Heroic Slaughter and Versified Violence:
A Reading of Sacrifice in Some Early English and Carolingian Poetry of War

Anthony Adams

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Anthony Adams
Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Toronto

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the function and expression of sacrificial violence in a group of texts on heroic themes that were composed in the ninth and tenth centuries in England and France. The introduction offers a preliminary survey of theories of sacrifice, specifically those that have proven most useful in analyzing literary texts. It also presents an overview of how the metaphors of the 'sacrificial' and the 'traumatic' have been used by both classical and medieval scholars. It is one of the assertions of the thesis that medieval authors actively looked (and called) for signs of heroic sacrifice in their own times, and this is reflected in certain poems on contemporary events. Chapter one traces the development of heroic poetry from Vergil's *Aeneid* and Lucan's *Bellum civile* through the adaptation of the form by Christian poets, and the 'rediscovery' of secular and historical subjects in the early medieval period. Chapter two looks briefly at sacrifice in Classical literature before turning to its re-interpretation by Christian writers, including St Paul and St Augustine; Christian sacrifice was influenced by the language of military service and heroic action, resulting in poems that blended the language of martyrdom and militancy, such as Prudentius' *Liber Peristephanon*, Fortunatus' hymns on the Cross, and the Old English *Dream of the Rood*. Chapter three analyzes the development of heroic sacrifice and its concomitant violence in the *Paderborn Epic*, the Old English *Judith*, the *Bella Parisiacae urbis* of Abbo of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, and *The Battle of Maldon*. The chapter closes with an analysis of how heroic sacrifice is appealed to in one major event in the life of Otto I. Chapter four looks at the need to interpret the times experienced by some observers of ninth- and tenth-century warfare, and at the elements of horror and trauma that occur in literature when sacrificial violence fails, including readings of Lucan, *Beowulf*, the *Bella Parisiacae urbis*, and the Latin rhythmical poem 'The Battle of Fontenoy'. A conclusion provides a glance ahead into the later period through the Middle English *Havelok*, and some remarks on sacrificial violence and modes of literature.

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation presents a reading of the theme of sacrifice in selected early medieval poetry of war, a claim that will require several definitions and qualifications. Through a close reading of Anglo-Saxon and Carolingian literary texts chiefly from the ninth and tenth centuries, I am seeking to provide a reading of scenes of violence that are either presented ostensibly as comprising a scene of sacrificial violence, or that fit comfortably within a framework of sacrificial violence established by earlier texts. Thus, both explicit and implicit scenes of sacrifice will be considered. The texts I have chosen, which are mostly poetic, involve as their central theme martial conflict, although in some cases the fragmentary state of the text remaining to us has left only a strong suggestion of the impending violence in the textual material preceding the lost sections.

Scholarship on the ninth and tenth centuries in England and France has identified a number of trends related to the development of historical writing, a category which includes both annalistic endeavors such as the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, freer versions involving a significant re-reading of history such as Notker's *Gesta Karoli*, as well as poetry. The very real crises of these years—the threat from foreign peoples, the struggle between kingdoms and between families for control over political power, and the numerous claims to the thrones and questions over rightful succession—all contributed to the efforts to record and interpret those events, in the light of the writers' knowledge and sense of historical progress. These interpretations therefore were deeply imbued with both historical, religious, and literary hues, and it is acknowledged that even the driest of annals might contain a flicker of misprision brought on by the writer's Biblical background, and also that the most purple patch in heroic verse possibly contains a dram of truth concocted along the numerous allusions to the Bible and classical lore. No less than at other times, early medieval reading and writing worked together to produce interpretations and records of the events of these turbulent centuries, when the very idea of national identity and cohesion was yet within the crucible, working to create, in

Jennifer Neville's words, 'imagined communities' of readers.[1] The work of Coupland, Dutton, Garrison, Godman, McKitterick, Nelson, Reuter, and Wallace-Hadrill, and most recently Goldberg and MacLean, have demonstrated that the Carolingian and Ottonian written record includes numerous attempts, in both poetry and prose, to read the events of their present in the light of scriptural history and Biblical record, as well as a desire to compare their present leaders to their illustrious ancestors. On the Anglo-Saxon side, Davis, Foot, Frank, Godden, Harris, Lapidge, Orchard, Neville, Robinson, Szarmach, and Thormann have argued that the record in Old English and Latin also demonstrates a keen desire to understand the present within the literary and historical record of the recent and even poetic past. The insights and scholarship of these scholars and others will play a significant role within this thesis. I have also chosen to make use of Classical scholarship in the fields of Latin poetry and the epic tradition which touches upon these issues, and which seems especially relevant to the question of when current history and peoples are read within the light of their literary models.[2]

My project seeks to examine how certain scenes of sacrificial violence functioned in early medieval literary texts. In some cases, these scenes seem to have served as models for the behavior of rulers and citizens; in others, the meaning and narrative significance of such scenes seems to have been read into contemporary events of the ninth and tenth centuries, in the writing of texts which featured current or fairly-recent events, and living or recently deceased persons. The scenes of sacrifice could take several different forms, and could function in various ways. Using models from older epic and heroic poetry, and sometimes from prose, writers sought to impose a heroic and sacrificial model upon their own difficult or insecure times, which seemed so often to be in need of a hero, and so often in need of sacrifice. The models for this form include the final combat between Aeneas and Turnus in the *Aeneid*, and also the binding of Isaac; furthermore, the self-sacrifice of Jesus becomes, in Christian poetic texts, yet another potent exemplum of heroic sacrifice. This sort of claim for literary reading of the past

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[1] Neville, 'History, Poetry, and "National" Identity', 109–11.

[2] Among the most relevant are Hardie, *Epic Successors*, and Quint, *Epic and Empire*. The broader critical on the topics of nationhood and national identity must include references to Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*; and the essays in Bhabha (ed.), *Nations and Narration*.

into the present is not new, as it is clear that this has been one of the most frequent calls to write since Vergil, at least, interpreted the Augustan mission, however qualified he did so, within a heroic pattern stretching back to Aeneas, Homer, and the Trojan War. However, this has not yet been done comprehensively for the period I have studied. Moreover, my own project is deeply limited to those scenes specifically of sacrifice, and will not seek to raise the equally-important questions of larger patterns and cycles, or of specifically Biblical interpretations of current events, or of how such readings may have played out on the political scene, or how this might be evident in the record of manuscript transmission. All of these are excellent questions, and some have been spiritedly engaged already by scholars, but they will not be my concern.

My study will thus feature a category division in the texts I have chosen. One side will show how sacrificial models were applied successfully to historical events, in a successful act of heroic re-interpretation, usually meant to function as a model for another, sometimes related, ruler. Texts such as the *Paderborn Epic*, which lionized Charlemagne for his own heirs to model, and such as the Old English *Judith*, which features an Old Testament heroine and which may itself have been meant as an inspiration for current rulers battling in the midst of the Danish conflict, differ therefore from Abbo's *Bella Parisiacae urbis* and the *Battle of Maldon*, which feature either confused and incomplete endings, or which attempt to place defeat within the best possible (heroic and sacrificial) light. This is not limited to poetry, obviously, as Janet Nelson and Simon MacLean have demonstrated in work on the historical writings of Nithard and Notker; in each case, the writers attempt to deal with troubling current events or an uncertain leader through a significant attempt at reading these events through the lens of heroic action and heroic models.[3] Here too, I am working on already well-trodden ground; yet, previous scholarship has not looked deeply at the role that sacrifice has had to play in these interpretations, and in some case, such as the Ottonian kings and their own literary record, much literary-analytical work remains to be done at every level.[4]

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[3] Nelson, 'Ninth-Century Knighthood'; and MacLean, *Kingship and Politics*.

[4] For example, Hrotsvitha scholarship has made many inroads, yet much of it, especially in English, has seemed to analyze her at a remove from the larger tradition within which she worked. Moreover, the majority of work has focused on her dramatic output, somewhat less on her versifications of saints' lives, and even less still on the *Gesta Oddonis*.

My thesis will also seek to examine the reverse side of heroic sacrifice, what I call traumatic (or horrific) sacrifice. As Vergil is the primary exemplar of the former, Lucan's *Bellum civile* is the primary exemplar for the latter. His depiction of the horrors and emptiness of civil war and the elusive attainments of sacrifice can be seen to culminate in the *aristeia* of the centurion Scaeva, and also in the death of Pompey.[5] The grotesque and near-comic dismembering of these men show Lucan at his excessive best (or worst), and also demonstrate the questions he raises about the real cost of such forms of sacrifice. This form, which has close ties to what Northrop Frye termed the 'ironic' mode of literature,[6] reveals both the excesses and failures contained precisely within (though not always acknowledged, revealed, or celebrated) such forms of sacrificial violence, and which result in a delight in mutilation and grotesque horror for its own sake, and also for the sake of revenge (which is not a true type of heroic sacrifice, since it tends to be repeated in the form of counter-vengeance, and does not either inaugurate peace or bring violence to a close). There is a connection as well with the grotesque humor alluded to by Curtius, and by other writers on the medieval sense of dark humor.[7] This form of violence has been the focus of consistent and penetrating studies of Middle English texts, such as *The Siege of Jerusalem* or *Alliterative Morte Arthure*, and includes the numerous accounts of violence done to Muslims and Jews in medieval literature. But it is also evident in Abbo's *Bella Parisiacae urbis*, in the Carolingian rhythm 'Battle of Fontenoy', to an extent in the *Waltharius*,[8] and in the prose writings of Nithard,[9] Notker,[10] and the *Vita sancti Edmundi* of Abbo of St Fleury.[11]

The study of sacrifice in both its strictly religious and cultural forms has steadily grown in popularity within the field of literary studies over the past decades; although it

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[5] Recent work touching this topic include Johnson, *Momentary Monsters*; Leigh, *Lucan: Spectacle and Engagement*; and Masters, *Poetry and Civil War*.

[6] Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, pp. 33–42.

[7] Curtius, *European Literature*, pp. 417–35. See also the essays collected in Halsall (ed.), *Humour, History and Politics*, especially Innes, '"He Never Even Allowed"'.

[8] Strecker (ed.), *Waltharius*, MGH PLAC vi:24–85.

[9] Müller (ed.), *Nithardi historiarum libri IIII*, MGH SSrG.

[10] Haefele (ed.), *Notker von St-Gallen. Die Taten Karls des Großen.*

[11] Winterbottom (ed.), *Three Lives of English Saints*, pp. 67–87.

has its origin firmly in the disciplines of comparative religion and anthropology, scholars in other fields have found it both necessary to deal with the theme, partly owing to its ubiquity, and also have found it a compelling trope (or a useful analogue) for reading a range of contemporary concerns, and for considering the intersection of politics, violence, and narrative. Thus, in addition to anthropologists, historians of religion, and theologians, sacrifice in its various guises (heroic, civic, destructive, failed, for example) has become a focal point for the concerns of classical scholars, medievalists, and trauma theorists.

Interpreted broadly, sacrifice can represent the decision of an individual to sacrifice him or herself for the greater good, an act memorialized by Vergil's Neptune as representing a universal law of *unum pro multis dabitur caput* ('one head will be given for the many', *Aeneid* 5.815). The act of a Sidney Carton, for example, or of Jesus Christ, to offer himself up to death in order that others might live and flourish, or so that others might be forgiven their transgressions, are classic examples of self-sacrifice. This act is also referred to by some writers as martyrdom, although martyrdom *per se* should involve a specified cause (political or theological) which will be advanced by the martyr's death. The flip side to the act of self-sacrifice is the decision to sacrifice another person under the operation of the same law. A central example of this type is the sacrificial 'close call' of Isaac by Abraham in the Book of Genesis (22:1–19). By extension, the sacrificial edict often seems not to require human intervention, and to operate without their conscious intervention, so that this universal law takes on the appearance of being a law of the universe, albeit often only a narrative universe. Whether the narrative's point of view is that of sacrificant or sacrificand, the suffering and death of the one benefits the many, sometimes without their knowledge, and sometimes even against their will.

The scenes of sacrifice in the poetic narratives I have focused on function both to initiate certain vital courses of action, and to bring these same actions to a close; sacrifice can thus be both initiatory and cessatory in origin and purpose. Sacrifice often heralds the death of an old realm, season, or way of life, and the beginning of a new one; it is not a coincidence that the *Aeneid* nearly begins and ends with the verb *condere*, which Vergil uses to mean both 'to found [a city]' and 'to bury [a sword]' in one's enemy.[12]

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[12] At 1.5 and 12.950: for further analysis, see James, 'Establishing Rome with the Sword'.

Alternatively, sacrifice can also be read as a ritual act by which a cycle of violence is brought to a close; on the other hand, sacrifice gone wrong, or what I call 'horrific sacrifice', serves to initiate or escalate a cycle of violence. These two versions connect at a powerful level, wherein a human death is presented not as random violence, or vengeance, but instead as a sacrifice. This new guise gives the killing the cloak of ritual, and of greater importance. The technique (which the cultural theorist René Girard calls *masking*), although deceptive, is frequently presented as an essential step in the construction of culture and empire.[13] In this process of sacrifice, the individual and the community are united, with the single man, the hero, representing the larger whole. This is true whether the hero is slaying a 'monster' (defined most broadly), or offering himself as a sacrifice, a *devotio*, on behalf of his group.[14] Generally speaking, the sacrificial categories for the hero to find him or herself are those of 'attacking monsters' or 'becoming a martyr'. Ideally, both will have the same narrative function, as they seek to draw the action of the narrative around them, attempting to coalesce the action in order to simplify it and remove doubts and confusions. Each sacrifice is just that—an attempt to clarify and solidify the chaos that attends to societies which are prone to violence and upheaval.

What I am calling 'traumatic' or 'horrific sacrifice' characterizes those moments when what is intended as heroic sacrifice goes awry, or when the attempted sacrifice becomes merely a killing, such as in revenge narratives. In such circumstances, the narrative, far from working to conceal or erase the violence through reference to the larger narrative of success, of a quest coming to a close, or of a war being brought to completion, instead emphasizes the horrific circumstances of the sacrificial death, which renders the death's violence more palpable in all of its degrees. The narrative might offer a counter-blast to this horror by means of humor, or it might seek to amplify the horror through elaborate and mannered descriptions.[15] And one also finds a narrative revealing

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[13] Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, pp. 23–43; Bandera, 'Sacrificial Levels', 229.

[14] For studies of the Roman *devotio*, see Versnel, 'Destruction, *Devotio*, and Despair', and idem, 'Self-Sacrifice, Compensation, and the Anonymous Gods'.

[15] Examples of the first are detailed in Curtius, *European Literature*, pp. 431–3. One of the prime examples of grotesque sacrifice remains Lucan's description of the centurion Scaeva, whose *aristeia* I will discuss in chapter four.

the flawed sacrifice as exemplary of a 'traumatic heroism', one which understands boldly its own failures, its own limitations, and indeed suggests that they are unavoidable within the heroic and sacrificial code.[16] It is this last form that has arguably become the mode best-established in the twentieth century; yet, there is evidence of this in the early medieval period, as writers wondered whether the heroic narratives of sacrifice they told, retold, and believed in were still valid in a world of changing circumstance and dire loss.

In his study of the conventions and aspirations of epic, David Quint argued that this form of poetry tended to get written by the victors of martial (and even cultural) conflict.[17] The need for the epic to close off previous ways of experience, and to declare that a new way, or realm, or model, has begun, can in fact only be written by those who have successfully 'come through' the conflict. Yet, one could argue that frequently this sort of reading is imposed upon events and persons while the outcome remains undecided; one could even argue that there are times when such writing could serve the perilous cause, as a piece of propaganda. He goes on to argue that 'romance' is the form attractive (or cognizant to) the losers, and that its own cyclical form allows for a persistent retelling and forestalling of the unpleasant events that have resulted in a different outcome than hoped-for. I would note that the cyclical nature of traumatic events is also one familiar to tragedy, as well as epic—it is the recurring cycle of bloodshed and revenge that Aeneas's slaying of Turnus finally brings to a close. If anything, romance is the genre left to those who seek to retell and even relive the events of the past without feeling the need to confront the unpleasant realities of the present, and as such would have been, in Quint's scheme, the most attractive form for the losers of a traumatic event such as the Norman Conquest—one with traumatic consequences for the Anglo-Saxons most of all.

Viewing sacrificial scenes in narrative in this way allows us to access the insights of trauma theory, which posits that violence, especially sacrificial violence, can function as a response to traumatic history. The field of trauma studies is a fairly new outgrowth

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[16] I have borrowed the phrase 'traumatic heroism' from Farrell, *Post-Traumatic Culture*; the concept I am describing, however, has been touched upon by numerous medieval scholars, including Allen Frantzen, Peggy McCracken, Aranye Fradenburg, and Eugene Vance.

[17] Quint, *Epic and Empire*, pp. 21–48.

of a combination of the insights of literary criticism, psychoanalytic criticism, and historians, particularly those of catastrophic historical events such as the Holocaust. The concept of trauma (from the Greek τραύμα, 'injury, wound') originated with the field of psychiatry, and can be defined after the definition offered by the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* as a collection of symptoms of mental disorder, anxiety, and 'psychic numbing' following the experience of events 'outside the range of usual human experience', and including war, rape, torture, or accidents causing serious physical injury.[18] Significantly, trauma affects an individual's understanding of their own history, and their memory, so that mental recollections of the event become increasingly more recurrent, and seemingly more real, as the person experiencing trauma loses the ability to distinguish between past events and present time. The pain of past experiences becomes relived from moment to moment in the present, and the reminder of physical harm becomes imprinted recurrently upon the person's mental state—what are popularly referred to as 'flashbacks'. Alternatively, some subjects experience trauma as dissociation, as mental images and memories of the painful event become forcibly broken off from the subject's remaining memories. Violence that produces trauma thus begets violent emotions of pain and anguish, or a lack of emotion, as the subject becomes unable to correlate the traumatic memories with the remainder of his or her sense of reality, or personal narrative. It is this last insight which has proven particularly attractive to historians and literary scholars, including classical and medieval scholars, since it engages with the contemporary concern with the fashioning of narratives at both the level of the individual and of the community, or nation. A traumatic event is one which disrupts certain organizing principles which allow an individual to maintain his or her sense of identity. In the language of self psychology, a field of study which has proven very attractive (and, at times, productive) for literary critics, trauma is caused by 'the unconscious meaning of real occurrences' by shattering the subject's existing and crucial 'meaning structures'.[19] Despite the problems (justifiably criticized)

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[18] *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 3rd edition, pp. 236–8; cited in Willis, '"The gnawing vulture"', 26–7.

