need be, martial affairs, as illustrated by *Æðelflæd*, it is very unusual to see a woman actually executing violence with her own hands. Even Modthryth, the young queen criticised in *Beowulf* for being overly aggressive, did not kill the men who dared gaze at her: she ordered them to be put to death (1933-40a).

Another essential attribute of a traditional hero is a *comitatus* of retainers, part of the socially determined code of honour in Hill's definition. Judith's lack of *comitatus* is one of Griffith's objections to viewing Judith as an epic heroine.⁴⁰ Admittedly she is not the official leader of the Bethulians, but upon her return she does exhort them to battle. As Magennis observes, she is able to give orders ('bebead', 144, and 'het', 171).⁴¹ Her exhortations, such as 'fyllan floctogan fagum sweordum' (194),⁴² and especially 'Berað linde forð / bord for breostum' (191b-192a),⁴³ are arguably reminiscent of Byrthnoth's instructions to his men, for example: 'and bæd þæt hyra randas rihte heoldon / fæste mid folman' (*Battle of Maldon* 20-21).⁴⁴ Yet at other times she employs gentle, polite, and therefore

more stereotypically feminine phrases of requesting, for example: 'hu ic gumena gehwæne [. . .] biddan wylle' (186-87),⁴⁵ which can, however, be no less compelling, as is also demonstrated by Wealhtheow in *Beowulf*: 'dryhtguman doð swa ic bidde' (1231).⁴⁶ The multitude that gather upon her return is reflected stylistically by a mixture of familiar epic features peppered with unusual elements. As Stanley observes: '[This is] a rare example of movement achieved less by verbs than by [. . .] an unusually dense massing of *nomina* [. . .] reflecting the tumultuous rushing of the joyful Israelites towards the victorious Judith'.⁴⁷

Þa wurdon bliðe · burhsittende,
syððan hi gehyrdon hu seo halige spræc
ofer heanne weall. Here wæs on lustum;
wið þæs fæstengeates folc onette,
wears wif somod, wornum ond heapum,
ðreatum ond ðrymmum þrungon ond urmon
on gear ða þeodnes mægð þusendmælum
ealde ge geonge. (159-66)⁴⁸

The welcome she receives here is more affectionate than in either of the biblical sources, and it must be a deliberate adaptation on the part of the poet. Ultimately, when Judith exhorts the Bethulians to go into battle against the Assyrians, they do as she bids, which makes them no less her retainers than the Mercian warriors were Æthelflæd's or indeed than Hrothgar's were also Wealhtheow's.

Wisdom

Kaske refers to Isidore of Seville's definition of a hero, which calls for a combination of the virtues *sapientia* and *fortitudo*:

Heroicum enim carmen dictum quod eo virorum fortium res
et facta narrantur. Nam heroes appellantur viri quasi aëri et
caelo digni propter sapientiam et fortitudinem.⁴⁹

While the Latin *vir* is the equivalent of the OE *wer* rather than of *man* (which would be *homo*),⁵⁰ the maleness of Isidore's heroes does not indicate the impossibility of female heroism, but reflects the reality that heroic deeds and

martial matters were typically the domain of men. Isidore's requirement of *sapientia* and strength is fulfilled by the *Judith*-poet. The Vetus Latina version contains more references to Judith's wisdom than the Vulgate.⁵¹ Kaske discusses the Old English Judith's wisdom,⁵² and notes that her strength is mainly a constancy of mind, rather than brawn (which would masculinise her). A large number of epithets refer to her wisdom and her determination: 'gleaw on geþonce' (prudent in mind, 13), 'ferhðgleawe' (prudent, 41), 'ða snoteran idese' (the wise lady, 55), 'þrymful' (glorious, 74), 'þa wearð hyre rume on mode' (then it became spacious in her mind, 97), 'searoðoncol mægð' (the shrewd woman, 145), 'seo gleawe' (the prudent one, 171), 'þurh ludiðe gleawe lare' (through Judith's prudent advice, 333), 'þære beorhtan idese [. . .] gearoþoncolre' (to the ready-witted bright lady, 340-41). In the latter phrase, the word *beorht* really seems to approximate the modern 'bright' in the sense of 'intelligent'.⁵³ Her wisdom, as Griffith remarks, is, however, not equal to that of traditional Germanic women: it is not prophetic,⁵⁴ which would involve magic or fortune-telling; on the contrary, her wisdom is miraculous, entirely based on her unconditional faith. The only prophetic streak Judith can possibly be credited with is her knowledge of Christ and the Trinity:

Ic ðe, frymða god, ond frofre gæst,
bearn alwaldan, biddan wylle (83-84)⁵⁵

This type of anachronism is not unusual, as the Church Fathers saw the Old Testament as a prefiguration of the New. Gregory the Great, who was very influential on the Anglo-Saxon Church, wrote in one of his Homilies on Ezechiel that the Old Testament saints were saved by their faith in the future passion and resurrection of Christ since they loved and believed in Christ before he came.