[19] Ulman and Brothers, *The Shattered Self*, pp. 2–6. Self psychology is a field of psychoanalysis developed primarily by the controversial Heinz Kohut; see Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self*; and idem, *Self Psychology and the Humanities*.

of generalization and universalization inherent in such rather sweeping analyses of culture and individuals, the insights of the model offered by self psychology has been attractive to literary scholars for its ability to unpack the ways that narratives often foreground the difficulty that characters have with dealing with traumatic events.

THEORISTS OF SACRIFICE

Attempts at comprehensive theories of sacrifice originated in the scholarly disciplines of comparative religion, anthropology, and theology, and as such can have only a tangential, and possibly circumspect, relationship to the analysis of literature and art. Nevertheless, a brief survey of the most commonly accepted models of the rationale of sacrifice is essential for my purpose, since so many of the theories have influenced and informed the study of literature. Moreover, scholarly observers now commonly understand that narratives of myth, ritual, religion, and fiction, all performative to one degree or another, are not so different as once perceived to be, and this renders the anthropological theories of sacrifice a useful starting point for discussions of the meaning of sacrificial action in heroic literary texts.[20]

An early, and long-standing, anthropological theory of sacrifice in early cultures posits that it is essentially a gift, one 'made to a deity as if he were a man', and which evidences strong parallels with prayer.[21] Sacrifice is also progressively symbolic, or, in other words, progressively seen, even by its practitioners, as 'essential'. Thus, the smoke or fire of a burned offering, that which could be considered the medium by which the sacrifice (and the prayers or pleas of the participants) reached the gods, came to receive greater prominence over time. Although later anthropologists criticized early theorists such as Tylor for overstating the presence of animism in the ritual purpose of sacrificial action (the 'dead ancestor' theory), some element of the 'gift-model' remains nearly ubiquitous, although in highly-qualified forms.

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[20] A useful anthology of texts devoted to sacrifice is Carter (ed.), *Understanding Religious Sacrifice: A Reader*. See also the theoretically-inclined survey by Keenan, *The Question of Sacrifice*.

[21] Tylor, *Religion in Primitive Culture*, pp. 461–78.

A more specific theory suggests that the act of giving and receiving had wider ramifications among the participatory groups, and that the sacral sharing of essentials such as food helped define members of a group. Robertson Smith's classic study of Semitic religions defines sacrifice clearly as a 'species of social eating', one demarcated most essentially by its being a communal activity. The resultant mood of the participants is one of delight, even rapture, and Robertson Smith detects a 'habitually joyful temper [in] ancient sacrificial worship'.[22] Sacrifices which seem to counter this model, such as the *'olah*, are considered to be later developments of an earlier communal meal, the *zebaḥ*, in which the meat offering is not thoroughly consumed by fire, but shared with the participants in the ritual.

Hubert and Mauss believed that sacrifice functions as a means 'to mediate the arrival or the departure of the divine'.[23] Each sacrificial offering, or each victim, 'contain a spirit that is liberated by its [own] death'; the expulsion of this sacred spirit is a 'primordial component' of sacrifice, as central as the act of communion is.[24] For these critics, the spirit being expelled is strongly connected to the victim's blood, or is in the blood; this spirit allows a relation between two separate realms, human and divine, to come into being. Sacralization of the victim, and the subsequent desacralization, helps define the boundaries of the human and divine realms, and also the limits of their interaction.

Evans-Pritchard, whose work on African peoples helped expand the consideration of sacrifice beyond the European frontiers, felt that the sacrificial actions he observed among the Nuer was primarily piacular in nature; additionally, the thing sacrificed became specifically a substitute for the sacrificant, and was a gift to the gods with which the sacrificant was identified.[25] This process of 'identification' was, for Evans-Pritchard, one of the essential means by which an object of great economic and social value, such as the initiatory ox each Nuer boy receives from his father upon his reaching manhood,

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[22] Robertson Smith, *Lectures*, p. 260; see also pp. 226–7, 240–69; cited in Chilton, *Temple of Jesus*, p. 7.

[23] Hubert and Mauss, *Sacrifice*, p. 11, 23, 35, 44, 77–8; cited in Chilton, p. 11.

[24] Hubert and Mauss, *Sacrifice*, pp. 32–45, 65, 66, 69.

[25] Evans-Pritchard, 'Meaning of Sacrifice'; idem, 'Some Features and Forms'; and idem, 'Some Features of Nuer Religion'.

becomes endowed with sacral value. The name of ox and young man become difficult to differentiate as a result of their constant intermingling in dances and games, so that 'in listening to Nuer poems one is often in doubt as to whether it is the ox or the man that is being spoken about'.[26] The custom is continued in activities of a more dangerous kind, such as in battle, as well as in the lengthy scarification rituals which accompany the initiation ceremonies.[27] His work was taken up by the French Structuralist de Heusch, who criticized Evans-Pritchard for his perhaps-unconscious dependence upon Judaeo-Christian models for African sacrifice. In an important argument, he questions the reliance upon 'identification' in interpreting Nuer sacrifices, suggesting instead that 'possession' or ownership is a better way of conceptualizing the relationship.[28]

Another pair of French Structuralists, Detienne and Vernant, returned to the notion that the fostering of social community was the primary goal, and outgrowth, of sacrifice.[29] The fact that a specific social group participated in the ritual was essential, and determinative of the boundaries of said group. Sacrifices are defined as special meals at which the gods are present, and these celebrations serve to define the membership in a human and earthly group. Such communal rituals also stress a communication with the gods, or with the divine, which is also a reminder of the usual separateness from that realm (of divinity). The sacrifice of animals served as well to remind the community that the human position was in between that of gods and beasts. Both included a variety of non-ethnographic data in their interpretations, including analyses of Hesiod's account of early myth, and the narratives told by Greek vases. The confusion that results when one sphere of animals (the domestic, for example) is treated as if wild (as happens in Book Twelve of the *Odyssey* in the story of Helios' cattle) is dangerous to the establishment of these essentially cosmic boundaries.

None of these paradigms, basically anthropological in nature, are exclusive to one another, but neither are they easily reconciled. Further analysis was to come from

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[26] Evans-Pritchard, 'Sacrificial Role of Cattle', 184.

[27] The concept of 'identification' as Evans-Pritchard uses it is more fully explored in Seligman, 'The Unconscious in Relation to Anthropology'.

[28] De Heusch, *Sacrifice in Africa*, pp. 8–9. A lengthy and critical discussion of de Heusch from a Christian theological perspective is available in Chilton, *Temple of Jesus*.

[29] Detienne and Vernant (eds.), *Cuisine of Sacrifice*.

scholars trained in classical studies, and whose primary source of evidence was drawn from Greek cultural examples.[30] Evolutionist theory of sacrifice defines it as primarily a model of killing, rather than of communion. The work of Meuli and Burkert, scholars of ancient Greek religion, posit that sacrificial ritual developed, chronologically, subsequent to killing, and was, in essence, a form of atonement. Fear of vengeance prompted a ritualized form of absolution on behalf of the killer that involved the entire community. The origin lies in the act of hunting itself. Meuli termed this ritual of atonement a 'comedy of innocence', in which the killing action which begins in grief ends with the pleasant resolution of the human society. In a lengthy linguistic analysis of the origins of the word 'tragedy', Burkert attempted to connect the word with ritual rather than with art, primarily in an effort to counter the theories of Welcker and Wilamowitz, who had popularized the idea that 'tragedy' is best etymologized as the 'song of the goats', not a 'song sung at the sacrifice of a goat'; their move aimed at eliminating the potential *realia* of sacrificial acts from the scene of the performance. Enhancing his extensive (and exhaustive) philological investigations with appeals to art history as well, Burkert establishes convincingly that the latter etymology, with its ritualistic and bloody origins, is likely to be the correct one. Burkert connects the word *tragos* with a Greek sense of passing male virility; the offering is a *vilis hircus*, not a youthful and still-promising buck.[31] The Olympian feast sacrifice is one of the few Greek sacrificial festivals for which any significant data exist, although it is hardly to be said that it is well understood. The ritual involved separating from the meat of the animal the thigh-bones, fat, tail, and gall-bladder, which are then burned for the god who is being honored.[32] What is a key development for Burkert, however, and for the study of sacrifice, is that it does not appear sensible to interpret the burnt offering as an offering of a gift of food to a god (*contra* Wilamowitz, Nilsson, and Robertson Smith). He follows the suggestion of Meuli, who connected this act to similar act of Siberian hunters, who presented the thigh-bones

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[30] Although many scholars refer to a Graeco-Roman tradition, it has been primarily Greek culture and religion providing the material.

[31] Burkert, 'Greek Tragedy and Sacrificial Ritual', 100.

[32] Burkert, 'Greek Tragedy and Sacrificial Ritual', 104.

of a slaughtered animal to a god.[33] Meuli's explanation centers on interpreting the thigh-bones as special not because they are food, but because they preserve the vital essence of the animal, the marrow. The act is a demonstration of respect for the 'continuity of life', the acknowledgement that killing another being, even an animal, is a situation for guilt, which must then be expiated. The ritual of sacrifice that results Meuli terms the *Unschuldskomödie* ('comedy of innocence'), and the purpose is to cover the slaughter of a being with the necessary veneer of expiatory ritual. 'Thus in the sacrificial feast the joy of the festival and the horror of death interpenetrate. The Greek sacrificial rites represent in vivid detail human aversion to killing and the feelings of guilt and remorse caused by the shedding of blood'.[34] Indeed, it is this shedding of blood, this killing, that is at the center of every act of ritual sacrifice: 'the destruction of life [is] the sacral center of the action'.[35] It is the hunt for the kill, and the killing, that creates the need for the guise of sacrifice.[36]

The deeper significance for Burkert's project is the adaptation of the symbols of sacrificial rituals to other cultural artifacts, especially in literary depictions. This search for significance leads first to the tragic form of drama, an art which is connected via its very etymology to the sacrificial slaying of a goat for Dionysus. The act of killing presents ambivalence in the mind of the one who kills—'the intoxication of blood and the horror of killing', which present 'something fundamentally uncanny' to the participant.[37] Here, we can observe a connection with the earlier observations of Robertson Smith, who had stressed the importance of joy, even rapture, in a community's act of sacrifice. Partly,

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[33] Meuli, 'Griechische Opferbräuche', at n. 34; see also Smith, *Imagining Religion*, pp. 53–65, who discusses the ethnographic dichotomy between agricultural societies and hunting societies, in relation to the hunt.

[34] Burkert, 'Greek Tragedy and Sacrificial Ritual', 106.

[35] Burkert, 'Greek Tragedy and Sacrificial Ritual', 109.

[36] A possibly relevant analogue to Meuli's suppositions concerning the Siberian hunters and their treatment of the goats is the story told of Thor in Snorri Sturluson's *Gylfaginning*, Anne Holtsmark and Jón Helgason (eds.). On a journey to Útgarð, Þórr and Loki stop at a farmhouse, where Þórr slaughters (*skar*) his goats and has them boiled (*soðit*) in a kettle. Lerer ('Grendel's Glove', 726–9) notes the similarities to the Indo-European traditions described by Burkert in *Homo Necans*, pp. 89–90, and discusses the relevance to sacrificial imagery. Compare the Germanic evidence gathered by de Vries, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*, 1:419.

[37] Burkert, 'Greek Tragedy and Sacrificial Ritual', 113.

we might explain this as an essential element of the 'comedy'—such sacrifice, sanctioned by the community and by the sacrality of the actors, is safely removed from the realm of unsanctioned killing, which is slaughter, or murder. And it is this latent, normally sublimated, element of horror that tragic drama illuminates.

Among the most comprehensive attempts at connecting sacrifice and narrative to a theory of culture is that of René Girard. For Girard, who began as a literary historian and has become one of the better-known (and controversial) theorists on the cultural meaning of sacrifice, sacrifice is deeply interconnected with desire, specifically that form which Girard calls 'mimetic' desire. This desire manifests itself in the drive to possess something another person already has (whether object, quality, skill, or status) merely because they possess it. This leads to an effort to displace the other person (or, as more frequently called in contemporary discourse, the other), to displace, disenfranchise, or destroy them; it is this desire that Girard defines as directly antithetical to human culture, being the root of all violence. Girard terms this desire-to-destroy the 'sacrificial crisis', occurring when an established sacrificial order breaks down (or is believed to have broken down), and violence erupts as a result, leading to chaos that must be resolved through the victimization of one of the parties involved in the violence. The breakdown of the social order results in violence being directed at a victim—in Girard's terminology, a surrogate. Violence is directed by the community against a single individual target; this target can be a single individual person, but it can also be a single homogenous group of individuals (which, for the purposes of his model, functions in the same way as an individual). According to the Girardian model, this redirection of violence onto a single individual, or upon a homogenous group is not only the basis for all sacrificial ritual and meaning, it remains the basis of all institutional practice and all cultural order as well. The act of communal sacrifice stems from communal violence, and is also a means by which the community at large works simultaneously to conceal and avert violence. In the Girardian model, sacrifice arises originally as a response to some crisis, to which violence was the first response, a violence which grew from individual acts to community carnage—the madness of the mob. The crisis, whatever it may be in actuality, is perceived as social, and some crime or set of crimes is held to be its cause. A culprit is found, a marginal figure or marginal group, which can be held responsible by the larger

community. This is Girard's figure of the scapegoat, modeled after the Jewish version, but detached from its cultic significances. Girard's inspiration for this conceptual model is Greek culture, but, unlike Burkert and Meuli, who use a wide range of Greek sources, literary and archaeological, Girard's analysis is primarily dependent upon literary texts, especially Greek tragedy.[38] For his model, the example of *Oedipus Rex* is the *locus classicus* of sacrifice in action. Oedipus's crime is interpreted as the cause of the plague of Thebes, and it is he who must suffer so that Thebes might survive; the one must suffer for the many. Of course, in the play the crime of Oedipus is presented directly as the cause—in other words, the interpretation is correct. For Girard, however, the performance in the play is an example of the mythologizing of societal violence. Myths introduce the element of sacrality, and raise the victim of violence to the status of that of a god or hero. The opposite can also occur, and an individual (or group) can become demonized, as their characters are held to be truly evil. In either case, the violence is justified because of their crimes. The ritual act of killing a victim restrains and assuages the communal violence at its root, and societal harmony is restored. The concept here is identical to Meuli's 'comedy of innocence', since in neither case is the victim actually guilty, but they must be seen to be in order for the ritual act of sacrificing to be valid, and for order to be restored.[39]

Whether or not Girard's model is sustainable as a model for culture—and there are many indications that it is not—it has proven valuable to students of narrative.[40] It is in this regard that classical scholars have adopted Girard's ideas and made use of them in analyses of classical tragedy and epic, for the topoi of sacrifice—the one and the many, the innocent victim and the willing and self-sacrificing hero—abound in narratives of all

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[38] Studies of sacrifice in Greek tragedy have been extraordinarily voluminous; among the most intriguing are Foley, *Ritual Irony*; and Goff, *The Noose of Words*, who each offer useful perspectives on Girardian criticism. See also Easterling, 'Tragedy and Ritual'; Goldhill, 'Modern Critical Approaches to Greek Tragedy'; idem, 'Violence in Greek Tragedy'; Hawk, 'Violent Grace'; Olivia, 'Transforming Rhetoric'; Pucci, 'Human Sacrifice in the *Oresteia*'; Segal, 'Greek Tragedy and Society'; Seidensticker, '*Peripeteia* and Tragic Dialectic'; and Vernant, 'Ambiguity and Reversal'.

[39] See Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, the central text of his theories on sacrifice, and also his *I See Satan Fall*, in which the theory is expounded in interview form. Numerous reviews of his work have appeared, some positive, some not. Overviews of his work with an application to literary studies include Foley on Greek tragedy (primarily Euripides), and, less favorably, to theology, by Chilton, *Temple of Jesus*.

[40] See the treatment by Foley, *Ritual and Irony*, and also the caveat issued by Mitchell-Boyask, 'Dramatic Scapegoating'.

sorts, in antiquity, the medieval period, and on through to the present day, in literature both sacred and profane.

Classicists have offered a significant number of interpretations which have aimed to read the myriad of actual and pretended sacrifices present in both epic poetry and tragic drama.[41] For scholars of Latin poetry, the most significant scenes for their analyses has been drawn from the *Aeneid*, Book Two in particular, especially the section of the poem moving from Sinon's false tale of his own near-escape from sacrifice at the hands of the Greeks, the interpretation he offers for the meaning of the Horse, and the death of Laocöon during an actual sacrifice (left uncompleted as a result).[42] Putnam referred to the death of Laocöon as symbolizing, perhaps metonymically, the later destruction of Troy itself.[43] Block, Hardie, and Manuwald in turn offered traditional refinements to Putnam's reading, which identified the poetic and narrative techniques at work in the story, and which also underlined the tale's significance in the *Aeneid* as a whole.[44] However, the story of Sinon is not the only instance where sacrificial imagery plays an crucial role in the *Aeneid*. Other sections of the poem which brought sacrifice to the foreground also came to be discussed in these terms. Brenk, Nicoll, O'Hara, and Putnam have studied, within the contexts of the classical tradition, the sacrificial imagery and language in the loss of the slumbering Palinurus at the end of Book Five (5.858–60; earlier demanded by Neptune at 5.814–15).[45] The deaths of Pallas and Turnus, especially the latter, have also been read as sacrifices.[46] Such scholarship has provided elucidation of the types and significance of sacrifice within the *Aeneid*, and also, to a lesser degree, within Roman and classical tradition as well. Yet, none of these chose to actively engage with larger

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[41] Several recent dissertations have attempted such readings in Greek epic and tragedy: Hitch, 'King Of Sacrifice' (on the *Iliad*), Mori, 'Alliance, Ambush, and Sacrifice' (on the *Argonautica*), and Olivia, 'Transforming Rhetoric' (on Euripides).