Gender

Conventional heroic features cause unconventional elements to conflict sharply. In this way, recognisably heroic battle scenes help to emphasise the most unusual nature of Judith's battle with Holofernes: (1) he is not an acceptable lord; he gets excessively drunk, mistrusts his retainers (as expressed by the 'two-way mirror' mosquito net⁵⁶), and inspires fear so that his men do not dare to disturb him at a time of crisis. (2) He is slain in his sleep, which is the antithesis of a heroic death in the heat of battle. (3) His heroic slayer is a woman whose femininity, rather

than the masculine aspects of her action, is emphasised. This seems, however, not unproblematic.

The Anglo-Saxon *Judith*-poet, makes no attempt to masculinise his heroine, but on the contrary emphasises her femininity: she acts as much as possible as a noble female and her heroic epithets are, as Magennis observes, always accompanied by a feminising noun, for example: 'ides ellenrof' ('the brave lady', 109 and 146), 'mægð modigre' ('a courageous woman' 334), 'collenferhðe eadhreðige mægð' ('bold triumphant ladies' 135).⁵⁷ The poet strives, as Magennis astutely put it, to avoid her becoming 'either monstrous or some kind of honorary male'.⁵⁸ The feminine representation includes female weakness when it comes to weapon-wielding.⁵⁹ She is presented as nervous and frightened, and it is only through her piety and prayer that she manages to gather the necessary resolve to perform the deed that to a man would have been too easy to be honourable. Here, as elsewhere, the language and style reflects the unconventional content: hypermetrical lines, no epic formulas, hardly any poetic diction, and the lack of oppositional phrases allow the scene to gather momentum.

In addition, the actual beheading could apparently not be performed by an ordinary woman. The crucial phrase is 'ides ælfscinu' ('noble lady of elven brightness'). Was the act of killing a man felt as such a transgression of the boundaries of femininity that Judith temporarily also needed to transgress the boundary of humanity and take on elvish qualities? This theory would be even more attractive if the word 'ælfscinu' were to occur at the crucial moment of the actual beheading, rather than in l. 14a where it is said that it has now been four days since she first sought him out in his own camp. Not Judith but Holofernes transgresses species boundaries: she beheads 'þone hæðenan hund' ('the heathen dog' 110). Or possibly the deceitful way in which she created the opportunity to kill him, rather than the decapitation, was felt to be transgressive. The Judeo-Christian tradition depicts a number of women as deceiving, tricking, and bringing down men by seduction and temptation, starting with Eve.⁶⁰ However, the otherwise intact image of the virtuous, pious and wise Judith perhaps did not allow for this incongruity without the insertion of some supernatural element. Swanton argues for the negative connotations of the 'ælf-' part of the compound, stating that it touches on the 'Gebiet des Unheimlichen' and contains 'magische und somit gefährliche Untertöne'.⁶¹ He refers to the *Beowulf*-poet's inclusion of the elves among the evil races descending from Cain. Jente discusses the element in other compounds, such as 'ælfadl' ('nightmare'), 'ælfside' ('nightmare'), 'ælfðone' ('nightshade'),⁶² all of which convey a sense of elves being connected

with fear, illness, madness, and death. A negative layer of meaning could also be attributed to *-sciene* by association with the word 'scinna' ('evil spirit'), which appears in *Beowulf* in the phrase 'scuccum and scinum' ('demons and evil spirits', 939).

Others, however, such as Stuart and Griffith, have argued for a positive interpretation of the word, along the lines of 'wonderfully beautiful', supported by the fact that *Ælf-* is a popular element in Anglo-Saxon names (e.g. *Ælfric*, *Ælflæd*, *Ælfwine*, *Ælfred*, etc).⁶³ The second element, *-sciene* ('shining brightness'), is also generally used in a positive light, which Griffith illustrates quoting 'sunsciene' ('radiant as the sun', *Juliana* 229), 'wlitesciene' ('shining with beauty', *Genesis B* 527), and the epithet 'mæg ælfscieno' for Sarah ('a woman beautiful as an elf', *Genesis A* 1827 and 2731) as descriptions of feminine beauty.⁶⁴ The phrase 'ða beorhtan idese' ('the bright lady', 58b, see also 254 and 340) equally attributes brightness to her, which could be in the sense of physical beauty, if taken as reported thought of Holofernes and the Assyrians. If, however, this is to be read as the voice of the narrator, the sense is probably referring to moral virtue rather than mere physical beauty. Swanton relates Judith's brightness here to that of Eve and her role as temptress (*Genesis B*, 626-27, 700-01, 821-22), taking her dress and jewellery (36b-37a), as well as the arrangement of her hair ('wundenlocc', 'with twisted hair', 77, 103) to be further features of seduction.⁶⁵ Yet the rings and bracelets form part of the description of a traditional Anglo-Saxon lady: 'Wealhþeow [. . .] cynna gemyndig, / grette goldhroden, guman' (612-14) and 'beaghroden cwen' (623).⁶⁶ The jewellery is equally applied to the virgin in lyric 9 of *Christ I*,⁶⁷ while the adjective 'wundenlocc' also refers to the Jews' hair in general (325).