[42] This is not to overlook the large amount of actual sacrifice mentioned in the poem: 10.519–20; 12.113–15. See also Dyson, *King of the Wood*, 186; and Hardie, 'Closure in Latin Epic', p. 144.

[43] Putnam, *Poetry of the Aeneid*, p. 24.

[44] Block, *Effects of Divine Manifestation*; Hardie, 'Sacrifice of Iphigeneia'; and Manuwald, '*Improvisi aderunt*'. In this they were anticipated by Heinze's brief note in *Virgil's Epic Technique*, p. 366 n 15.

[45] Brenk, '*Vnum pro multis caput*'; idem, 'Wind and Waves'; Nicoll, 'Sacrifice of Palinurus'; O'Hara, *Death and the Optimistic Prophecy*, pp. 19–35, 82–4, 106–10; and Putnam, 'Unity and Design'. See also Dyson, '*Caesi iuvenci*'; and Nielsen, 'Aeneas and the Demands of the Dead'.

[46] Gross, 'Mantles Woven With Gold'; Horsfall, '*Non viribus aequis*', 49–50;

discussions of sacrificial topoi within literature, and also chose to steer clear of theories which attempted a comprehensive discussion of sacrifice across cultural traditions, such as the theories of Girard.

Sacrificial violence and sacrificial death is basically no more than killing for a cause. The violence can be read as beneficial if it results simultaneously in the closure of a previous cycle of violence and the reimposition of order, either the older order reestablished or a new order commencing from the moment of the coup-de-grâce. Thus, the killing of Turnus at the end of the *Aeneid* is beneficial violence, since we are to understand that his death has a twofold purpose, bringing the war between the Latins and the Trojans to a close, and inaugurating a new world order, one which will result in the reign of Augustus. Yet, theorists of sacrifice (such as René Girard) have suspected that every such act of beneficial violence is at the same time unstable at its core, acting as a mask for nothing more than revenge. Heroic literature asks us to believe in the fiction that Aeneas killing Turnus is different than Turnus slaying Pallas since it intends to stop the war, and also establish the Augustan imperial project. With Turnus' death, the epic comes to an abrupt close, and the hero's destiny seems fulfilled. The killing of Turnus is clearly termed as a sacrificial act by Aeneas' own words: 'Pallas te hoc uulnere, Pallas / *immolat*' (*Aeneid* 12.949).[47] Of course, this sacrifice killing is also obviously an act of vengeance—Aeneas kills Turnus to avenge the death of Pallas, his fury spurred by the sight of Pallas' own baldric. And the poem also hints that Vergil is aware of the thin line separating such beneficial sacrificial violence from its opposite. Such tensions have been felt by classicists for some time now, and the discussion of exactly to what extent Vergil portrayed the killing of Turnus as ambivalent is a very live debate.[48]

This sort of sacrificial action is not mob violence, not the action of a group taking vengeance, or the act of one individual acting purely for personal motives. The narrative portrays the act as beneficial violence, since it focuses attention upon the individual of prowess acting for the greater good. Aeneas is the hero, acting on behalf of his people,

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[47] 'Pallas, with this wound, Pallas *sacrifices* you.' My emphasis.

[48] See the articles of Bowra, 'Aeneas and the Stoic Ideal', 16–19, and Garstang, 'Tragedy of Turnus', as well as the more recent Genovese, 'Deaths in the Aeneid', esp. 25–7; James, 'Establishing Rome'; and Johnson, 'Aeneas and the Ironies of *Pietas*'.

and for their benefit. Just as the memory of Pallas is summoned in the slaying of Turnus, so does Aeneas, acting as sacrificant, symbolize the people for whom he acts. This interpretation recalls the importance of the 'one acting for all' motif in heroic action, the core of epic motives. Lucan's *Bellum civile* is perhaps the epic which 'explores most insistently the topic of the sacrifice of the one for the many', although in this Vergilian text the efforts are unsuccessful. The easy blurring between sacrificial violence and riots coalesces in the image of a single man trying in vain to limit the violence through his own attempted self-sacrifice, trying, in other words, to be heroic, and yet failing in that effort, as the violence unleashed in the civil wars is too powerful for any man, no matter how distinctive, to control.[49]

Two key components of the literary representation of sacrifice are the linked concepts of *substitution* and *exchange*, complex acts by which the sacrificial victim takes on symbolic value of the group, standing in as a surrogate for those who offer it up. For example, the episode of Palinurus, the steersman, in the *Aeneid* represents the model of this sort of substitution, in which a single individual victim gives his or her life for the benefit of the group. The Palinurus episode also provide in its turn a model for the final battle between Turnus and Aeneas. In that horrible last duel, neither combatant is simply and wholly himself; rather, each is indicated as representing a complex of relationships based on earlier literary models. 'Once more the collapse of distinctions that results from the play of literary models seems to coincide with a feature of sacrificial practice as analyzed by Hubert and Mauss [. ...T]he priest can be an incarnation of the god as well as the victim'.[50] So does the *Aeneid* end with the very identity of the 'man himself' open to doubt; epic both defines and questions that man, that hero. In the process, Vergil's construction results in epic closure being thwarted.

In an article which has proven influential for readers of sacrificial themes in Latin poetry, Bandera attempted to tighten the connection between the slaughter of humans and the narrative function of sacrifice. Following Lucretius' equation in *De rerum natura* of the horror of human sacrifice and the core nature of religious practice (or 'superstition'),

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[49] Hardie, *Epic Successors*, p. 30.

[50] Hardie, *Epic Successors*, pp. 32–4.

Bandera offers his claim that at the basis of all 'Graeco-Roman' sacrificial practice is the 'unholy' and 'frightening reality' of human sacrifice.[51]

> Very little attention has been paid [by scholars] to those dark historical—or sub-historical—forces that prompted such authors [...] into building their intellectual constructs; to the forces that gave philosophy and science their historical urgency, that made it desperately necessary to substitute a rational, manageable, differentiated origin in place of an unspeakable and profoundly disturbing sacrificial origin, a sacrificial origin that could no longer be contained, that is to say explained away, by traditional mythical accounts. For the historical failure of myth as a rationalization of origins was obviously not only the cause of a purely intellectual dissatisfaction, it left the mind unprotected in the face of an extremely powerful, unstructured and chaotic violence.[52]

Bandera situates writers such as Lucretius and Vergil at a stage in society and civilization in which questions concerning the validity, and the usefulness, of myth-driven directives for sacrifice were increasingly common. This supposition requires one also posit an earlier, archaic form of the society during which sacrifice had arisen and become valid, and here Bandera has obviously borrowed the terminology of the 'mimetic crisis' from the work of Girard. In Bandera's words, the community locates in the scapegoat 'both the source of their violence *and* their savior [...]. The victim can become indiscriminately the source of all evil and the source of all good, an embodiment of the crisis itself which threatened the community with extinction and at the same time provided the way to a new beginning'.[53] The community, in finding the source of their fear and their troubles in a sacrificial victim, simultaneously finds the source for their joy or fortune. In such a view, the sacrifice of the one provides comfort, and furthermore salvation, for the many. Bandera notes that Girard's work is equally concerned with the Jewish and Christian 'undermining' of the sacrificial process (but which does not bear directly on his reading

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[51] Bandera suggests ('Sacrificial Levels', 238 n. 3) that 'historically documented examples of such panic and hysteria [which could result in human sacrifice] appear in the Graeco-Roman world with disturbing frequency': see Lintott, *Violence in Republican Rome*, and Brunt, 'Roman Mob', 3–27, as well as the third chapter of Burkert's *Structure and History*.

[52] Bandera, 'Sacrificial Levels', 220. See also his discussion of the support of the ameliatory effects offered by sacrifice in parts of the *Georgics*, 225.

[53] Bandera, 'Sacrificial Levels', 221; emphasis his.

of 'sacrificial levels' in the *Aeneid*).[54]

Given that the 'general sacrificial law [...] is explicitly formulated as follows: *unum pro multis dabitur caput*', Bandera offers the hyperbole that a 'terrible price must be paid', as confusion resulting from the lack of differentiation inherent in sacrificial struggle is the result.[55] The one and the many have everything in common, and given that the selection of the one is arbitrary, it is difficult to distinguish explicit and implicit sacrifices in the text.[56] The deaths in the *Aeneid* of Creusa, Orontes, Palinurus, and Misenus may be read as meaningful within the larger sacrificial framework of the epic, or they may be read as meaningless, mere accidental deaths, if sight of the larger, epic framework is lost. Individuals often cannot see the larger picture: Palinurus, for example, thinks his own death is accidental. Each of these possibly sacrificial moments begins with elements darkness and confusion, further illustrating the difficulty of forming sharp distinctions in the realm of sacrifice. The language used by Vergil indicates that the 'targets' of sacrifice seem to be moving in and out of awareness and consciousness: *demens, confusam* [...] *mentem, solvuntur frigore membra.*[57] Again, echoing Girard, Bandera argues that Vergil is deliberately casting men such as Palinurus in this way to indicate that 'even the most respectable sacrificial [read Augustan] order is not only grounded on violence, but in fact made possible through violence. In other words, the social order rises originally out of the same thing that can also annihilate it'.[58] The accidental and shadowy character of these deaths foreshadow the worse and bloodier

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[54] Bandera's point of view here echoes both certain scholars of nationalism and the Breton nationalist Ernest Renan, who, addressing the Sorbonne in 1882, in the aftermath of Germany's annexation of Alsace and Lorraine (a result of the Franco-Prussian war in 1871) delivered the lines: 'Forgetting, I would even go so far as to say *historical error*, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation, which is why progress in historical studies often constitutes a danger for nationality. [...] The nation, like the individual, is the culmination of a long past of endeavors, *sacrifice*, devotion'. Emphasis mine. From 'Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?', in Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*, p. 19. Lacking objective characteristics, such as race, language, religion, geography, etc, what makes a nation, is their *construction*.

[55] Bandera, 'Sacrificial Levels', 232–3.

[56] For a discussion which offers a more specific focus on the *Aeneid*, see Nicoll, 'Sacrifice of Palinurus', 467–8.

[57] 'Out of one's mind', referring to Misenus (6.172); 'confused mind', referring to Creusa (2.736); and, referring to Aeneas himself, 'his limbs went slack with cold' (1.92). Cited by Bandera, 'Sacrificial Levels', 228.

[58] Bandera, 'Sacrificial Levels', 230.

violence that will occur during the fighting in Latium, starting in Book Seven, with the appearance of Allecto, the Bacchae and the spinning top (7.376–84), the fury of Turnus (7.458–62), and of Iulus' hounds (7.479–81). Book Eight continues these chaotic effects, beginning with the trumpets and war-hysteria (8.1–6); his language gives the impression of rapid motion, the battle moving at a speed which makes it ever more difficult to draw distinctions between the combatants, and a deliberate multiplication of parallels between the Trojans and the Rutulians begins (which grows progressively through to Book Twelve: for example, at lines 12.500–4).

Sacrificial violence works to efface the difference between antagonists in epic narrative. The ease with which man can become monster is an important facet to all of the scenes of sacrificial violence, as is the blurring of identities between sacrificant and sacrificand. The fog of sacrifice whose confusion Bandera details is an important part of Vergil's art, since he is hinting at, but not committing to, a reading of the roles. Or, to put it another way, Vergil is demonstrating how each such act must be actively read as part of a larger narrative for it to make sense; each act of violence becomes sacrificial, and thus meaningful, only within the scope of this larger, unifying narrative. That is the function of epic. Each individual death, such as that of Palinurus, can easily be seen as, and indeed is unable to be seen as other than, an accident, a random and meaningless death against an uncaring backdrop. But, when read within the larger narrative, such deaths can be inscribed with meaning. As Hardie has remarked, Vergil emphasizes this most clearly at the poem's final climax, the duel between Turnus and Aeneas (12.672–727). During this scene, especially at 707–9, Latinus, who is observing the fight from a suitably comprehensive vantage point, compares the fighters to two bulls, and has difficulty distinguishing the sides.[59] The opinion of the aged king is seconded by Jupiter himself (*nullo discrimine*, 10.108, a line picked up again at 12.498, *terribilis saevam nullo discrimine caedem*, and again at 12.770–1, *sed stirpem Teucri nullo discrimine sacrum / sustulerant*), and by several other images of distinctions failing (such as Turnus' failure

[59] Hardie, *Epic Successors*, pp. 25–6, who notes the successive readings of this scene by Ovid, Lucan, Statius, Valerius Flaccus, and Silius Italicus.

to hurl a stone which served as a boundary marker, 12.896–8).[60] In the midst of the numerous, equivalent deaths, on the battlefield, the one that is chosen as the sacrifice is Turnus. As Juno withdraws her support from Turnus, as his fortunes start to betray him, and as Aeneas' role as founder of the Roman people is made explicit and secured (in Juno's bargain with Jupiter), Turnus becomes the *unus pro multis* who can bring the sacrificial crisis to its close, and who can initiate, ironically through his own death, the line of Augustus. Bandera argues that Vergil suggests powerfully at this moment of the poem that he understands the 'double role' of every sacrificial victim who must play the part of 'scapegoat and founder', and how Turnus represents the universal victim who has been substituted for 'any and all of the sacrificers':

> When Trojan Aeneas, immediate heir and witness to the spirit of Hector, now in his role as Achilles, kills Turnus in his role as Hector, the violent reciprocity, the perfect symmetry of the crisis has been revealed and, at the same time, broken.[61]

The violence needs to break down the barriers, of order and community, in order to bring about a moment of crisis which can, in turn, end the violence. The sequence of apparently capricious deaths cease, and a single meaningful death brings the communities peace.

Hardie offers further narratological refinement to Bandera's 'sacrificial levels', and does so at an even-greater remove from the sphere of cultural analysis.[62] The strength of sacrificial action is that it is both initiatory and conclusive; it is thus appropriate that sacrifice both begins and ends the *Aeneid.* Sacrificial topoi return at many points throughout the poem. When the *foedus* is broken between Aeneas and Latinus (12.161–215), fires of the altar turn into torches of war (12.283–301), humans replace animals as sacrifices (e.g., 12.296, Messapus killing Aulestes, the first 'deliberate confrontation' in the final battle).[63] In Girard's words, heroic narratives attempt a distinction between

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[60] Hardie, *Epic Successors*, pp. 28–9. See also discussion of the *limes* in Budick, 'The Prospect of Tradition', 28–33. The word also came to mean 'frontier of the empire' in Tacitus (*Agric.* 41.2; *Germ.* 29.4), and keeping such a meaning in mind here is especially evocative; see Lintott, 'What was the *Imperium Romanum*?', 65.

[61] Bandera, 'Sacrificial Levels', 234.

[62] Hardie, *Epic Successors*, pp. 19–56. Note his essential caveat concerning Girardian terminology at p. 21, n. 5.

[63] Hardie, *Epic Successors*, p. 20, and see Nicoll, 'Death of Turnus'.

impure violence and purifying (or beneficial) violence. The killing of Turnus is cloaked as a sacrifice, but, as Hardie notes, not all readers have seen it that way.[64] Indeed, Nicoll argues that

An essential warning for all scholars who seek to adapt the models of sacrifice (and trauma) to their literary texts is sounded by Richard Thomas, who severely criticizes the desire to apply models drawn from the fields of cultural and anthropological inquiry to those of literature, especially when the main victim of the critical trauma is, in many case, the text itself. Responding to a thesis of Thomas Habinek, who reads the slaughter of oxen at the close of *Georgics* 4 as a sacrifice, thus approving a satisfying (and positive) closure to Vergil's poem, Thomas chooses to read the text more literally as a non-sacrificial killing, one which intentionally lacks the language of sacrifice; that Vergil is familiar with such language, and is capable of using it when he wishes, is made evidently clear by Thomas in his remarks on the only clear-cut sacrifice in the poem (at *Georgics* 3.486–93), an episode that is unremarked upon by Habinek, yet one which abundantly features the language of sacrifice (*aram, infula, vitta, altaria*) and moreover one which *fails* in its effort to bring about an end to the disease that ravages the country.[65] Thomas is specifically interested in defending the readings of Vergil which seek to anticipate and elide easy closure of his poems; yet, his critique should also serve as monitory for those who might seek to read the language of sacrifice in texts where such language is at best implied, and at worst is fantasized by the critic herself.

Yet the powerful connection between sacrifice and human action in literary texts manages to make deception an important trope as well. Rebekah Smith, in an analysis of *Aeneid* 2.1–249, offers corrections and disagreements with both Bandera and Hardie concerning the way that sacrificial violence functions in Vergil's texts, but she underscores the importance of sacrifice in her conclusion, which offers that it is the very 'entwining' of deception and sacrifice that foregrounds the necessity and interest for us to

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[64] See Putnam, *Poetry of the Aeneid*, p. 193; Leigh, 'Hopelessly Devoted'; Nicoll, 'Death of Turnus'; and O'Hara, *Death and the Optimistic Prophecy*, pp. 83–4.

[65] Thomas, '"Sacrifice" at the End', 215–16. Habinek's argument was outlined in his 'Sacrifice, Society, and Vergil's Ox-born Bees'.

read actions that will not readily yield interpretation to us.[66] Sacrifice has moved well beyond anthropology and history of religions, even in those scenes where a religious significance seems hinted at, or is real but violated, such as in the tales of Sinon and Laocöon.[67]

The Concept of Sacrifice in Medieval Literary Studies

Medieval scholars have followed the lead set by historians of religion and classicists, and turned in greater numbers to the framework of concepts that are included in discussion of sacrifice.[68] The connected concepts of chivalry and the Crucifixion have proven especially amenable to readings of them through the various types of sacrifice. In a work which attempts to bridge the crusading values of the High Middle Ages with the reinterpretation of those same values during the First World War, Allen Frantzen adopts the language of sacrifice and sacrificial violence, including the work of theorists such as Girard and Kristeva, whose theory of abjection is utilized to illuminate the concept of self-sacrifice (one which, although not original to him, Frantzen defines in a slightly specific way). Frantzen's training as an Anglo-Saxonist is of particular application in this context, since he analyzes, as 'early' sacrificial texts, both the *Dream of the Rood* and the Latin and Old English versions of the *Life of St Edmund* by Abbo of Fleury and Ælfric, respectively. By early, he means that such texts, according to his argument, are closer to the concept of sacrifice as defined by Jesus' doctrine of nonviolence and forgiveness as was revealed in the Gospels, than the conception of chivalry as developed in the later Middle Ages.[69]

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[66] Smith, 'Deception and Sacrifice'.

[67] See also the insights of Lyne, *Words and the Poet*, pp. 76–8.

[68] I have found the following works useful which centralize the theme of sacrifice in their medieval criticism: Fradenburg, 'Sacrificial Desire', on the *Knight's Tale*; Frantzen, *Bloody Good*; idem, 'Tears of Abraham'; Gaunt, 'Martyr to Love', which explores sacrifice in Bernart de Ventadorn; McCracken, 'Poetics of Sacrifice', on Chretien; and Trone, 'Dante's Poetics of Sacrifice'. I discuss Frantzen's work in more depth below, and other works will be cited in my notes.

[69] Frantzen, *Bloody Good*, p. 9.

Frantzen denotes three forms of sacrificial action which were entwined with chivalric notions of conduct, and which he presents as three choices or options which were available to the knight: the act of killing another (*sacrifice*), which takes on the qualities of vengeance when this is directed at Christ's enemies (e.g., Jews or Muslims); the refusal to kill another, but rather to forgive them (*antisacrifice*), regardless of the consequences; and to offer up oneself, not through suicide but in battle (*self-sacrifice*).

> Chivalry supported conflicting responses to Christ's death: either a desire to take revenge against those who killed him or a willingness to forgive his persecutors. Christ urged the second response upon his followers, but history shows that many of them, especially those with lawful access to means of violence, chose the first and not infrequently used Christ himself to justify their decision. I call the first response *sacrificial*, because it calls for the taking of one life to avenge the loss of another and thus for perpetuating cyclical violence. I call the second response *antisacrificial*, because it opposes the taking of life and seeks to bring the cycle of violence to a halt. Chivalry, I argue, not only made both responses available to knights and to their modern descendants but validated a third response, *self-sacrifice*, that conflated prowess and piety and blurred the lines between sacrifice and antisacrifice.[70]

This third option Frantzen sees as a 'middle way' between the first two contradictory options. The attraction of this option of self-sacrifice, to offer oneself to God by offering oneself to one's own (and his own) enemies, is a result, Frantzen argues, of the conflict which occurred between the two opposite notions of sacrificial action, a 'tension between sacrifice and antisacrifice' which was resolved into the appeal of self-sacrifice through the means of 'the principles of chivalry'. As medieval chivalry was 'refashioned' as *romance* during the course of the nineteenth century, seeds were laid for the attempted use of the images of 'chivalry' in later wars. The 'theory and practice of knighthood', however, has been neglected, both then and now; chivalry's emphasis on the group has been one casualty of this skewed focus.

Most essential for Frantzen's argument is the driving force toward self-sacrifice, which he and other gender theorists term 'heroic masculinity'. Mere martyrdom is not enough; it can, even must, be transformed into a more masculine and heroic activity, a 'sacrificial act that justifies, defends, and propagates the true faith'.[71] A figure such as the

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[70] Frantzen, *Bloody Good*, p. 3; emphasis mine.

[71] Frantzen, *Bloody Good*, p. 19.

crusader-knight makes literal the spiritual armor of Eph 6:13–17, and proceeds to engage in 'holy warfare' in the name of Christ, resulting in a 'lamentable history' of sacrificial vengeance. The transformation is attractive because this act of self-sacrifice allows the willing victim to determine the significance of his own death, and it requires 'the continuation of violence in the victim's name'. In this interpretation, cycles of violence and vengeance are inaugurated in Christ's name; just as Christ's own chosen act of self-sacrifice mandates that knights, wearing the guise of chivalry, wreak vengeance upon his slayers (Jews), so too must the surviving brethren of knight seek vengeance upon his slayers. This is an 'act of will, an assertion of meaning of one's sacrifice, [which] is central to heroic masculinity'.[72] Frantzen's emphasis on acts of will is intentional here, as his reading asserts that heroic prowess and feats of strength do not alone make the man; rather, masculinity must be achieved as well by assertions of will, the decision of making a conscious choice.

This definition of masculinity as a characteristic necessary to the hero but also one created and fostered, not born, Frantzen sees echoed by remarks of C. S. Lewis: the 'knightly character is art, not nature—something that needs to be achieved, not something that can be relied upon to happen'.[73] Medieval chivalry pointed to an idealized condition that certified the permanent state of heroic masculinity. Rather than the Renaissance conception of the life cycle of a hero, a passage from manhood unto death, medieval manuals of chivalry suggest a state of temporary manhood, achieved over a series of decisions and acts of prowess, followed by a martyrdom, in which state the hero achieves a condition similar to that of Christ himself—slain, but resurrected, and powerful in death, in spite of death.[74] Knights transitioned from the glory of warfare through abjection and passion to the glory of final martyrdom and Christ-like heroism.

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[72] Frantzen, *Bloody Good*, p. 20.

[73] Lewis, *Present Concerns*, p. 4.

[74] Frantzen, *Bloody Good*, p. 21.

THEORISTS OF TRAUMA

Sacrifice generally aims toward closure and commencement, often simultaneously. A successful sacrifice in a religious context, whatever the specifics of the interpretation, is functional, and opens up an opportunity for the individual and the group. That opportunity is then seized, guided, and made official by the modes of forming meaning governing the religious principles of the group. Similarly, sacrifice as metaphor, whether cultural or more specifically literary/textual, must be evaluated as to its purpose within the structure of the narrative being told. Aeneas' killing of Turnus is framed in sacrificial language, and functions within the narrative as signaling a final close to the hostilities, a close to the tribulations of the Trojans, a close to Trojan history itself (by virtue of the promise of Jupiter to Juno), and a beginning of the Roman empire, and the line of Augustus.

Yet this interpretation has its difficulties, and it has not been clear to all readers of the *Aeneid* that this killing of one man by the other is a successful sacrifice—or whether it is even a sacrifice at all, despite the language Aeneas chooses ('Pallas te hoc uulnere, Pallas / immolat'). A debate has long been underway over whether the killing of Turnus was justified, and whether Vergil intended his readers to see it as justified.[75] Or is Turnus' death to be seen as a *devotio*, a self-sacrifice for his people?[76] Moreover, there is indication that to read the close of the Aeneid with an eye toward finding definite closure

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[75] Putnam, *The Poetry of the Aeneid*, pp. 193–4.

[76] The view of Nicoll, 'The Death of Turnus', and O'Hara, *Death and the Optimistic Prophecy*, pp. 83–4; the context for *devotio* is explored by Leigh, 'Hopelessly Devoted', and Pascal, 'Dubious Devotion'. Nicoll is careful to note that any semblance between Turnus' death and the Roman *devotio* is not intended to be strict, but rather to indicate a far more subtle reminiscence (Nicoll, 'The Death of Turnus', 191). The question of *devotio* had been raised much earlier, in studies of Warde Fowler, *The Death of Turnus*, pp. 48–9, and Gilbert Highet, *The Speeches in Vergil's Aeneid*, p. 63. See also Galinsky, 'The Anger of Aeneas'.

is misguided; it is not clear that Vergil had known specifically what Aeneas' future would hold, despite Jupiter's words in Book One (1.278–9).[77]

Trauma studies and trauma theory have become, over the past several decades, an ever-more popular (and productive) means to interpret texts and aspects of cultural production. Adapted from problems that Freud left unsolved in his own work, and seemingly egged on by the historical gravity of the twentieth century, the language of trauma theory has proven to be fruitful for scholars working in a wide array of disciplines. Yet, the invocation of the concept of trauma must be approached especially cautiously by scholars working in fields such as medieval or early modern literature. The threat of anachronism is extremely high; the application of theoretical constructs developed from psychoanalysis and Holocaust studies to pre-modern texts and peoples risks merely seeing the reflection of the modern in the glass of the past. Despite these risks, and very often working alongside them, literary scholars and historians of the medieval and early modern Europe have still found the concept of trauma attractive, and, in a few cases, nearly essential. I will trace the broad outlines of trauma theory as practiced by its most distinguished adherents before plunging into a discussion of how these studies of contemporary texts and phenomena have profited scholars in the fields of medieval and early modern studies.

The practioner who has arguably done the most to establish the basic foundations and principles of trauma theory is Cathy Caruth, who attributes to Freud the initial insight into the paradoxical relation between history and trauma. Caruth remarks that a history of trauma must be 'referential precisely to the extent that it is not fully perceived as it occurs', and such history can 'be grasped only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence'.[78] Interestingly enough, she begins her description of trauma theory with a scene from an epic poem: Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*.[79] She examines a scene of violence from the poem that also troubled Freud, who wrote about it in *On the Pleasure*

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[77] O'Hara, *Death and the Optimistic Prophecy*, chapter 3, and Cairns, *Virgil's Augustan Epic*, pp. 180–9.

[78] Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, p. 8. See also Hartman, 'On Traumatic Knowledge'; and Mitchell, 'Trauma, Recognition, and the Place of Language'.

[79] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, pp. 1–4; Carini (ed.), *Gerusalemme Liberata*. I have relied upon the translation of Anthony Esolen, *Jerusalem Delivered*.

Principle. In the scene, Tancredi encounters his beloved Clorinda once again, whom he himself had slain, accidentally, during a period of battle rage. This second encounter comes later in the poem, when he and his knights meet with a strange and forbidding forest whose trees frighten them; Tancredi slashes at one, causing it to bleed as if human, and causing it to cry out with the wound. The voice belongs to Clorinda, who points out that her beloved has done violence against her again. For Caruth, this image is the epitome of the traumatic moment, for it is not recognized as trauma until it returns upon the victim[80] to speak, unassimilated, to create chaos and dislocation in the present narrative. In this case, Tancredi's own epic and heroic narrative becomes disrupted by the presence of Clorinda, who speaks and accuses him of neglect. Kathleen Biddick argues that both Freud and Caruth are equally guilty of neglect, having ignored the immediate textual aftermath of the Clorinda's second wounding, when Clorinda speaks to Tancredi, and tells him of the innumerable others who are trapped within the tree along with her, other martyrs, including members of both sides of the Crusader conflicts. For Biddick, this revelation of Clorinda's marks Tasso's own attempt to silence the memory of those martyrs, the 'noisy ghosts of the traumatic First Crusade'.[81] Freud himself, it would seem, is guilty of 'encrypting' martyrdom, since by ignoring this passage he has ignored the martyrdom of Jews during the Crusades.[82]

The literary critic Shoshana Felman and psychologist Dori Laub produced one of the earlier analyses linking literary narratives and their construction and coherence with the sort of 'personal narratives of the self', or 'testimony', sought for and probed by psychoanalysis. Seeing personal narratives as various testimonies to a problematic (and horrific) history, Felman and Laub seek to identify the difficulty of eye-witnessing such events through the medium of normal narrative. They claim the relevance of the metaphor of the 'black hole' in discussions of the difficulty of rational discourse to articulate remembered traumatic events. 'The black hole is the ever open wound of

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[80] Not, in this case, the trauma experienced by the victim of violence, whose own trauma is not discussed. Caruth has been criticized for this blurring, for example by Leys, *Trauma*, pp. 296–7, and Sanyal, 'Soccer Match in Auschwitz', 24.

[81] Biddick, 'Unbinding the Flesh', 206–9.

[82] Neubauer and Stern, *Hebräische Berichte*; see also Einbinder, *Beautiful Death*; and Patterson, '"The Living Witnesses"'.

traumatic memory that cannot be articulated within the structure of rational discourse. Such memory demands transformation into testimony that, paradoxically, becomes testimony to its own impossibility'.[83] In a later essay, Felman seeks to clarify her stance that literature is primarily a map or a topography to mark the 'alignment between witnesses':

> As a relation to events, testimony seems to be composed of bits and pieces of a memory that has been overwhelmed by occurrences that have not settled into understanding or remembrance, acts that cannot be constructed as knowledge nor assimilated into full cognition, events in excess of our frames of reference.[84]

Traumatic events are those which make narratives break apart, causing them to become inconsistent, unpersuasive, and lacking in explanatory power; the memory of the events becomes fragmented, and the disconnected bits are unable to settle 'into understanding or remembrance'.[85] This sort of fragmentation and loss of narrative voice is intimately connected with the calls for, and concerns over, silence in the wake of events such as the Holocaust, which called for a 'retreat from the word' on behalf of poets and intellectuals alike.[86]

Dominick LaCapra has become one of the leading theorists of trauma and its historical significance through a series of works at whose center lays the specter of the Holocaust.[87] LaCapra's definition of trauma foregrounds the essential quality (taken up later by Caruth) of persistent (or incessant) repetition, combined with repression of the original memory. He treats 'historical trauma' as a type of discourse, one which attempts to project upon history a 'fetishistic narrative' that seeks to oppose trauma through a 'teleological story that projectively presents values and wishes as viably realized in the

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[83] Felman and Laub, *Testimony*, p. 108.

[84] Felman, 'Education and Crisis', p. 16.

[85] Felman and Laub, *Testimony*, p. 5.

[86] The expression is George Steiner's, in *Language and Silence*, p. 123. Steiner is of course responding to Adorno's pronouncement concerning the possibility of poetry after Auschwitz (Adorno, 'Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft', p. 30).

[87] See especially his monographs *Representing the Holocaust*, and *History and Memory*, and his article 'Trauma, Absence, Loss'.

facts'.[88] LaCapra promotes the Freudian doctrine of 'working through' as opposed to 'acting out' as a means of respecting the lessons of trauma without succumbing to the desire to sublimate them through a coerced narrative, and also without the equally destructive result of a lack of action, which tends to eliminate the very potential for growth that trauma can provide in its acknowledgement by the individual and society. In his work on trauma, LaCapra also delineates the concept of transference, as he has adapted it from psychoanalysis, and one which is essential for his own theories of trauma: the reflective subject tends to repeat aspects of the object of study in the very process of studying it; 'for example, in the study of the Holocaust, we tend to repeat processes (scapegoating, blaming the victim, disavowal, avoidance) or roles (perpetrator, victim, bystander, register) prominent at the time, and we even face the problem of what terminology to use (Holocaust, Shoah, "final solution") in an area where no terminology is innocent or unaffected by the events themselves and by the history of their representation'.[89] This 'repetition-displacement' of past events into the present (which also produces anxiety concerning the future) is characterized most strongly by a lack of control, which, ironically, simultaneously produces a desire to exert control over the subject of study.[90] Although LaCapra does not, in his most central expositions on his theory of trauma, engage directly with literary texts[91] (making his contribution to trauma and literary studies indirect and rather problematic as a result), he does offer to medievalists a framework for examining trauma in an historical rather than a personal context.[92]

THE CONCEPT OF TRAUMA IN MEDIEVAL LITERARY STUDIES

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[88] LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust*, p. 192.

[89] LaCapra, 'Intellectual History and its Ways', 429. For a useful critical appraisal, see Klein, 'On the Emergence of *Memory*'.

[90] LaCapra, 'Is Everyone a *Mentalité* Case?', 296–7.

[91] As noted by Berger, 'Trauma and Literary Theory', 576–7.

[92] LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust*, pp. 178–83.

The abundance of applications of trauma theory to twentieth-century literature has inspired its use in studies of older literature as well. This approach has been attempted in recent years by a few New Testament scholars, as part of an effort to understand the rationale behind the various narrative strands in early Christianity. In an essay on the benefits offered to interpretation of the Gospel of Mark by recent work on ancient and medieval constructions and theories of memory, Werner Kelber makes use of the concept of compounded trauma to suggest that the Markan Gospel may well have been written in response to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.[93] The crucifixion itself was the single 'massively disruptive' traumatic event of Christianity, made evident in the trivializing of the event in the Gospels: 'the traumatic death of the Messiah is unlikely to have been the first event negotiated in coherent narrative. To the contrary, one must stand apart from the trauma—temporally, mentally, emotionally—so as to be able to appropriate it as memorial history'. Instead, the description of the passion related in the Gospels aimed to mediate the violence through categories of discourse accessible to narrative.[94]

At the other end of the pre-modern spectrum, scholars studying the revenge tragedies of the Renaissance, especially those of Shakespeare such as *Titus Andronicus*, have also found trauma theory useful as an analytical tool for understanding the motives of the characters, their 'floods' of emotional grief, their emotional turmoil, and their desire for revenge.[95] Deborah Willis has argued that the sometimes-extraordinary violence of a play such as *Titus Andronicus* functions as a therapeutic activity for the actors of the tragedy driven by the desire for vengeance.[96] Willis here draws upon the arguments of historians of 'honor violence', who have posited that societies with strong traditions of 'honor-driven feuds and factional violence' have a powerful and ambivalent relationship with revenge practices, to argue that acts of revenge can offer 'a perverse therapy for traumatic experience'.[97] Specifically, the humiliation experienced by the

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[93] Kelber, 'Works of Memory', p. 244.

[94] Kelber, 'Works of Memory', p. 246.

[95] A recent monograph on this topic is Anderson, *Performing Early Modern Trauma*.

[96] Willis, '"The gnawing vulture"'. See also Cunningham, '"Scars can witness"'; and Helms, '"The High Roman Fashion"'.

[97] Willis, '"The gnawing vulture"', 25.

parents in *Titus Andronicus* can be read as a type of trauma, who witnessed but were unable to prevent the death of their children.[98] Willis traces the recurring images of dismemberment, dislocation, and rupture, most often presented in a physical element, and notes that humans in such a context are turned into animals. I would counter that although Willis uses the word 'sacrifice' in this context of humans as hunted animals, it is important to maintain the distinction, highlighted by classicists, between sacrifice and hunting, one which also has prompted much of Girard's own criticism.[99] Nevertheless, it is encouraging that Shakespearean scholars have also been following similar paths to myself and to classical scholars. Willis' argument also touches upon other aspects related to my own, including the conjunction between revenge and traumatic sacrifice, and the connection of such with the blackly comic and grotesque.