Griffith highlights the Vulgate statement that Judith's beauty was miraculously increased by the virtue of her purpose (10.4). With the 'ælf-' compound the poet may have been substituting the original miraculous element with a native supernatural reference: the mythological race of elves and the magic associated with them. In any case, the governing noun 'ides', the normal Old English word for 'lady', seems to confine our heroine to the realm of respectable and positive humans.⁶⁸ In conclusion, one could not go further than acknowledge both the positive elements and the scope for uncomfortable 'elvish' layers of meaning. As Swanton says about women's role in general, Judith in the Assyrian camp is 'attraktiv und schrecklich zugleich'.⁶⁹

Feminism and Stereotypes

Of the biblical Book Judith it has been said, from a feminist viewpoint, that 'it is almost too good to be true',⁷⁰ but this is not the case for the Old English poem, or at least not in a straightforward way. I disagree with Swanton's assessment that Judith represents 'einen militanten Feminismus', but would be happy to emphasise the 'spezifisch weibliche Eigenschaften' which he also acknowledges.⁷¹ The Anglo-Saxon Judith is much less 'a threat to gender divisions' than her biblical counterpart:⁷² the element of sexual seduction is carefully edited out, and Holofernes' own lust and drunken stupor deliver him helpless into her hands. Magennis has demonstrated how the *Judith*-poet negotiates the stigma associated with a woman entering the male territory of heroic violence by portraying her as passive, vulnerable and frightened;⁷³ her success is due solely to God's help. Even the beheading itself is described as clumsy and inexpert: with the sword in hand she takes twenty lines to prepare and pray for help in killing her sleeping opponent. She lacks the physical strength to be a warrior; to convey this the poet elaborated the biblical detail that she needs to hack at his neck twice:

Sloh ða wundenlocc
þone feondsceaðan [. . .]
[. . .] þæt heo healfne forcearf
þone sweoran [. . .]
[. . .] Næs ða dead þa gyt [. . .]
[. . .] Sloh ða eornoste
ides ellenrof oþre siðe
þone hæðenan hund, þæt him þæt heafod wand
forð on ða flore. (103-11)⁷⁴

In the Vulgate this passage reads simply: 'et percussit bis in cervicem eius et abscidit caput eius' (13.10); the Old Latin version contains essentially the same: 'et percussit in cervice ejus bis [or: semel et iterum] in virtute sua, et abstulit caput ejus ab illo'.⁷⁵ In addition, the Anglo-Saxon Judith has too much emotional sensitivity to be a warrior, as is expressed repeatedly in her prayers. The Old Testament Judith is emotionally much more robust, cool under pressure, using her beauty to manipulate her victim, and, though pious and grateful for God's help, much more in control of the situation.

The following passage from Bede's account of the peace of King Edwin implies that being a woman with a child was the most vulnerable situation in which one could find oneself:

Tanta autem eo tempore pax in Brittaniam [. . .] fuisse perhibetur ut, sicut usque hodie in proverbio dicitur, etiam si mulier una cum recens nato parvulo vellet totam perambulare insulam a mari ad mare, nullo se ledente valeret.⁷⁶

Tacitus describes displays of female vulnerability as an encouragement to men facing their enemies in battle,⁷⁷ which also features in Wulfstan's *Sermo Lupi*. In the latter the urgent call to piety motivated by the approaching Doomsday contains a scarcely concealed Germanic call to valour through the image of a man forced to watch his kinswoman being raped.⁷⁸ Both examples are very effective at encouraging the warriors, be it through virtue or bravery in battle, to protect what they hold dear. Heroic poetry has a similar function: it presents men with heroes as role models and with images of respectable but vulnerable women for whom the heroes fight courageously, if necessary to the death, and from whom they receive important gifts and support in their ambitions. The epic poet celebrates male heroic behaviour and encourages women to encourage men. The Old English Judith, more than her counterpart, is lady-like; her character is developed from the notion that it has really come to something if a lady (not just any woman, but an, aristocratic and therefore respectable one) needs to go out into the enemy camp with all the risks that entails, in order to initiate military action; it is thus arguably meant to shock men into martial bravery.