Mary Carruthers has usefully warned scholars inclined to apply contemporary templates of memory and suffering to medieval texts that the medieval mind did not necessarily conceive of traumatic events as traumatic, at least not in the way that psychoanalytic criticism has implored us to do: contemporary literary theorists, she writes, have

> emphasized the role of trauma in memory making. I do not wish to be thought to believe that analysis based on these psychoanalytic constructs has no role to play in our perception of medieval cultures. But medieval people did not construe themselves in this way, and I have noticed that scholars who use psychoanalytic language to talk about the importance of "trauma" in the undoubtedly violent lives of medieval people can neglect the more social, rhetorical roles such violence played, at least in their art and their pedagogy.[100]

In place of the trauma theory of Caruth, Carruthers offers *mnemotechnique* and 'mnemotechnical anxiety', the image of the medieval mind purposefully 'wounding' itself as the hard stylus makes punctures in a wax tablet. Instead of the rather loaded concept of a neurosis, she suggests that the act of dwelling on violent images was instead a praiseworthy, even necessary, activity for the development of a powerful memory. In a similar vein, Janet Coleman has stressed the importance for Benedictine monks, who

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[98] Willis, '"The gnawing vulture"', 31.

[99] For treatment of hunting and sacrifice in Greek texts, see Vidal-Naquet, 'Hunting and Sacrifice'.

[100] Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, p. 101.

were engaged in a great deal of the writing, to forget whatever identities they had assumed before their entrance to the cloister, and form instead memories from their new collective.[101]

The work on the difficult and dislocating period of transition from an Anglo-Saxon to an Anglo-Norman England by Elisabeth van Houts provides a cautious model for the reading of the historical record with an eye toward identifying those periods of time in which the collective and individual memory of traumatic events overwhelms said record. The conquest of England by William I in 1066 was undoubtedly a traumatic event for the Anglo-Saxons who experienced it, whether they were involved directly in the politics and combat, monks in Anglo-Saxon monastic houses, or women who had suffered loss of family or status. The historical writing of subsequent generations has been read as offering evidence of a salvage effort regarding a particular 'Englishness' that was now, in the generations and years following the Conquest, at risk of being eliminated. This fear of erasure may have been what prompted a number of historians to begin compilations of what memories of the bygone traditions yet remained in the memory of the community.[102] Van Houts reads *Gesta Herewardi* as an attempt to cope with the 'trauma of defeat' following the Norman Conquest of England.[103]

Cautiously, perhaps, scholars of medieval literature have begun to pay more attention to concepts of the 'traumatic' and 'horrific'. Even in those readings where direct influence is lacking, the similarity of questions and readings suggests the possibility for future exploration. Studies such as Deborah Willis' have certain things in common with studies by medieval scholars of similar 'trauma' experienced by the loss of children, such as Egill and Haethcyn.[104] Although Harris' analysis of Egil's grief over the impossible-to-avenge death of his son, and the analyses of the grief suffered from the death of Herebeald, have not directly involved themselves in the vocabulary of trauma theory, the

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[101] Coleman, *Ancient and Medieval Memories*, pp. 127–30.

[102] Southern, 'Aspects of the European Tradition'; Campbell, 'Some Twelfth-Century Views', pp. 209–28; Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 105–6, 167–8.

[103] Van Houts, *Memory and Gender*, pp. 123–42; and idem, 'The Trauma of 1066'. Vance, 'Poetics of Memory', offers a subtle reading of the *Chanson de Roland* according to a similar model for 'commemorative culture'.

[104] See Harris, 'Sacrifice and Guilt'.

questions posed and the conclusions drawn have some significant moments of overlap. Scholars working in feminist theory have also borrowed at times from the language of trauma theory in their explorations of female voices and attitudes in poetry.[105]

Scholars working on Middle English texts have found certain elements of trauma theory helpful in identifying or describing just those moments of cultural or narrative dislocation. Geraldine Heng and Suzanne Conklin Akbari have each referred to the arguably traumatic encounter of the West with foreign cultures as evidenced in the numerous tales of cannibalism reflected in crusader narratives and in Crusader romances such as *Richard Coeur de Lion*.[106] A similar approach could prove useful in another provocative Middle English text featuring flesh-eating, *The Siege of Jerusalem*, whose most powerful scene for many readers remains the cannibalism of the 'myld wife' Mary (lines 1081–96), who, with the city's citizens reduced to gnawing shields and shoes during the long siege of Jerusalem by Vespasian and his son Titus, decides to cook her own son, eats of his body, and offers him afterward to the curious mob who have been enticed by the nearly-forgotten scent of roasted meat.[107] Likewise, the execution of Caiaphas (lines 693–712), however, is reminiscent of numerous scenes of traumatic (vengeful) sacrifice, and deserves more treatment than it has received. The Middle English poem *Havelok* is a late thirteenth-century romance with strong connections to Scandinavian-English relations.[108] Several violent scenes in the poem are given minor but vivid roles. The rather excruciating scenes of violence in *Havelok* have not received an intense amount of attention by readers of the poem. The Skeat edition (revised by Sisam in 1956) passed over the relevant sections in silence, although, since the majority of their

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[105] To cite one example, Ashby Kinch refers to the problem of articulating 'psychological trauma' in a warrior culture as a means of differentiating between male and female voices, with particular regard to *The Wife's Lament* (Kinch, 'The Ethical Agency', 144).

[106] Heng, *Empire of Magic*, pp. 17–62; idem, 'The Romance of England'; and idem, 'Cannibalism, the First Crusade'; and Akbari, 'The Hunger for National Identity'. See also Ambrisco, 'Cannibalism and Cultural Encounters'.

[107] For fuller references, see Livingston, *Siege of Jerusalem*, notes to lines 1081–96. The story receives extensive treatment from Millar, *The Siege of Jerusalem*, pp. 76–104, who attempts an anthropological reading (through the lenses of Mary Douglas and Caroline Walker Bynum).

[108] Smithers (ed.), *Havelok*.

commentary was philological in nature, such taciturnity might be excused.[109] The most recent editor of the poem, however, had little to say either, despite a far fuller and more historical commentary.[110]

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

I begin by recounting and examining the history of epic writing during the Late antique and early medieval periods, tracing how the genre's eminent models, such as Vergil and Lucan, were adapted by Christian poets, eager to tell the deeds and exploits not of mere warriors, but rather of *milites Christi*, such as St Martin. In chapter two I turn to the evolution of various theories of sacrifice, and the ways a classical and non-Christian concept was evolved and adapted to fit into a heroic and epic model by poets of Biblical epic and related genres; I conclude with a series of readings of explicitly Christian and sacrificial texts including the cross hymns of Venantius Fortunatus,[111] the Christian martyr poems contained in the *Peristephanon* of Prudentius,[112] and what is considered the elegant melding of Germanic and Christian imagery of *The Dream of the Rood.*[113] Chapter three turns to heroic sacrifice proper, as I examine the structure that sacrificial violence plays in the fragment we possess of the *Paderborn Epic*,[114] the meaning of the sacrifice of Holofernes by the eponymous heroine in the Old English poem *Judith*,[115] the desire to read sacrificial actions into contemporary events in Abbo's *Bella Parisiacae urbis*,[116] and the 'anxious' sacrifice of Byrhtnoth and his followers in

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[109] Skeat (ed.), *The Lay of Havelok the Dane.*

[110] Smithers (ed.), *Havelok*. Smithers notes that the described flaying of Godard is not a historical impossibility, given the reality (albeit rarity) of flaying as a punishment in England.

[111] The first volume of a new edition of the works of Fortunatus is now available: Di Brazzano (ed.), *Venanzio Fortunato Opere*. The poems have also been edited by Reydellet (ed.), *Venance Fortunat*, 2 vols. Both supersede the earlier edition of Leo. Useful addenda to the text of Reydellet appeared in Schwind's review, *Classical Review* 50 (2000), 65–7, at 66.

[112] Prudentius has been edited by Lavarenne (ed.), *Oeuvres*, and by Cunningham (ed.), *Aurelii Prudentii Clementis Carmina*; I will be following the Cunningham text.

[113] I follow the edition of Swanton (ed.), *The Dream of the Rood.*

[114] Dümmler (ed.), in PLAC, i: 366–79. Attributed doubtfully to Angilbert, and also to Einhard.

[115] Griffiths (ed.), *Judith.*

[116] I have used the edition of Winterfeld (ed.), *Abbonis Bella Parisiacae urbis*, MGH PLAC, iv: 72–122.

The Battle of Maldon.[117] I conclude with a scene from Thietmar's *Chronicle* on Otto I, showing heroic sacrifice being read into the historical narrative of an ambitious Ottonian ruler.[118] Chapter four examines the grotesque machinery of traumatic or horrific sacrifice, through the lens of the counter-blast to empire and civil war offered in Lucan's *Bellum civile,*[119] the despairing observations of a survivor of the *Brüderkrieg* of mid-century Francia in 'Battle of Fontenoy',[120] the by turns comic and hideous scenes of traumatic violence from Abbo's *Bella Parisiacae urbis* and *Beowulf.* I conclude with a glance at the way that traumatic violence will enter into the later fictionalized history of the English and Danish conflict, with a reading of some of the most violent (and traumatic) scenes from the Middle English poem *Havelok.*[121] The Middle English period, the age of chivalry and crusading violence whose sacrificial images have been studied by Frantzen, Fradenburg, McCracken, and others, seems to rejoice particularly in this sort of violence, traumatic sacrifice (discussed by Frantzen as 'self-sacrifice'), and my concluding view hopes to show at least a modicum of continuity between the early medieval period and the better-known centuries to come.

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[117] The latest edition is Scragg (ed.), *Battle of Maldon*, with collected essays; the term is indebted to Robinson, 'God, Death, and Loyalty'.

[118] Holtzmann (ed.), *Thietmari Merseburgensis episcopi chronicon.*

[119] Shackleton Bailey (ed.), *M. Annaei Lucani De bello ciuili.*

[120] Dümmler (ed.), MGH PLAC ii: 138–40.

[121] Smithers (ed.), *Havelok.*

CHAPTER ONE

An Epic Background to Sacrificial Topoi: The *Conventiones* and *Renovationes* of Heroic Verse

Parce metu, Cytherea: manent immota tuorum
fata tibi; cernes urbem et promissa Lavini
moenia, sublimemque feres ad sidera caeli
magnanimum Aenean; neque me sententia vertit.
Hic tibi (fabor enim, quando haec te cura remordet,
longius et volvens fatorum arcana movebo)
bellum ingens geret Italia, populosque feroces
contundet, moresque viris et moenia ponet,
tertia dum Latio regnantem viderit aestas,
ternaque transierint Rutulis hiberna subactis [...].
His ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono;
imperium sine fine dedi.[1]

[...] eahtodan eorlscipe ond his ellenweorc
duguðum demdon, swa hit gedefe bið
þæt mon his winedryhten wordum herge,
ferhðum freoge, þonne he forð scile
of lichaman læded weorðan.
Swa begnornodon Geata leode
hlafordes hryre, heorðgeneatas;
cwædon þæt he wære wyruldcyninga
manna mildust ond monðwærust,
leodum liðost ond lofgeornost.[2]

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[1] 'Do not fear, Cytherea: the fate of your people is unmoving; you will see the city and the promised walls of Lavinium, and you shall bear your great-hearted and sublime son Aeneas up to the stars of heaven. My thought has not altered. He (for I will speak, since this anxiousness gnaws at you; I will unroll the secrets of the fates from afar) shall wage great war on Italy, and bruise down fierce peoples and set up customs and walls for his people, until he sees his third summer as the king, and has made it through three winters since he subdued the Rutulians [...] I place neither limits to their deeds nor times; I have given empire without end': *Aeneid*, 1.257–66, 278–9.

[2] 'They praised his lordship, and his deeds of courage, and they regarded his virtues, as it is proper that one should praise his friend and lord with words, should in his heart adore him, when he must be led forth from his body. Thus did the Geatish people, his hearth-companions, mourn the fall of the lord; they declared that he was, of all earthly kings, the most merciful of men, and the most gentle, the kindest to his people, and the most eager for glory': *Beowulf*, lines 3173–82.

Whether it has been done with the intent of salvaging some embers of antiquity during otherwise apparently dark centuries, or with the desire to illuminate the learning of a lustrous and innovative era, the poetry of the early Middle Ages has long been mined for classical borrowings and echoes, for any evidence of indebtedness to Vergil or to Horace, Lucan or Ovid. While all scholars concur on the centrality of the Bible and of the primacy of Christian literature in the works of ninth- and tenth-century poets—for it is from such sources that their most crucial themes and models were drawn—the notion that classical poetry had an impact worth considering is far less secure. To be sure, the manuscript tradition indicates that classical writers, poets especially, were continuously copied, even treasured, throughout the period; indeed, however harshly their textual-critical skills have been judged by modern classical scholars, it is likely that our access to many poets would rest on far more tenuous ground than they do without the efforts of Carolingian scribes.[3] Moreover, painstaking analysis of concordances and corpora have indicated a wide and innovative range of classical borrowing undertaken by writers from the earliest period of Anglo-Saxon conversion to the celebrators of the Norman conquest, and at almost all points temporal and geographical in-between. Yet, to what extent the poets of this period emulated Vergil, instead of merely aping him, remains to some degree an open question. Our knowledge of the availability of classical authors in manuscript is still developing, and greater still is our uncertainty over how they were used.[4] Evidence indicates that Vergilian epic was both known and appreciated, although to what extent and in what manner remains a question that perhaps must be answered separately for each individual poet in turn.[5] It is likely to be the case that many poets of the early Middle Ages received Vergil both directly and through intermediaries. While the text of, for example, the *Aeneid*, was clearly read in almost every classroom, and while for the sake of hexameter verse-writing poets wishing to fill out a line would recall

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[3] See, for example, Contreni, *The Cathedral School of Laon from 850 to 930*; and Laistner, *Thought and Letters*, for several specific examples. A survey can be found in Reynolds, *Scribes and Scholars*, pp. 23–34. For further references, see Bischoff, 'Libraries and Schools in the Carolingian Revival of Learning'.

[4] In general, see Reynolds (ed.), *Texts and Transmissions*.

[5] Andersson, *Early Epic Scenery*, compares Vergilian descriptions of space to those of several Carolingian poems, including the *Paderborn Epic* and *Waltharius*. See also Ebenbauer, *Carmen Historicum*.

some half-line from one of its books, it would not always be to the poem itself that a medieval poet would turn when seeking inspiration on a thematic level. Fortunately, for those seeking Vergilian influence, the poet was himself already mediated by many Christian writers by the time of the ninth century, and it is some combination of original Vergilian motifs and topoi, and those same topoi modified by Christian Latin poets such as Juvencus, Sedulius, Prudentius, Arator, Avitus, and Venantius Fortunatus, all of whom in turn became canonical school texts, which can be shown to have influenced every writer of the early medieval period seeking to write poetry in the heroic manner.[6]

The structure, theme and conventions of ninth- and tenth-century heroic poetry of England and France can best be understood against the literary background of earlier epic, and the subsequent adaptation of their models and conventions among Christian Latin poets. It is not necessary to posit direct influence of Vergil upon a Carolingian or Anglo-Saxon poet to find reference to him helpful in reading their work. Poets such as Sedulius, Prudentius, and Venantius Fortunatus depicted heroic action in a Christian context; in their poetry, one can observe the development of the Christian hero: there we watch violence committed to Christians portrayed as saintly self-sacrifice and martyrdom, violence committed by Christians glorified in the name of *Christus victor*, and the heroic (because miraculous) deeds of holy men sanctified in new forms of epic. By appropriating the melding of panegyric and epic that can be observed even in poets of the late empire, Christian authors found a means to express heroic themes and topoi within an avowedly faith-based context.[7] The general (and, in some places, unavoidably

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[6] The notion that Latin poetry carried a 'stigma' is present in numerous Patristic sources: see Augustine, *Ep.* 26; Lactantius, *Div Inst.* 5.1; Jerome, *Ep.* 21.13. Yet positive citations are also found: see Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana*, 2.40.60, and Jerome, *Ep.* 70, each of whom see a positive value in it from an allegorical perspective.

[7] The term 'theme' has a particular history in Old English literary studies, having been adapted from Lord by early theorists in oral-formulaic theory. Lord defined a theme as 'groups of ideas regularly used in telling a tale in the formulaic style of traditional song' (*The Singer of Tales*, p. 68). Magoun incorporated the term and the work which Parry and Lord had initiated into his criticism of Old English literature (in 'Oral-Formulaic Character', and 'Theme of the Beasts of Battle'), and this was in term taken up by other scholars such as Creed ('Singer Looks'), who actively applied the concept to *Beowulf*, and Fry, who attempted to define it more carefully. Brodeur reinterpreted it as a sort of *leitmotif* (*Art of Beowulf*, p. 79). Recent scholarship has stressed the 'formulaic' aspects of medieval poetry, rather than 'oral-formulaic', and seems to have moved toward discussing Old English and other medieval literature in terms which acknowledge its deeply literary cast. See Orchard, *Critical Companion*, pp. 85–97, and 163–8, for a recent example.

superficial) survey of certain 'norms' of epic narrative is intended to provide a framework for my closer analysis in subsequent chapters of similar moments in early medieval heroic verse, primarily secular poetry written in Old English and Latin during the period of the Viking raids of Western Europe. This approach takes for granted that, if there is justification to speak of the 'heroic' literary conventions as reflected in poetry, or if there is such a thing as 'epic culture' ('epic' referring here to a literary mode differing from tragic or elegiac modes, for example), then narrative poetry following these heroic and epic models and conventions will incorporate certain narrative topoi, certain recurring and evocative scenes and motifs, and these will demonstrate common (yet variable and individual) characteristics across a wide range of poetry, drawn from different cultures and eras. That those topoi of heroic narrative will exhibit development and alteration is expected herein, as an inevitable by-product of the processes of artistic and cultural development.[8]

The first variance to be admitted must be that between heroic poetic norms, which are either pagan, as in the case of Vergil, or are an admixture of secular heroic values ascribed to a removed but recallable Germanic past, and an energetic system of oft-incompatible Christian mores, as in the case of *Beowulf*. The *Beowulf*-poet is no longer thought of as artist whose work was later adorned with Christian piety; rather, he has been shown to have skillfully and consciously woven elements of the various traditions available to him, both the legendary and Germanic, and the learned and Biblical.[9] Moreover, *Beowulf* is primarily a poem of heroic deeds and words, not a vehicle for the expression of theology or piety, whether heathen or Christian. The *Beowulf*-poet was also exceptionally skilled in this regard; not all poets' compositions demonstrated such a successful melding, and for many poets the effort to express Christian truths, or indeed to

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[8] For debate on this question see Curtius, *European Literature*, pp. 148–50; Herzog, *Bibelepik*, pp. 65–7; Roberts, *Biblical Epic*, *passim*, but esp. pp. 61–106; and Springer, *Gospel as Epic*, pp. 9–22. Curtius, and Roberts after him, have favored the 'paraphrastic theory' for the origin of versifications of the Bible, while Herzog and Springer have countered this hypothesis with theses of their own. Szarmach has recently suggested that poems that narrate the warfare of Christians with Vikings could comprise a similar sub-genre. Poems such as *The Battle of Maldon*, the *Bella Parisiacae urbis*, and the Old High German *Ludwigslied* all share certain heroic motifs and set-pieces, in addition to the general historical nature of their narratives. See Szarmach, 'The (Sub-)Genre'.

[9] See Orchard, *Critical Companion*, pp. 130–68, for an overview of this topic.

declaim secular narratives in a Christian context, proved difficult. The attempt to unify such seemingly dissimilar narratives is sometimes expressed in terms of horticulture, as when one speaks of Christian themes and values being 'grafted onto' a received text or texts which is secular or pagan, but this can also happen in reverse, as the Christian message is retold in the language of an originally un-Christian poetry. This occurred in a very substantial way in Late Antiquity, when Juvencus, Sedulius, Arator, and others chose to retell parts of Holy Scripture in the form of Vergilian epic; it also occurred, equally significantly, in the decision of early Christians to use the language of the arena, of violent death and sacrifice, in the encomiastic descriptions of the deaths of Christian martyrs, a practice which resulted in the *Peristephanon Liber* of Prudentius, as well as in his allegorical epic, the *Psychomachia*.[10]

The translation of the Gospel narrative into a form belonging to classical epic was, in the hands of its most capable artists, more than merely a matter of rewriting the Gospels in hexameter verse.[11] In a similar vein, recent scholars have remarked upon a confluence[12] of heroic themes and motifs in early medieval poetry (including poems in historic, panegyric, and elegiac modes), poetry which has as its primary concern the description either of warfare or, more narrowly, of events in which specific battles or individuals in combat play a significant and often central role. Despite the fact that the majority of early medieval poetry is either sacred or hagiographic in nature, or is specifically written as praise poetry to a leader, there remains extant a small group of early medieval poems which are either secular and also martial in their concerns, or which animate and illuminate heroic elements from within the enclosure of a religious theme. These poems are not intended to glorify combat per se, but they do feature occasional, even central, episodes of violence and suffering, such as the versified stories of Christian martyrs told by Prudentius in his *Peristephanon Liber*. In such poems, although the theme is not typically heroic (since combat does not occur), and although

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[10] See Lühken, *Christianorum Maro et Flaccus*, for extensive parallels.

[11] See Roberts, 'Last Epic of Antiquity', 260–7; Herzog, *Bibelepik*; and Green, *Latin Epics*.

[12] The word is now freighted with the concerns of scholars of allusion and intertextuality, and implies accidence rather than intentionality on the part of the poet; see Thomas, 'Virgil's *Georgics*', p. 174 n.12, and Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext*, pp. 17–25.

the form in which they are told is not that of epic verse (as they are not narrative in intent but rather eulogistic and memorial), the language used to describe the suffering of the martyrs shares many features with the scenes of violence found in heroic narrative poetry.[13]

What may appear as an ambivalence regarding whether to call the themes on which I plan to focus 'heroic' or 'epic' is partly a result of the difficulty in maintaining uniformity of terms across the divide between classical and medieval poets, a difficulty that is certainly reflected in the scholarship surrounding heroic verse. While it would not be true to claim that heroic motifs were the sole property of those poems which glanced longingly and cautiously backward to the Homeric epic, such poems retain a central concern of scholars studying epic literature.[14] Despite the anxiety with which many Church Fathers, and through them the subsequent Christian tradition, regarded the pagan values displayed in Roman literature, the centrality of Vergil to the educational curriculum throughout Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, and the massive esteem in which Vergil was held ensured that Vergilian concerns—that is to say, the heroic writ large—continued to play a familiar role in medieval letters.[15] Once Christian poets began to create those Late Antique poems that make up that sub-genre[16] of Vergilian-inspired verse known as Biblical epic, their immense popularity established for the form a new audience and new energies for early medieval readers and writers. Their scenes and motifs were continually remade and reworked into new molds and forms—a habit in keeping with the drive to incorporate other genres and one's own predecessors that Vergilian epic encourages.[17]

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[13] Prudentius has been edited by Lavarenne (ed.), *Oeuvres*, and by Cunningham (ed.), *Carmina*; for a discussion of the literary form and purpose of the *Peristephanon Liber*, see Roberts, *Poetry*; and Palmer, *Prudentius on the Martyrs*.

[14] Boyle, *Roman Epic*, pp. 4–16.

[15] See, for example, Comparetti, *Vergil in the Middle Ages*, pp. 6–26; Munk Olsen, *L'étude des auteurs classiques*, ii: 673–826; Laistner, *Thought and Letters*, pp. 45–67; Riché, *Education*, pp. 7–13.

[16] The specific question as to whether 'Biblical epic' is a useful category and if so, how to define it, remains an uncertain issue. See wider discussion in Thraede, '*Epos*', and Deproost, 'L'épopée biblique en langue latine'.

[17] Late Antique poetry still included a variety of epics, heroic *carmina*, and 'secondary paraphrases', but the era of Carolingian biblical (rather than hagiographic or liturgical) poetry seems to mark the disappearance of full-scale 'epics' from poetic accomplishment, and the marked diminishment of biblical

My discussion of the topoi of sacrifice begins with an attempt to clarify some narrative and broadly thematic features of epic poetry, which has served as the basis for defining heroic action, even in those poems which are not strictly epic in form. That heroic sacrifice in the epic shares many features with tragedy as well has been made clear by several scholars of sacrificial motifs; it is tragedy, in fact, which has served to generate much of the discussion surrounding sacrifice.[18] Moreover, the writings of medieval and late antique authors were even more influenced by the themes of sacrifice particular to Christianity and to the life and death of Christ. Although these observations will likely seem evident to readers familiar with such texts, from a literary critical perspective, I have found it useful to begin with a discussion of Vergil and the Latin epic, which, despite the tensions such poetry elicited in many medieval Christians, remained a standard touchstone for narrative depictions of violent warfare, heroic action, and civic destruction.[19] This is not an attempt to define epic as a genre; previous attempts have proven the task to be a rather difficult one. Examination of the definitions of the most significant ancient commentators, such as Aristotle[20] and Quintilian,[21] have not proven to be especially satisfying, as they are limited as much as anything by an earliness of scope. For these writers, an epic is a long narrative poem, written in hexameters, concerned with the foundation or destruction of a people or a place, which involves the travails of at least

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epic as a poetic model in general; for overview, see Dinkova-Bruun, 'Alexander of Ashby's *Brevissima*', pp. 15–24, who stresses the greater importance of hagiographic material; and Kartschoke, *Bibeldichtung*, esp. ch. 2.

[18] For a highly-literary approach to this topic, with much relevance to the larger issues of sacrifice in tragedy, see Segal, *Tragedy and Civilization*, pp. 13–42.

[19] Among many discussions of the complex Christian reaction to the Classics, see the standard overviews in Hagendahl, *Latin Fathers*, esp. pp. 240–5, 276–81, and 305–7 (on Jerome and Vergil); Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics*, pp. 384–463 (Augustine and Vergil, with a discussion of Augustine's subversive reaction to the important Vergilian theme of Roman national purpose at pp. 408–19); and Marrou, *Saint Augustin*, esp. pp. 125–57.

[20] Aristotle discusses this in his *Poetics*; see discussion in Halliwell, *Aristotle's Poetics*, pp. 257–65, and in Golden and Hardison, *Commentary*, pp. 260–72. This work was not known to early medieval writers, and Aristotle himself was often known only through intermediaries, such as Boethius.

[21] See Winterbottom (ed.), Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 10.1.46 and 10.1.85, on the *magnitudo rerum* of heroic poetry. On early medieval knowledge of Quintilian, see Reynolds, *Texts and Transmission*, pp. 332–4. Carolingian manuscripts are among the most important sources for the text of Quintilian; see Winterbottom, *Problems in Quintilian*, pp. 14–25.

one hero, who is opposed by others, and which features the presence of a supernatural force or forces.

Such a definition offers a beginning, but leaves many questions and concerns unanswered. Not all poems which strike their readers as heroic or epic in quality contain all of these features—Lucan's *Bellum civile* lacks active involvement of the traditional gods of epic poetry (although not the supernatural, or the chthonic gods of the underworld) in a Homeric or Vergilian sense, for example—and the study of Christian epic poses additional problems, as the concerns of classical poets become significantly altered and qualified.[22] The fourth-century grammarian Diomedes, an author particularly important for the medieval period, characterized poetry according to the manner in which they were addressed.[23] In this view, epic poetry is 'mixed', or *genus commune*, since it is poetry in which both the author and characters speak (as opposed to dramatic, for example, in which only the characters speak, and didactic poems such as Lucretius' *De rerum naturae*, in which only the poet speaks); moreover, epic could be subdivided further into 'heroic' and 'lyric' sub-categories, the former exemplified by Vergil, the latter by Horace. Also, an individual 'work' could contain examples of several types (*Eclogues* One and Nine were considered 'dramatic', for example), and the mixed genre could contain examples of heroic themes as well as bucolic themes (note, for example, the mixture of scenes depicted on Aeneas' shield). Approaching the Middle Ages, Isidore of Seville offers a definition of the genre which begins by approaching the problem as one of metrics—heroic poetry is verse written in hexameters—but quickly moves on to a suggested etymology for the crucial term *heros*:

> Heroicum enim carmen dictum, quod eo virorum fortium res et facta narrantur. Nam heroes appellantur viri quasi aerei, et coelo digni propter sapientiam et fortitudinem; quod metrum auctoritate caetera metra praecedit, unum ex omnibus tam maximis operibus aptum quam parvis, suavitatis et dulcedinis aeque capax.[24]

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[22] An overview of classical theories on epic verse is provided by Koster, *Antike Epostheorien*. See also Burgess, 'Epideictic Literature', 120–24.

[23] On Diomedes' influence in the Middle Ages, see Curtius, *European Literature*, p. 440–2. His work is edited in Keil (ed), *Grammatici Latini*, i: 299–529.

[24] Lindsay (ed.), Isidore, *Orig*. 1.39.9: 'A poem is called heroic because in it are narrated the affairs and deeds of mighty men. For men are called heroes as if they were lofty, and as if worthy of heaven on account of their wisdom and courage; this meter surpasses other meters in authority, the one out of all of

Isidore, laying the ground for many early medieval theorists, paid less attention to form and structure of genres than did his classical predecessors. The notion of tragedy, for example, becomes completely separated from any stricture of dramatic art, and comes to represent a certain masterplot involving the fall of the great. Epic came to center on the heroic actor and his origin and his fate, which led eventually to the medieval romance.[25] Isidore also notes the 'epic quality' of the songs of Moses (at *Etymologies* 1.39.9–13), an important method of demonstrating that heroic values were not limited to classical poets, but were valued in the Jewish tradition as well, and were therefore available to be claimed by early Christians even without the intermediary of Roman writers.[26]

If we were instead to examine the definition of a dedicated modern reader of epic, Maurice Bowra, we find that

> An epic poem is by common consent a narrative of some length and deals with events which have a certain grandeur and importance and come from a life of action, especially of violent action such as war. It gives a special pleasure because its events and persons enhance our belief in the worth of human achievement and in the dignity and nobility of man.[27]

Certain familiar elements recur in this definition: the length of the poem is important (the poem must have some space for expounding upon the themes), the poem must celebrate a life of action, actions which are characterized by sanctioned violence such as warfare, and which concern nobility and dignity, although the precise definition of these terms remains open.

One of the difficulties present in any attempt to define the bounds, or features, of epic in such a methodical or comprehensive manner, is the tendency of the form to absorb and remake other genres and forms of poetry in its own image. Epic is not completely promiscuous in its absorptive habits—interludes of low comedy, for example, such as

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them suitable for works both very great and small, equally capable of sweetness and of charm'. A complete translation of Isidore has been recently completed by Barney, Lewis, *et. al.* (eds.), *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville.*

[25] For a discussion of Isidore's view of genre, albeit focusing on tragedy, see Kelly, *Ideas and Forms*, pp. 36–50; and see his discussion of Remigius on pp. 50–7. Heiric of Auxerre offers interesting comments on tragedy in his *Commentum in Boethii opuscula*, 5.3 (cited in Kelly).

[26] Cited in Ziolkowski, 'Epic', p. 548.

[27] Bowra, *From Virgil to Milton*, p. 1. Bowra makes a distinction between authentic (oral) and literary (written) epic, the latter of which is the subject of his book; that the distinction is made too sharply was noted by its first reviewers.

what might be quite at home in Marlowe or Shakespeare, do not normally find a place in epic[28]—nor does it attempt this timidly.[29] Rather, it seems to be done with an eye toward their subversion, stitching motifs appropriate to tragedy, for example, or historiography into an epic context.[30] One of the concerns of epic is with past events, and past models of story—the predecessors of the poem. This particular sense of belatedness, which is not necessarily negative, intensifies, after Vergil, and is clearly present in the work of poets such as Lucan, Statius, and Silius Italicus. The *Aeneid* betrays a near-obsession with the past, absent in Homer but present already in Greek texts such as Callimachus' *Aitia*[31] and Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica*,[32] and this looking backward, this tension between the past and the present is, in Philip Hardie's words, 'thoroughly Alexandrian'.[33] The past to which the *Aeneid* looks in not only past poets, and past legends, but more local history as well, specifically the history of Rome. The *Aeneid* is not so much about its eponymous hero as it is about the events that brought Rome and Roman institutions into existence.[34] One could even view it as a *ktistic* epic, an aetiological narrative about the foundation of a *civitas*, as symbolized in the *altae moenia Romae* (*Aeneid*, 1.7).[35] As the Trojan legend,

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[28] Some elements of the comic are certainly present in epic poetry, often in the form of spoken retorts, or pithy narrative asides. The presence of 'low comedy' in tragedy is perhaps most famously illustrated by the Porter scene in *Macbeth* (II.iii), expounded upon equally famously by De Quincey.

[29] A classical variant of boorishness within the epic would be the character of Thersites in the *Iliad*, whom Mahaffy characterized as a 'misshapen buffoon' (*Social Life in Greece*, p. 13), and Beye as a 'rude boorish...menial, a nonentity' (*The Iliad, The Odyssey, and the Epic*, p. 86). For an attempt at rehabilitation, see Postlethwaite, 'Thersites in the *Iliad*'; and for an examination of the place of such a character within epic, see Thalmann, 'Thersites: Comedy, Scapegoats, and Heroic Ideology'.

[30] See Hardie, 'Narrative Epic', 88–90; Conte, *Rhetoric of Imitation*, pp. 69–129; idem, *Genres and Readers*, pp. 35–65, 105–28; Hinds, *Metamorphosis*, pp. 99–134; and idem, 'Essential Epic', *passim*. Rossi, *Contexts of War*, examines the (mutual) debt of Vergil's epic poetry and Roman historigraphy.

[31] On the *Aitia* and its relationship to Hellenistic poetry and later epic, see Fantuzzi and Hunter, *Tradition and Innovation*, pp. 42–88.

[32] See Hunter's chapter on the 'Modes of Heroism' in the *Argonautica*, in Hunter, *Argonautica of Apollonius*, pp. 8–45.

[33] 'Like the international high modernism of this [first] half of the twentieth century, Alexandrianism produced creative writers who reconstituted the works of their tradition so as to give them a sensibility that was contemporary' (Beye, 'Vergil and Apollonius', p. 272).

[34] Hardie, 'Narrative Epic', p. 88. See also George, *Aeneid VIII and the Aitia of Callimachus*, pp. 65–72.

[35] Hardie, 'Ovid's Theban History', 224; on the theme, see Horsfall, 'Virgil and the Poetry of Explanations'.

if not the *Iliad* itself, was concerned with the destruction of a city and a people, the *Aeneid* is equally concerned, if not even more so, with the foundation of Rome and the destiny of the Roman people.[36]

An attentive reader of Vergil detects a wide range of genres being alluded to, even supplanted, during the course of the *Aeneid.* Important elements of pastoral, a genre especially popular in Hellenistic poetry,[37] are placed by Vergil in the very heart of Rome, dramatized in the story of the theft of Hercules' cattle by Cacus (*Aeneid*, 8.184–275),[38] and in the humble images of rusticity embodied in the description of the cattle lowing around the humble home of King Evander, where the Forum and the Carinae will one day stand (*Aeneid* 8.359–61: 'ad tecta subibant / pauperis Euandri, passimque armenta uidebant / Romanoque foro et lautis mugire Carinis').[39] In Books Seven and Eight, pastoral elements might reflect Roman fantasies about their own rustic origins, which must be 'destroyed or left behind' when the 'Iliadic' half of the poem begins in force (see *Aeneid* 7.635–6, where farming implements are beaten into weapons, and 'trembling' men turn once again to their 'faithful' swords).[40] The interlude with Dido in Book Four could be seen to represent a tale of amatory action (or inaction) that must be abandoned for the traditional constraints of heroic narrative,[41] which Aeneas does, compelled by the driving force of fate, which is embodied by Jupiter and which is represented in the 'thunderous' sword by which he severs the mooring-rope and hastens away from

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[36] Von Albrecht, *Roman Epic*, p. 6. See Horsfall's discussion of the link between the 'sufferings' of Aeneas and the founding of Rome's *alta moenia* in 'Virgil and the Poetry of Explanations', 204–5. This topos is taken up by Moorman, 'Suspense and Foreknowledge in *Beowulf*', 381, building on the suggestions of Bonjour, 'Use of Anticipation in *Beowulf*', 295–6.