Yet stereotypes are not an entirely rigid concept, but one that is to be broken – and, one might argue, therewith reinforced – in extreme circumstances. At Beowulf's funeral not only the women but the Geatish men too were crying and mourning openly: 'hæleð hiofende [. . .]' ('the men, lamenting, [. . .]' 3142); 'Higum unrote / modceare mændon' ('with a sad spirit they uttered their grief' 3148-49); extreme disaster, such as the death of the famous but heirless king and, linked with it, the seemingly unavoidable annihilation of the tribe by its enemies, calls for extreme reactions: the men abandon their stereotype of 'locking up emotions in their hearts' as is prescribed in the gnomic part of the *Wife's Lament*,⁷⁹ and for once surrender to feelings of despair. Similarly, Judith's excursion into the enemy camp is a-stereotypical. Her people have already spent

days under siege without water, and annihilation is rapidly approaching. Her transgression of the stereotype, however, differs from that of the Geatish men in an important aspect: since she is a pious Christian woman,⁸⁰ for all of her nervousness, she does not despair, yet instead trusts in God to the extreme. The physical risks to which she exposes herself are considerable. However, the poet allows us insight into her mind and faith; there is no doubt about God's protection: 'Heo ðær ða gearwe funde / myndbyr(d) æt ðam mæran þeodne' (2-3); 'Ne wolde þæt wuldres dema / geðafian [. . .] ac he him þæs ðinges gestyrde' (59-60).⁸¹ The reader knows that Judith's success is guaranteed, and so in fact does she, since her faith is so strong; one could claim, therefore, that she was not in any danger at all whilst in the Assyrian camp.

This duality occurs in other facets as well. Judith is brave and heroic in an active, almost masculine way, taking military action, carrying out an attack on the enemy, yet simultaneously the poet emphasises her fragility which she acknowledges in her prayer, her passivity (she is brought to Holofernes' tent at his command, not going there at her own initiative), her feminine waiting for an opportunity (it is already her fourth day in the Assyrian camp), and her manoeuvring the body to allow for an easy kill ('hu heo þone atolan eaðost mihte / ealdre benæman', 75 and 'swa heo þæs unlædan eaðost mihte / wel gewealdan' 102-03).⁸² The latter is distinctly unheroic in all aspects: it would have been considered most dishonourable for a hero to drag his opponent by the hair, to kill him in his sleep (as Grendel's mother does to *Æschere*), and to need two strikes to sever a sleeping man's head. Swanton applies the shame of the actual beheading, 'bysmerlice' ('shamefully', 100), to both Holofernes and Judith.⁸³ For a male hero this scenario would indeed be shameful. However, it is exactly by emphasising her feminine vulnerability and lack of skill at sword-wielding that the poet succeeds in re-creating his protagonist as a lady who, in spite of her gender, manages to perform an heroic act rather than confidently acting like a masculine heroine.

Humility and Christianity

The effectiveness of the poem as an exemplary and inspirational narrative is based on the Christian concept of total humility vis-à-vis God. Humility is assumed of the audience and repeatedly highlighted as one of Judith's features. Judith is the opposite of *Beowulf* in this respect: she does not promote herself as

qualified for the job of assassin of the enemy; she does not boast about her strength or about any previous achievements. Instead she openly admits in her prayer to weakness and nervousness: 'torne on mode' (grievously in mind, 93b) and 'hate on hreðre minum' (hotly in my heart, 94a). God rewards this humility by granting her strength 'þa wearþ hyre rume on mode' (then it became spacious in her mind, 97b).⁸⁴ Humility can also be discerned in Judith's speech: she is not boastful or self-important, yet is nevertheless authoritative, as can be gleaned from the verbs 'bebead' ('commanded', 144) and 'het' ('ordered', 147 and 171) and from the fact that the Bethulians obeyed her orders.⁸⁵ Judith's humility is also reflected stylistically. For example, in the first few lines of the poem (as it stands) God or epithets for God frequently occupy the a-verse, while Judith herself is referred to mainly by means of pronouns in the b-verse:

Heo ðær ða gearwe funde
myndbyr(d) æt ðam mæran beodne, þa heo ahte mæste þearfe
hyldo þæs hehstan deman, þæt he hie wið þæs hehstan brogan
gefriðode, frymða waldend. Hyre ðæs fæder on roderum
torhtmod tiðe gefremede, þe heo ahte trumne geleafan
a to ðam æimihtigan. (2-7)⁸⁶

The main action is clearly divine; Judith the woman is instrumental. The emphasis on God's support and on her constant faith, expressed in her prayer for aid and mercy before and during the killing, and in her giving thanks after the event, clearly depicts her as a humble, pious person rather than as a more traditional Germanic type of epic heroine, proud of her own achievement.