[37] See Hutchinson, *Hellenistic Poetry*, pp. 143–213, for a discussion of the bucolic verse of Theocritus, and for his argument that the 'bucolic' was not originally intended, and should not be viewed by readers, as a distinct genre. Compare the analysis of Fantuzzi and Hunter, *Tradition and Innovation*, pp. 133–90. For its influence on Vergil, see Clausen, *Virgil's Aeneid.*

[38] Galinsky, 'Hercules-Cacus Episode'.

[39] On the geographical hints given in this passage, and the connection between Evander's hut and Augustus' own dwelling see Fowler, *Aeneas at the Site of Rome*, pp. 74–6. For further connections, see also Bishop, 'Palatine Apollo'.

[40] 'Iliadic' is a term discussed in Otis, *Vergil: A Study in Civilised Poetry*, and see further Gransden, *Virgil's Iliad*, who discusses numerous points of contact between *Aeneid* Books 6–12 and the *Iliad.*

[41] Although see Ovid, *Trist.* 2.371, 'Ilias ipsa quid est aliud nisi adultera...', and the discussion in Hinds, 'Essential Epic', pp. 227–33 (cited in Stover, 'Confronting Medea', 142).

Carthage and Dido (4.579–80: 'dixit uaginaque eripit *ensem* / *fulmineum* strictoque ferit retinacula ferro').[42] A feature from Greek tragedy enters the Vergilian narrative in Book Seven; summoned by Juno, when peace between King Latinus and the Trojans is at hand, the Fury Allecto, whom 'her own father Pluto loathes, as do her sisters', at once begins to stir *domestic* discord, which is central to tragedy (7.335–6: 'tu potes unanimos armare in proelia fratres / atque odiis uersare domos'),[43] and possibly also reminded the contemporary auditors of the *Aeneid* of the 'full misery of internecine war'.[44] In each instance, Vergil adapts the motifs and conventions of these other genres for his own purposes, and thrusts his own poem, inexorably, beyond them.[45]

This process of assimilation of other forms of poetic expression for innovative re-use in epic did not cease with Vergil's death, of course; on the contrary, it became a convention itself. Poets after him sought to engage with his claims and tropes, to outdo, subvert, or pay homage to him. The poetic record after Vergil reveals consistent attempts to redefine his own concerns and metaphors, type-scenes, and handling of tropes, by poets such as Ovid, Lucan, and Statius; this was continued by Christian interpreters of Vergilian material and form such as Caelius Sedulius, Arator, Prudentius, and Venantius Fortunatus; these poets came to represent a new channel of poetic convention and license, and were equally important with Vergil in molding Latin heroic narrative of the early medieval period. The works of Anglo-Saxons such as Aldhelm, Bede, and Alcuin, and Carolingian poets such as Theodulf of Orléans, Walahfrid Strabo, Ermoldus Nigellus, Abbo of St-Germain-des-Prés, and the author of the *Waltharius*, to name only a few, were indebted to each tradition.[46]

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[42] 'He spoke, and drew his thundrous blade from its sheath, and struck the mooring-ropes with the keen blade', emphasis mine; see Hardie, 'Narrative Epic', p. 88. On the aesthetic value of this action within the larger episode, see Bradley, 'Swords at Carthage', and also the further refinements of Khan, 'Dido and the Sword of Aeneas'.

[43] 'You are able to spur to battle brothers of one mind, and can overturn homes with hatred'.

[44] Fraenkel, 'Some Aspects', 4. The article contains many valuable remarks on the manner in which Vergil depicts Allecto as the 'embodiment of Discordia'.

[45] Hardie, 'Narrative Epic', pp. 88–9. For the specific importance of tragedy to Vergil, see also Hardie, *Epic Successors*, pp. 71–3.

[46] See Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext*, pp. 1–16 for an overview of the issues of intertextuality, and also Conte, *Rhetoric of Imitation*, and Thomas, 'Virgil's *Georgics*', for examples of what Hinds sees as the

A special case might be made for Old English poetry, for which direct contact with certain aspects of this learned Latin tradition can be demonstrated, but, in regard to the most important secular heroic poem, *Beowulf*, direct influence cannot be proven.[47] Nist's dismissal of any meaningful relationship between the *Aeneid* and *Beowulf* was largely made at the expense of the Vergilian accomplishment, and to the benefit of the Homeric epic, which the *Beowulf*-poet could not have known directly.[48] He employs Schopenhauer for the purpose of praising the 'living idea' of the *Iliad* and *Beowulf*, versus the 'dead concept' of Vergil.[49] Andersson has recently declared currently 'moot' the search for specific Vergilian allusions in *Beowulf*, pointing to his own study on epic scenery as evidence that certain topoi in the Old English poem seem likely to show evidence from Vergil (although they are not, in his model, specifically Vergilian, capable of being traced to Homeric epic as well), while feeling that skepticism of a relationship is justified by Niles' demonstration of a dearth of literary elements that one ought to find in a truly Vergilian-influenced *Beowulf*.[50] Specific allusions may, in the end, prove impossible, but this is unimportant, I feel, for the context of my own study, for which strict sources are unnecessary. *Beowulf*-criticism has found it fruitful to compare elements within the poem to various North Sea analogues, and although questions remain concerning the nature and origin of these analogues, discussion of their similarities and differences has proven beneficial.[51]

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competing views. See also the considered overview of both approaches given by Farrell, *Vergil's Georgics*, pp. 3–25.

[47] The situation is summarized in Orchard, *Critical Companion*, pp. 132–3.

[48] Some aspects of the Homeric epics have drawn the attention of Anglo-Saxonists seeking to establish some link, if only analogous. See the work of Cook, 'Greek Parallels'; Brandl, 'Hercules und Beowulf'; Louden, 'Narrative Technique'; and Whallon, 'Formulas for Heroes'.

[49] See Nist, '*Beowulf* and the Classical Epics', 260. Much of Nist's criticism of Vergil seems strikingly untouched by the most basic insights of Heinz, *Virgil's Epic Technique*, and denotes a rather insensitive reading of the Roman epic.

[50] Andersson, 'Sources and Analogues', pp. 139–41. Niles' observations appear on pp. 78–9 of his *Beowulf*.

[51] The literature on this topic is immense. An overview of the subject is provided by Andersson, 'Sources and Analogues'. Among the better and more detailed examinations of the central arguments are Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, pp. 28–57 and 140–68, for connections between *Beowulf* and the Old Norse *Grettis saga*; and Dumville, '*Beowulf* and the the Celtic World', and Puhvel, *Beowulf and Celtic Tradition*, for Celtic matters. See also Orchard, *Critical Companion*, pp. 98–129, for the connections in *Beowulf* to a legendary past and for additional bibliography.

Rather than attempting to prune a comprehensive definition of what epic poetry might be from this, I will follow the lead of several recent scholars who proposed instead a set of 'epic norms',[52] thematic patterns and motifs that tend to be especially common to, and be handled differently by, poems which we have tended to think of as concerned with heroic themes, and including the topoi of heroic sacrifice. Indeed, many scholars, sensing the slipperiness of generic concepts when dealing with this poetry, have attempted to sidestep the problem, perhaps wisely, by referring to these poems as 'heroic'. Thus, *Beowulf* may or may not actually display all of the formal characteristics that would qualify it as *epic*, but all could agree that the poem is certainly *heroic*, at least in the sense that a *hero* was the focus of the narrative. Such a maneuver also allows to be left open the tangential arguments of genre: how similar is *Beowulf* to 'romance',[53] and to what degree are elements of the poem 'tragic' (a debate more crucial to my own purpose in this thesis). It is not necessary to my purposes to maintain hard and fast distinctions between hero-types in different genres such as the 'romance hero' and 'epic hero'; as Greene observes, post-Crocean discussion of genres can be characterized as fruitful but less coherent than previously.[54] Readers of early medieval poetry have frequently found it to involve a frequent *mélange* of generic conventions and expectations.[55] For my own purpose, which is to study the *motif* of sacrifice as it appears in topoi in certain poems from Carolingian France and Anglo-Saxon England, such a purity of division would be impossible to defend. Yet, not all poetry from early medieval England and France will feature sacrifice, whether it be heroic, civic, or horrific (to allude to the chapters that will follow), and the poems that do tend to the heroic rather than primarily to consolation, panegyric for lords secular and sacred, or didactic instruction. Other poems, such as the Old English *Judith*, allow for very suggestive readings in the topoi of heroic action and

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[52] The expression is Greene's, from his *Descent from Heaven*.

[53] Suggestions that *Beowulf* may have more in common with romance than with epic have been made by Ker, *Epic and Romance*, p. 165; Lapidge, '*Beowulf* and the Psychology of Terror', pp. 373–4, and Lerer, 'Grendel's Glove', 722. This discussion has recently been continued by Breizmann, '"Beowulf" as Romance'.

[54] Greene, *Descent from Heaven*, p. 4..

[55] See Fontaine, 'La mélange des genres'.

sacrifice, despite being, fundamentally, a Biblical 'paraphrase'.[56] For this reason, an overview of the epic mode, and thus of heroic *narrative* poetry, is necessary. This will follow a threefold model, concerning epic *imagination*, the epic *hero*, and epic *structure*, although these categories are not meant to be completely exclusive from one another. Following that, I will look at how these norms were continued and adapted by ninth-century writers of Carolingian Francia, and at some of the tensions explored by the introduction of specifically Christian readings of heroic topoi, before turning to a consideration of sacrifice itself.[57]

A Threefold Look at Epic

The epic *imagination* differentiates itself from comedy and tragedy through a constant drive to expand, to extend, to explore. Whereas comedy tends toward the cozy, the pleasantly domestic,[58] and tragedy tends toward the perversion of normal domestic space that disrupts and horrifies,[59] the imagined space and world of epic encourages an intrepid examination of that space. The tragic imagination illuminates a single fragment amidst shadows and forbidding mystery; the epic, at home with the encyclopedic and a

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[56] I will be discussing *Judith* in greater detail in chapter three; for an overview of the the translation of the Biblical Judith, see Griffith (ed.), *Judith*, pp. 47–61.

[57] The second chapter of Greene, *Descent from Heaven*, pp. 8–25, was the inspiration for some of the structural principles of the summary and discussion that follows. Greene's primary concern in his book (which skips medieval poetry entirely after its first chapter) is quite different from my own, but his broad description is among the most coherent and suggestive that I have read. I have also incorporated Philip Hardie's analysis of Vergilian themes and motifs in *The Epic Successors of Virgil*; these two scholars will provide the conceptual foundation for my subsequent discussion of heroic, civic, and horrific sacrifice within the literary context of medieval poetry. For Old English material, the overviews of O'Brien O'Keefe, 'Heroic Values', and the insights of Stanley Greenfield on concepts of the heroic have also been incorporated. Quint, *Epic and Empire*, is especially valuable for its analysis of epic as political (and on the epic hero as essentially communal), although he, like Greene, only glances modestly at medieval epic en route to Renaissance writers.

[58] In the words of Alexander Leggatt, although comedy 'at once encourages and resists generalization', it remains, as the plays of Plautus love to demonstrate, situated in the 'space between two houses', and within the confines of a single, familiar, neighborhood. The dramatic scale is local, ordinary, domestic life; a comedy can end happily in marriage, or (resisting generalization) in a blessed divorce, such as in the sundering of the marriage of Sullen and his wife at the end of Farquhar's *The Beaux' Strategem* (*Introduction to English Renaissance Comedy*, pp. 2–15).

[59] Such as the dual horror or perversion at *Agam.* 1384–6, when Clytemnestra describes her killing of Agamemnon in the same language as the three libations of an Athenian symposium (Goldhill, 'Language of Tragedy', p. 131).

will to catalog, shines on open spaces and frontiers.[60] It is a poetry that colonizes, that drafts and displays manifestos.[61] Again, this is the opposite of the tragic imagination, which isolates the independence of the will and presents the individual separated from his or her world and society.[62] On a narrative level, Vergilian epic also pushes at its own limitations, seeking totality and closure while encouraging repetition and reworking of previous texts and traditions. In the *Aeneid*, the boundaries of Roman geography itself expand, becoming 'coextensive with the limits of the natural world'.[63] This expansion is both spatial and temporal, and develops, in the latter, into an effort to bridge the gaps between the distant past and the historic present. If one thinks of Homeric epic as making this 'gulf' between now and then evident, the *Aeneid* and its successors strove to close that gulf, 'to forge a continual, even identity' between the hero Aeneas and Augustus, in whom had been obtained a Golden Age.[64] Nor is this effort to achieve continuity limited to classical Latin texts. The presentation of temporal heroic history in *Beowulf* is marked by continuity via attentive reference to the past, permitting 'the timelessness of hero and of history to emerge. The life of a warrior, the events of this life, follow a recurrent pattern, one felt to be fateful and disastrous'.[65] The poem also, with its persistent

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[60] Williams writes thoughtfully on this concept in *Technique and Ideas*, pp. 12–26.

[61] The epic has proven to be an attractive form by which artists in nascent nations, or at least whose sense of nationality is nascent, seek to define themselves and their polity. See Quint, 'Voices of Resistance', and Murrin, *History and Warfare in Renaissance Epic*. One recent examination of the view that the *Aeneid* is an embodiment of patriotic pride is Cairns, *Virgil's Augustan Epic*, and the theme is also a locus for Greene, *Descent from Heaven*; yet, as the studies of Quint and Murrin demonstrate, the epic urge demonstrates both the desire for expansion and the imperial tensions that such 'self-fashioning' reveals. On the *Aeneid* specifically, see Lyme, *Further Voices*, pp. 210–24; Putnam, *Poetry of the Aeneid*; and Perry, 'Two Voices of Virgil's *Aeneid*'. Stahl, 'Death of Turnus', and Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, have recently maintained the centrality of the pro-Augustan stance to the poem.

[62] Knox, *Heroic Temper*, pp. 36–44.

[63] A theme sounded early in the *Aeneid*, in Jupiter's speech to Venus at 1.257–96: 'sublimemque feres ad sidera caeli / magnanimum Aenean...His ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono / imperium sine fine dedi'. Anchises' description of Augustus' successes reveals in detail the space that would exhaust Hercules (6.791–803), and the description of Aeneas' shield (8.626–728) are its most descriptive manifestations. See Feeney, *The Gods of Epic*, pp. 12–13, and p. 24 n 90; Williams, pp. 199–205; and Hardie, *Cosmos and Imperium*, pp. 285–91. On the theme in Old English poetry, see Neville, *Representations of the Natural World*, pp. 19–52, with discussion of *Beowulf* at pp. 129–38; and Campbell, 'Ends and Meanings'.

[64] Hardie, *Epic Successors*, p. 5.

[65] Arent, 'The Heroic Pattern', pp. 175–7. See also Shippey, 'Fairy-Tale Structure of *Beowulf*'; Helterman, '*Beowulf*: The Archetype Enters History'; and Scowcroft, 'Irish Analogues to *Beowulf*', 28–30.

language of journeying, possesses an 'outwardly expanding and more encompassing sense of place'.[66]

Awareness of the narrative purpose of repetition has proven to be a useful way of reading Vergilian epic. Narrative becomes not just a series of new actions but also a repetition of events which have already happened, newly narrated; the poet consciously makes use of specific repetitions in order to create plot and, more importantly, to uncover the significance of events.[67] An epic such as the *Aeneid* is structured around series of repetitions, yet, since narrative plot requires a beginning, middle, and end, in order for the events to have an order, some slippage between end as 'stopping point' and end as goal (*telos*) is inevitable. An analogous 'maximizing' tension could be seen in Lucan, in whose narrative the major actors seem to sense both the struggle for domination and the difficulty of maintaining a sense of significance.[68] At times, the characters in epic can almost experience a sense of *déjà vu*, and this offers a dilemma, what Quint terms the choice of 'regressive repetition', and its alternative, 'repetition-as-reversal'.[69] The former leads to helplessness, a sort of traumatic re-experiencing of the event, the repetition of the account of the downfall of Troy in the second book of the *Aeneid*.[70]

This expression of epic time as 'vertical' rather than as 'horizontal', the sense that the audience, knowing what is to happen and what is to come, remains captivated by the connections consistently being made between events unfolding and those past and yet-to-come, affects the epic structurally as well as imaginatively. A succession of linkages holds the past up for scrutiny while attempting unification at the same time. Frank sees in

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A similar folkloristic approach has been taken by Barnes, 'Folktale Morphology and the Structure of *Beowulf*', which relies upon the terminology of Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*.

[66] Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking*, p. 149.

[67] Quint, *Epic and Empire*, pp. 12–17; see also Freccero, 'Significance of *Terza Rima*', pp. 258–71, who makes a connection between this narrative construct and the meter of the *Commedia*.

[68] At, for example, *Bellum Civile* 5.252–4, 7.659–64, and 9.123–5. Cited in Hardie, *Epic Successors*, p. 7. See also Feeney, *Gods of Epic*, p. 213; Henderson, *Fighting for Rome*; Masters, *Poetry and Civil War*, pp. 44–8.

[69] Quint, *Epic and Empire*, p. 25.

[70] For the beginnings of a discussion of conceptualizing trauma in literature, see Gomel, *Bloodscripts*, pp. 163–4: 'Traumatic memory is the nemesis of narration. If it is articulated at all, it is only through a discourse of rupture and fragmentation that mutely gestures at what cannot be encompassed by the discredited structures of causality, continuity, and closure.'

the *Beowulf*-poet's clarification of the customs of pagan times an effort to demonstrate awareness of anachronism—an authenticating action—while seeing in his diverse conglomeration of Scandinavian ethnic tribes an attempt at creating an 'archetypal Northman' to assist in the 'colonizing' force that is prominent in epic.[71] Such an effort unites both types of epic expansiveness, the temporal and spatial.[72]

Another way to see this distinction which can be made in the manner that different poetic modes handle the context of the hero and heroic action or struggle. Tragic imagery inexorably isolates its hero, fragments his world;[73] the comic restores norms through release and reconciliation;[74] the epic pushes toward social cohesion, and expansion of boundaries while maintaining social (and spiritual) harmony.[75] This is not to suggest that the epic hero does not eventually meet up with a sense of his limitations; in fact, tragic elements are frequently visible at precisely those moments in epic wherein one of the heroes learns painfully of his own limited capacity to affect the world.[76] But epic first encourages the feats of prowess and of might (*aristeiae*) that are prevalent in heroic poetry: Aeneas and Turnus leading their armies into war, Beowulf grappling with Grendel, Judith decapitating Holofernes, Walther defeating Gunther's army in single combat.[77]

These feats of prowess, of prodigious action, are essential characteristics of the epic *hero*. This hero is not a god, he is not super-human, but what he does is certainly

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[71] Frank, '*Beowulf*-Poet's Sense of History', pp. 53–4 and 62.