Conclusion

For the Bethulian victory there was, as Swanton observes, no practical need to kill Holofernes: the Assyrians had already been put to flight before Holofernes' death was discovered.⁸⁷ Yet Judith's deed was essential to effect the metamorphosis of the Bethulian men from a dejected despairing crowd into a courageous band of warriors resolved to fight for their freedom. Christianising the figure of Judith is an important part of securing approval for her unusual features, both as a heroic figure and as a lady. Similar to her Old Testament model, she is depicted as pious and clearly bestowed with God's approval; who are we, as readers, to raise

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eyebrows over her actions? Her piety and humility, expressed in prayer before she is summoned, her prayer with sword in hand (while the tension rises, and the risk of discovery increases), and an elaborate prayer of thanks, acknowledging that she could not have achieved her victory without God's help, repeatedly reinforce the principle that whatever she did was according to God's will. Her faith and piety also help to emphasise her femininity in the stereotypical sense: the whole event is a trial for her; she is not interested in personal glory and, above all, she is not bloodthirsty, which, while acceptable or even positive in a man, would be monstrous in a woman.

NOTES

¹ I am grateful to Mary Swan, Eric Stanley, and Iain Kerr for useful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

² Helena Kennedy, *Eve was Framed: Women and British Justice* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1992), p. 245, fn. 2.

³ In Swanton's opinion Judith's behaviour makes it 'kein Wunder daß ["die Apokryphe Judith"] vom jüdischen wie vom christlichen Kanon ausgeschlossen wurde' [no wonder that [the apocryphal Judith] was excluded both from the Jewish and from the Christian canon]; Michael Swanton, 'Die altenglische Judith: Weiblicher Held oder frauliche Heldin', in *Heldensage und Heldendichtung im Germanischen*, ed. by Heinrich Beck (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988), pp. 289-304 (p. 296). The reason for the exclusion, however, rather than the content, appears to have been both Jerome's and the Protestants' objections to the text lacking a Hebrew version and having only the Septuagint transmission. See G. W. Anderson, 'Canonical and Non-Canonical' and S. R. Greenslade, 'Appendix I: The Apocrypha in the English Versions', in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, ed. by P. R. Ackroyd, C. F. Evans, and S. R. Greenslade (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963-70), respectively i, 113-59 (esp. pp. 155-59) and iii, 168-70. On the use made by the pious of the apocrypha, see Richard Marsden, *The Text of the Old Testament in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 450-51.

⁴ *Angelsächsische Homilien und Heiligenleben*, ed. by Bruno Assmann (Kassel: Wigand, 1889), and Peter Clemoes' reprint (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964) offer the following reading at the end of Ælfric's 'Summary of the Book of Judith' (surviving only in the badly charred London, British Library, MS Cotton Otho B. x): 'Nis þis nan leas spel: hit stent on leden, nis on ðære bibliothecan' [This is no false story: it stands in Latin and is not part of the book treasury] (p. 114, ll. 404-05). The first assertion, 'this is no false story', seems curiously incongruous with the statement that the book is not part of the 'book treasury', that is the Holy Scriptures. Stanley established that the second 'nis' is an erroneous conjecture for letters which under ultraviolet light clearly read 'þus'; Eric G. Stanley, 'Ælfric on the Canonicity of the Book of Judith: *Hit stent on leden þus on ðære bibliothecan*', *Notes & Queries*, 230 (1985), 439.

⁵ This observation has been made by several scholars. See, for example, Hugh Magennis, 'Gender and Heroism in the Old English *Judith*', in *Writing Gender and Genre in Medieval Literature*, ed. by Elaine Treharne (Cambridge: Brewer, 2002), pp. 5-18 (p. 5); and *Judith*, ed. by Mark Griffith (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1997), pp. 67-70.

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⁶ L. John Sklute, 'Freoðuwebbe in Old English Poetry', in *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature*, ed. by Helen Damico and Alexandra Hennessey Olsen (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 204-10; Michael Enright, *Lady with a Mead Cup: Ritual, Prophecy and Lordship in the European Warband from La Tène to the Viking Age* (Blackrock: Four Courts, 1996); Lori Eshleman, 'Weavers of Peace, Weavers of War', in *Peace and Negotiation: Strategies of Coexistence in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. by Diane Wolfthal (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), pp. 15-37.

⁷ Enright, *Lady with a Mead Cup*, pp. 12-14.

⁸ Anne Klinck, 'Poetic Markers of Gender in Medieval "Woman's Song": Was Anonymous a Woman?', *Neophilologus*, 87 (2003), 339-59.

⁹ Coincidentally, Caponigro assumes a female author ('Auctrix') for the Septuagint version; Mark Stephen Caponigro, 'Judith, Holding the Tale of Herodotus', in *No One Spoke Ill of Her': Essays on Judith*, ed. by James C. VanderKam (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992), pp. 47-59.

¹⁰ G. Shepherd, 'Scriptural Poetry', in *Continuations and Beginnings*, ed. by Eric G. Stanley (London: Nelson, 1966), pp. 1-36 (p. 12).

¹¹ Thomas G. Foster, *Judith: Studies in Meter, Language and Style*, Quellen und Forschungen, 71 (Strassburg: Trübner, 1892), pp. 90-103; Edith E. Wardale, *Chapters on Old English Literature* (New York: Routledge, 1965), pp. 215-17; Charles L. Wrenn, *A Study of Old English Literature* (London: Harrap, 1967), p. 181; and Bernard F. Huppé, *The Web of Words: Structural Analyses of the Old English Poems: 'Vainglory', 'The Wonder of Creation', 'The Dream of the Rood', and 'Judith', with Texts and Translations* (Albany: State University of New York, 1970), p. 147. For a thorough discussion on Æthelflæd, see Frederick T. Wainwright, 'Æthelflæd, Lady of the Mercians', in *New Readings on Women*, pp. 44-55.

¹² Damico and Olsen, 'Introduction', in *New Readings on Women*, p. 15.

¹³ Hrabanus Maurus, *Expositio in Librum Judith*, PL 109, col. 546, 558.

¹⁴ Aldhelm, *De virginitate*, in *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. by Rudolf Ehwald, MGH, AA XV (Berlin: Weidmannos, 1919), pp. 316-17. *Ælfric's Homilies on 'Judith', 'Esther', and the 'Maccabees'*, ed. by Stuart D. Lee (1999) <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~stuart/kings/main.htm>.

¹⁵ See Peter Lucas, 'The Place of *Judith* in the *Beowulf*-Manuscript', *Review of English Studies*, 41 (1990), 463-78 and *Judith*, ed. by Griffith, pp. 1-4 for a discussion of previous scholarship on the manuscript and for views on how much of the beginning of the text is missing.

¹⁶ Jane Chance, *Woman as Hero in Old English Literature* (Syracuse, NY: University Press, 1986), p. xvii.

¹⁷ Jack suggests that *Judith* was a later addition to the collection focusing on monsters and giant creatures; *Beowulf: A Student Edition*, ed. by George Jack (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 1.

¹⁸ Shepherd, 'Scriptural Poetry', p. 12.

¹⁹ See Alain Renoir, 'Judith and the Limits of Poetry', *English Studies*, 43 (1962), 146-55.

²⁰ *Judith*, ed. by Griffith, p. 79.

²¹ Griffith offers an exhaustive list (pp. 71-72, n. 240).

²² *Judith*, ed. by Griffith, p. 51.

²³ Griffith offers both Latin sources in Appendix III (pp. 177-85), indicating by means of italic typeface which parts were used or adapted by the poet. *Bibliorum Sacrorum Latinae Versiones Antiquae, seu Vetus Italica*, ed. by Petrus Sabatier, 3 vols (Rheims: [n. pub.] 1743), I, 744-90 [facsimile available]. The Paris edition (1751) is said to be less accurate. Griffith also offers a few readings from Bodleian MS Auct.E., infra 1-2, and Munich MS 6239 which differ from Sabatier's text, and yet appear to be closer to the poet's source. For the Vulgate (and variants in Vulgate manuscripts some of which dependent on the Vetus Latina) see: *Biblia Sacra iuxta latinam vulgatam versionem ad codicum fidem*, ed. by Francis Aidan Gasquet (Rome: Typis polyglottis vaticanis, 1950) VIII, 211-80. This full text is the one underlying Weber's edition: *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, ed. by R. Weber (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1969).

²⁴ Carl T. Berkhout and James F. Doubleday, 'The Net in *Judith* 46b-54a', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 74 (1973), 630-34 (esp. pp. 632-33).

²⁵ Swanton, 'Die altenglische Judith', pp. 289-91.

²⁶ *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. by Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), pp. 212-17; *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, ed. by Walter W. Skeat, EETS, o.s. 76, 82, 94, 114 (London: Trübner, 1881-1900), pp. 315-35

²⁷ 'I am a soldier of Christ; fighting is not permitted to me.' Sulpicius Severus, *Vie de Saint Martin*, ed. by Jacques Fontaine, Sources Chrétiennes, 133-35 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1969).

²⁸ Michael Swanton, *English Poetry before Chaucer* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 2002), p. 166.

²⁹ Ann Astell, 'Holofernes's Head: *Tacen* and Teaching in the Old English *Judith*', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 18 (1989), 117-33. Until Astell's work, Pringle was the only critic harmonizing the allegory with the patriotic motive, but he did so by dividing *Judith* into parts for *oratores* and *bellatores*, and interpreting the poem as emphasising the need for monastic reform and chastity if one was to secure God's assistance in driving back the Vikings; Ian Pringle, 'Judith: The Homily and the Poem', *Traditio*, 31 (1975), 83-97.

³⁰ Astell, 'Holofernes's Head', p. 131.

³¹ 'as an example for you, men' and 'that you protect your land with weapons against an attacking army'. Ælfric, 'Letter to Sigeward', in *The Old English Version of the Heptateuch*,

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ed. by Samuel J. Crawford, EETS, o.s. 160 (London: Oxford University Press, 1922; repr. with additional material by N. R. Ker, 1969), p. 48.

³² Chance, *Woman as Hero*, pp. 31-52.

³³ Marie Nelson, 'Judith: A Story of a Secular Saint', *Germanic Notes*, 21 (1990), 12-13.

³⁴ *Judith*, ed. by Griffith, p. 82. Other genre discussions have concluded that the text contains a mixture of the saint's life and other genres such as panegyric, epic, romance, and sermon: Erich Auerbach, *Literary Language and Its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages*, trans. by Ralph Mannheim (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), pp. 281-86 and Rosemary Woolf, 'Saints' Lives', in *Continuations and Beginnings*, pp. 37-66 (p.40). The earlier view of *Judith* as a Christian epic is discussed by Ivan Herbison, 'The Idea of the "Christian Epic": Towards a History of an Old English Poetic Genre', in *Studies in English Language and Literature: 'Doubt wisely', Papers in Honour of E. G. Stanley*, ed. by M. Jane Toswell and Elizabeth M. Tyler (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 342-61 (pp. 348-54).

³⁵ Patricia A. Belanoff, 'Judith: Sacred and Secular Heroine', in *Heroic Poetry in the Anglo-Saxon Period*, ed. by Helen Damico and John Leyerle (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1993), pp. 247-64.

³⁶ Joyce Hill, 'Heroic Poetry', in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Michael Lapidge and others (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 236-37 (p. 236).

³⁷ Swanton, 'Die altenglische Judith', p. 300.

³⁸ *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, ed. and trans. by S.A.J. Bradley (London: Dent, 1982), p. 301.

³⁹ 'Wæs se gryre læssa / efne swa micle swa bið mægþa cræft, / wiggryre wifes be wæpnedman' (1282-84). [The terror (of Grendel's mother's onslaught) was less just by so much as the strength of women, and the war-terror of a woman (are less feared) by an armed man].

⁴⁰ *Judith*, ed. by Griffith, p. 67.

⁴¹ 'commanded' and 'ordered'. Magennis, 'Gender and Heroism', p. 8.

⁴² 'cut down the leaders with gleaming swords.'

⁴³ 'proceed carrying (lime wooden) shields, shields in front of your chests.'

⁴⁴ 'and he ordered that they hold their shields fast properly with their hands.'

⁴⁵ 'now I want to bid each of the men.'

⁴⁶ 'the men do as I bid' or indeed 'men, do as I bid.'

⁴⁷ Eric G. Stanley, *In the Foreground: 'Beowulf'* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1994), pp. 152-53.

⁴⁸ 'The citizens rejoiced as soon as they heard how the saint spoke over the high wall. The army was filled with joy; the people hastened towards the fortress-gate, both men and women, in multitudes and swarms, in throngs and troops they jostled and ran, old and young in their thousands, towards the handmaiden of the Lord.' Here I give Stanley's translation, as it best reflects the point he makes. Stanley, *In the Foreground: 'Beowulf'*, pp. 152-53.

⁴⁹ 'A poem is called heroic because in it the affairs and deeds of strong men are narrated. For men are called heroes when they are as it were worthy of heaven on account of their wisdom and strength'. *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive originum libri xx*, ed. by Wallace M. Lindsay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), I.39.9; also note VIII.11.98 and X.2. Robert E. Kaske, "'Sapientia et fortitudo" in the Old English *Judith*', in *The Wisdom of Poetry: Essays in Early English Literature*, ed. by Larry D. Benson and Siegfried Wenzel (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1982), pp. 13-29, 264-68.

⁵⁰ For the early semantic development of the word, see Alfred Bammesberger, 'Urgermanisch *mann: Etymologie und Wortbildung', *Studia Etymologica Cracoviensia*, 5 (2000), 7-12.

⁵¹ *Judith*, ed. by Griffith, Appendix III (pp. 177-85) and see also p. 71, notes 237-39.

⁵² Kaske, "'Sapientia et fortitudo"', pp. 21-26.

⁵³ For 'beorht' the meanings of (literal) 'faculty of sight' as well as (metaphorical) 'intelligence' are listed in *A Thesaurus of Old English*, ed. by Jane Roberts, Christian Kay, and Lynne Grundy, 2 vols (Amsterdam-Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 2000).

⁵⁴ *Judith*, ed. by Griffith, p. 73. On the Germanic ideal of prophetic women, see Fred C. Robinson, 'The Prescient Woman in Old English Literature', in *The Tomb of Beowulf and Other Essays*, Fred C. Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), pp. 155-63 (pp. 159-60 on *Judith*); Patricia A. Belanoff, 'The Fall (?) of the Old English Female Poetic Image', *PMLA*, 104 (1989), 822-31 (mainly on *Genesis B*); and Thomas D. Hill, 'Sapiential Structure and Figural Narrative in the Old English *Elene*', *Traditio*, 27 (1971), 159-77.

⁵⁵ 'I want to pray to you, God of creation, and ghost of comfort, son of the almighty.'

⁵⁶ For a detailed discussion see Berkhout and Doubleday, pp. 630-34.

⁵⁷ Magennis, 'Gender and Heroism', p. 16.

⁵⁸ Magennis, 'Gender and Heroism', p. 6.

⁵⁹ The *Beowulf*-poet also remarks *en passant* that female warriors are less dangerous than male ones (ll. 1282-87).

⁶⁰ Although, strictly speaking, Satan was the seducer, while Eve acted with the best of intentions, the patristic tradition and later commentators have frequently portrayed her as the cause of Adam succumbing to evil.

⁶¹ 'the realm of the uncanny' and 'magical and therefore dangerous undertones'. Swanton, 'Die altenglische Judith', p. 297.

⁶² Richard Jente, *Die mythologischen Ausdrücke im altenglischen Wortschatz*, *Anglistische Forschungen*, 56 (Heidelberg: Winter, 1921), pp. 172-73.

⁶³ H. Stuart, 'The Meaning of OE *ælfscienc', *Parergon*, 2 (1972), 22-26 (p. 22).

⁶⁴ *Judith*, ed. by Griffith, p. 110.

⁶⁵ Swanton, 'Die altenglische Judith', p. 297.

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⁶⁶ 'Wealhtheow [. . .] mindful of the traditional customs, laden with gold, greeted the men' and 'ring-adorned queen'.

⁶⁷ *The Advent Lyrics of the Exeter Book*, ed. by Jackson J. Campbell (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1959).

⁶⁸ Or are there any grounds to assume that in Anglo-Saxon folklore elves already had a hierarchical society, such as, for example, can be found in the early fourteenth-century *Sir Orfeo*, where they have castles, courts, kings, and hunts?

⁶⁹ 'attractive and terrifying at the same time.' Swanton, 'Die altenglische Judith', p. 297.

⁷⁰ James C. VanderKam, 'Introduction', in *No One Spoke Ill of Her*, p. 2.

⁷¹ 'a militant feminism' and 'specifically feminine features'. Swanton, 'Die altenglische Judith', p. 300.

⁷² Amy-Jill Levine, 'Sacrifice and Salvation: Otherness and Domestication in the Book of Judith', in *No One Spoke Ill of Her*, pp. 17-30.

⁷³ Magennis, 'Gender and Heroism', pp. 5-18.

⁷⁴ 'The curly-locked one struck the foe so that she half cut his neck [. . .] At that point he was not dead yet [. . .] The brave zealous lady then struck the heathen dog on the other side, so that his head rolled onto the floor.'

⁷⁵ 'and she struck twice on his neck and cut his head off' and 'and she struck his neck twice (or: once and again) in her virtue, and took his head off from him'.

⁷⁶ 'It is related that there was so great a peace in Britain [. . .] that, as the proverb still runs, a woman with a newborn child could walk throughout the island from sea to sea and take no harm.' *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, ed. by Colgrave and Mynors, p. 192.

⁷⁷ '[E]t in proximo pignora, unde feminarum ululatus audiri, unde vagitus infantium. Hi cuique sanctissimi testes, hi maximi laudatores. Ad matres, ad coniuges vulnera ferunt; nec illae numerare aut exigere plagas pavent, cibosque et hortamina pugnantibus gestant'. [Close by them, too, are those dearest to them, so that they hear the shrieks of their women, the cries of infants. They are to every man the most sacred witnesses of his bravery. They are his most generous applauders. The soldier brings his wounds to mother and wife, who do not shrink from counting or even demanding them and who administer food and encouragement to the combatants.] *Cornelii Taciti opera minora*, ed. by Michael Winterbottom and Robert M. Ogilvie, Oxford Classical Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), *Germania*, § 7.

⁷⁸ *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*, ed. by Dorothy Whitelock (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1966), ll. 87-90.

⁷⁹ 'geong mon [. . .] / [. . .] habban sceal / bliþe gebæro, eac þon breostceare, / sinsorgna gedreag' (42-45).

⁸⁰ On the anachronism of her Christianity, see above.

⁸¹ 'She readily found protection from the glorious Lord' and 'The Judge of glory would not permit that [. . .] but He prevented him from that thing'.

⁸² 'how she might most easily deprive the terrible man of his life' and 'so that she might most easily manage the wicked one effectively.'

⁸³ Swanton, 'Die altenglische Judith', p. 299.

⁸⁴ See Kaske, "'Sapientia et fortitudo'", pp. 23-24 on the use of 'spacious' in the sense of wisdom and courage.

⁸⁵ For further examples see Judith's speeches upon her return to the Bethulians, ll. 152b-58 and 177-98.

⁸⁶ 'There she then readily found protection at the hands of the glorious Lord, at a time when she had most need of the highest judge's grace, so that he, the ruler of creation, defended her against the most acute horror. In this the glorious father in heaven granted favour to her, who always had true faith in the almighty' (my emphasis).

⁸⁷ Swanton, 'Die altenglische Judith', p. 302.