[72] On a different sense of vertical time, see the discussion of the collapsed sense of time and space in martur narratives, in Roberts, *Prudentius and the Cult*, pp. 11–37. On cities and their patron saints, see Orselli, *L'idea e il culto*. See also Engemann, 'Zu den Apsis-Tituli', 31–4.

[73] Although the concept has perhaps some relation to Aristotle's multivalent term *hamartia*, the importance of 'tragic isolation' in modern scholarly parlance owes much to Frye's thinking on tragedy: see *Anatomy of Criticism*, pp. 35–43.

[74] See Frye's remark, that the essential comic resolution is 'an individual release which is also a social reconciliation. The normal individual is freed from the bonds of a humorous society, and a normal society is freed from the bonds imposed on it by humorous individuals' (in his 'Argument of Comedy', p. 167). See also his revised thoughts in *Anatomy of Criticism*, pp. 163–86.

[75] According to this model, epic 'harmony' occurs when a character such as Aeneas, 'cooperates with and acts in harmony with destiny (Duckworth, 'Fate and Free Will', 357).

[76] For one examination of this element in Latin epic, see von Albrecht, *Silius Italicus*, pp. 47–55.

[77] For a further analysis of the presence of the single-combat, or duel, motif in heroic poetry, see Ashdown, 'The Single Combat in Certain Cycles', and Udart, *Between Two Armies*.

beyond the capacity of an ordinary man.[78] One school of thought concerning the origin of the literary depiction of epic heroes suspects that they represent the result of the gradual humanizing of the heroes of myth—the gods, or God—and after having passed through a stage when he is characterized by his relative comfort with the supernatural (or ability to use it, for such characters have access to the magical—a typical trait of the hero of romance), this new figure, diminished yet still prodigious, emerges as the hero.[79] The essential emotion that the epic hero is meant to elicit is *awe*, but the very limitations imposed upon the hero by their 'descent from heaven' renders this sensation very different from mythic or religious awe (or even that typical of romance).[80] This combination of extraordinary ability and a reduction toward the merely human—a reduction of which the epic hero is aware—Greene calls heroic *austerity*. In our modern usage, the word does not express as well as it could the controlled, conscious, and disciplined capacity for prowess that the hero possesses, or that embodies him: the sense, we could say, of being 'marvelously human'. Yet, it is a quality that heroic poetry is well-aware of. The Old English word *aglæca* (or *æglæca*, 'prodigious one') captures well the concept; in *Beowulf,* the word is used of Grendel, Beowulf, Grendel's mother (compounded as *aglæcwif*, 1259a), the dragon, and, during Beowulf's fight with the dragon, of both combatants (2592a).[81]

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[78] Again, compare with comedy; the comic 'hero' is neither the buffoon, nor the prig, but combines a society's values to create an 'everyman'. In the words of Congreve, 'the Character is a mix'd Character; his Faults are fewer than his good Qualities; and, as the World goes, he may pass well enough for the best Character in a Comedy; where even the best must be shewn to have Faults, that the best Spectators may be warn'd not to think too well of themselves' (from his *Amendments of Mr Collier's False and Imperfect Citations*, 1697, cited in Montague Summer (ed.), *The Works of William Congreve*, p. 200.

[79] Both Bowra, *Heroic Poetry*, pp. 5–8, and Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, pp. 33–4, posit a progression of this sort. For Bowra, the 'romance' stage is considered a sort of 'shamanistic' phase of poetry, characterized by heroes who possess hermetic knowledge.

[80] See Frye, *Anatomy*, pp. 33, 56–7; Bloomfield, 'Episodic Motivation'; and Greenfield, '*Beowulf* and Epic Tragedy', 103–4.

[81] It is used of Grendel at lines 159a, 425a, 433b, 592a, 646b, 732a, 739a, 816a, 989b, 1000b, and 1269a; of Beowulf (probably) at line 1512a; and of the dragon at lines (2520a, 2534a, 2557a, 2905a. See Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, p. 33. An extended discussion of the significance of this word for both Beowulf and his foes is available in Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, pp. 28–35. Other commentary relevant to *aglæca* and its complex of meanings: Duncan, 'Epitaphs for *Æglæcan*: Narrative Strife in Beowulf'; Georgianna, 'King Hrethel's Sorrow', 848; Kroll, '"Beowulf"', 121–2; Scowcroft, 'Irish Analogues to *Beowulf*', 38–9; Kiessling, 'Grendel', 191. Byrhtferth of Ramsey refers to Bede in this way, as a 'prodigious teacher' ('Beda *se æglæca lareow* mæge to gebugan and gesyttan fægere gebolstrod and us glædum mode geswutelian þa þing þe him cuðe synt': Baker and Lapidge (eds.), *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion*,

But prowess alone does not make an epic hero. The hero must have flaws and limitations. A hero's life is dangerous; the word danger itself implies the limitations of the all-too-mortal champion. It is only in dangerous situations, 'under conditions where one's life is in doubt,' that will result in glory; the 'good deeds by which Waldere will enhance his reputation are specifically acts of valor achieved with his sword.'[82] Heroes can die, they can be foolish (or overly-proud, a tragic flaw), and they can be ignorant of many things.[83] This mortality acts to curb the expansive thrust of the epic imagination; for, just as the poem seeks to explore and harmonize, and colonize, its world, the protagonist will eventually discover the limits of his ability. Often it is an awareness, and admittance, of vulnerability or weakness, or limitations, that occurs within the epic, rather than death itself.[84] Beowulf dies at the end of his poem; Pompey within the scope of his.[85] Yet Aeneas' limitations are expressed in many ways within the *Aeneid*, all of which serve to check the expansiveness of the poem, and which characterize him (more so, perhaps, than others), as merely human, although prodigious.[86]

The epic hero is also, finally, checked by his primary purpose, which is always external, visible, and communal rather than internal, opaque, and individual. If a hero's motives were not visible they might seem arbitrary to an audience, but that is not the way of epic. To declare our hero communal is not to imply that he is a mere cipher for the state. His glory is personal, as is his name and reputation (Old English poetry is

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2.1.174, p. 174; emphasis mine). In the third chapter I will take up the discussion extended by Orchard and others in examining the senses of the word in relation to the connections beween a hero and his antagonists.

[82] O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'Heroic Values', p. 109.

[83] Greene, *Descent from Heaven*, p. 12.

[84] What some scholars have hypothesized as being an awareness of how men fail to live up to the code of heroes: for an example, see Bennett, 'Military Masculinity'.

[85] On the 'spectacle' of the death of Pompey, see Leigh, *Lucan: Spectacle and Engagement*, pp. 118–25.

[86] The character of Aeneas has remained one of the controversies of the poem of longest-standing. Two main considerations have emerged; the first calls into question the dubious nature of the final act of the poem, the second concerns itself with the possibility that Aeneas' character develops over the course of the poem. See, among many suggestions, Johnson, *Darkness Visible*, pp. 44–67; Moseley, 'Pius Aeneas'; and Dudley, 'Plea for Aeneas'.

especially clear on the connection between *dom, lof, mærðu* and heroic deeds).[87] Over the course of a heroic poem, the hero's name becomes 'informed' with meaning.[88] Unlike certain heroes of romance, however, the epic hero does not start from square one, possessing nothing, known for nothing, such as the Old Norse version of Cinderella, the *kolbítr*, or as is the case for the youngest sons ('the unpromising hero') of folktales and *märchen*.[89]

Part of this externality is manifested politically, in the relationship a hero maintains between himself and his people, those he represents as *unus pro multis* ('the one for the many')—which will become one of the crucial definitions of the hero in our discussion of sacrifice. In Old English verse, the essential link is between a lord or leader, a *cyning* or *dryhten*, and the retainers who owe him service. 'The primary tasks of a retainer [...] were defense of the lord in battle and revenge for injuries'.[90] The link between them involved martial service, and one of sacrifice. However, the tenuousness of this connection, as with epic political connections in general, is demonstrated repeatedly through the concern with the *gift*, and the obligation it represented for both lord and retainer.[91] The connection between the individual heroic prowess and the manifestations of the apportioning of that prowess within group in part through tangible rewards is consistently present in Germanic heroic poetry. A hero must live up to the 'ideal of facing

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[87] See Harris, 'Beowulf's Last Words', 7–10 (his discussion at 14–22 attempt to characterize features of an Old English–Old Norse 'death song'); Hieatt, 'Beowulf's Last Words vs. Bothvar Bjarki's'; Orchard, *Critical Companion*, pp. 203–37.

[88] Greene, *Descent from Heaven*, p. 13. The importance of names in classical and medieval literature has been well-documented; however, the 'informing' process referred to here is not the same as that which occurs when a medieval author endeavors to 'tease from the [characters'] names some latent etymological senses which could then be shown to be appropriate to the characters who bear them' (Robinson, 'Significance of Names', p. 185), a practice developed from Jerome and Isidore of Seville, among others, and from the Bible before that.

[89] See Shippey, 'Fairy-Tale Structure'. Cecil Wood has argued that in the coast-guard's carefully-constructed speech made at the arrival of the Geats, the observation that Beowulf is 'not a hall-retainer' (*nis þæt seldguma*), *Beo.* 249b) alludes to the *kolbítr*-tradition ('*Nis þæt seldguma*: *Beowulf* 249'). However, his argument does not consider the next half line, *wæpnum geweorðad* (250a, 'exalted by weapons'), which qualifies the term and seems to invalidate this argument, and in fact makes a search for a deeper meaning for *seldguma* unnecessary; see Orchard, *Critical Companion*, p. 209; Bjork, 'Speech as Gift', 1009–10; and de Vries, 'Die Krákumál'.

[90] O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'Heroic Values', p. 109. See Donahue, 'Potlatch and Charity'.

[91] On gift-giving, see Donahue, 'Potlatch and Charity'; Hill, 'Beowulf and the Danish Succession'; and Bjork, 'Speech as Gift'.

the unknown unflinchingly. Yet, while his code is to brave the unknown, his success is measured by this tangible treasure'.[92] As represented in *Maxims II*, the obligation is as inevitable as a natural instinct: 'Fisc sceal on wætere / cynren cennan. Cyning sceal on healle / beagas dælan.'[93] The essential symmetry of this arrangement is elegantly displayed in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* entry for 755, the well-known 'Cynewulf and Cyneheard' episode. The political struggles in Wessex that it depicts seem to highlight the reality and nature of feuds and factional loyalty, and have been considered exemplary of the Germanic heroic ethos. Despite efforts at placing the entry into a wider context, what seems inevitable is the allegiance the story has with narrative fictions:

> The symmetrical offers of compensation and safe conduct combined with the survival in each battle of only one man from the losing side suggests that the attraction of the account of Cynewulf and Cyneheard lies in the narrative creation and exploitation of balance. Narrative sympathy rests with Cynewulf, and the focal point of the story is on social order, which Sigebryht and Cyneheard both violate.[94]

The impetus to avenge is one of the crucial forces that work both on and through the hero. In this, heroic narrative is linked to tragedy. A sense of inevitable confrontation looms, and cycles of violence become repeated, doomed to repetition by the code that binds hero to family and to a larger social group, such as tribe or nation.

The cycle of violence and resolution within the structure of epic narrative is brought out with more considerable artistry in *Beowulf*. The recurrence, and recurrent dislocations, of feud run throughout the poem, and are consistently recalled by the poet, or by the characters' own words. Sometimes the connection is simple, as when one loss begets another; Grendel's death leads to the death of Æschere. At other times the cycles of violence and vengeance are more complex, and are spread out over the epic, to be alluded to, as when we learn of the magnificence of Hrothgar's hall, Heorot, only to be told that 'it awaited hostile fires, the surges of war; it was not long before the sword-hate of sworn in-laws should arise after ruthless violence' during the Heathobard conflict.

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[92] Cook, *The Classic Line*, p. 17.

[93] *Maxims II*, 28–9: 'Fish shall spawn in water. A king shall give out rings in the hall' (*ASPR* vi: 244).

[94] O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'Heroic Values', p. 111. Hyams, 'Feud and the State', provides a recent overview of feud. See also Bremmer, 'The Germanic Context'; Heinemann, '"Cynewulf and Cyneheard"'; and Towers, 'Thematic Unity'.

Beowulf himself, speaking of Hrothgar's daughter Freawaru to Hygelac, also predicts the destruction of the unfast friendship in the Danish-Heathobard feud (2024–69), for 'seldan hwær / æfter leodhryre lytle hwile / bongar bugeð, þeah seo bryd duge!' (2029–31).[95]

As should be seen from this discussion on the epic imagination, epic *structure* involves both movement toward an end, and the persistent repetition and reformulation of motifs and topoi, both from without and from within the epic itself. The sense of 'regressive repetition' which leads to further trauma, and 'repetition-as-reversal', which leads to victory, can be seen in the sense of narrative progression through a series of *alii*, 'others' which at first strike the epic actors (or the reader) as similar to a previous event or situation, but which prove to be different; this realization helps to advance the narrative. One example would be the recognition by Aeneas of the series of 'false Romes', shown in Aeneas' visit to Buthrotum in Book Three; there, Aeneas discovers a miniature Troy constructed by Hector's wife Andromache and her new husband, Helenus. Here, the persistent sacrifices of Andromache at this empty tomb signify precisely the sort of traumatic repetition that Aeneas must move beyond in order to found Rome. It is this rejection of a certain sort of repetition which is re-enacted by later Christian poets, who see the '*alius* as an unambivalent marker of the progression from an imperfect to a perfect state', from the imperfect (and relatively empty) sacrifices of the Law, to the new unbloody sacrifice of Christ, which has inaugurated a new story.[96]

Struggles also occur between opposing forces, and the battle between heaven and hell is known to classical Latin epic as well as Christian. There is an attempt at movement from chaos to apotheosis, from hell to heaven.[97] The energy and turbulence of hell, warfare, and violence, seem to provide 'energy' to epic poetry, which so often takes for its beginning the metaphor of a journey; thus, such forces not infrequently begin a poem, perhaps after a short introduction. The *Aeneid* begins with a storm and the coursing of winds from Hell, which provide momentum for both the Trojan sailors and

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[95] 'Seldom does the deadly spear rest for long after the defeat of a people, though the bride be worthy. See Brodeur, *Art of Beowulf*, pp. 157–81; Eliason, 'The Burning of Heorot'; and Malone, 'Tale of Ingeld'.

[96] Hardie, *Epic Successors*, p. 18.

[97] For example, at *Aen.* 2.420 and 6.268. Hardie, *Epic Successors*, pp. 10–13, and pp. 59–60; Hardie, *Cosmos and Imperium*, pp. 125–43; Putnam, *Poetry of the Aeneid.*

their story. Lucan begins his epic with references to figures chosen from Roman history and legend whose place is in the underworld, or who are symbolic of hell on earth (as is the case with the ghost of Crassus, who walks unavenged).[98] Statius begins the *Thebaid* with the curse of Eteocles and Polynices by Orpheus, who has called upon the Fury Tisiphone to sow discord, war, and destruction; the father himself has become 'some horrific denizen of the lower world'.[99] Claudian, too, begins his epic *De raptu Proserpinae* with the fury of Pluto at his brother Jupiter, which leads to a war with heaven.[100] This irruption of hellish energy can be imagined as a series of transgressions, as in the subsequent crossings of Caesar, climaxing in his fording of the Rubicon, and the initiation of civil war.[101] The horror of the city or citadel under siege also serves to announce the presence of hell on earth; Lucan continues his epic with the depiction of the naval battle at Massilia and the siege of Brundisium.[102] Corippus shows us John, who is troubled by the chaos, the death and destruction caused by the barbarians in Africa.[103] Similar language of the topsy-turvy nature of the world at war will be found in ninth-century poems such as the 'Battle of Fontenoy', in which the peace of the Lord's day is cruelly exchanged for the war and savagery of a pagan god: 'Aurora cum primo mane tetram noctem dividet, / Sabbatum non illud fuit, sed Saturni dolium [...]' (1.1–2): 'At daybreak dawn split the hideous night, / but it was the wine-cask of Saturn, not the Sabbath [...]'.[104] The *Bella Parisiacae urbis* opens with an ironic sacrifice, as Abbo asks for the city of Paris to describe the 'gift' (*munus*) that the Danes 'poured out' (*libavit*) for it (1.20–1). The language is Christian in nature, and carries reminiscences of Biblical

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[98] Hardie, *Epic Successors*, p. 59.

[99] Vessey, *Statius and Thebaid*, p. 73; see his discussion on pp. 71–8.

[100] Beginning at line 32, 'Dux Erebi quondam tumidas exarsit in iras...', but declared from the opening word, 'Inferni...'; see Hall (ed.), *De Raptu Proserpinae* (Cambridge, 1969), pp. 123–5. See also Wheeler, 'Underworld Opening', whose article is interesting as well for its discussion of the topos of sacrifice in that epic.

[101] Masters, *Poetry and Civil War*, pp. 1–10.

[102] For discussion, see Masters, *Poetry and Civil War*, pp. 11–25 and pp. 29–39.

[103] Diggle and Goodyear (eds.), *Flavii Cresconii Coripii Iohanidos*; see Ehlers, 'Epische Kunst in Coripps *Iohannis*', for discussion of style. Also, on Corippus' reception among the Carolingians, see Schaller, 'Frühkarolingische Corippus-Rezeption'.

[104] Dümmler (ed.), MGH PLAC ii: 138.

sacrifice; yet the tone is contrary to the sacral, for this sacrifice is offered not by an ordained priest but rather by the *soboles Plutonis amica* ('loyal offspring of Pluto'). For an epic to begin with, or to gather impetus from, the introduction of chaos is a recurring structuring principle of the genre; and much of an epic poem's subsequent narrative will depict various efforts by the hero to resolve the chaos that was originally unleashed.

One structural feature common to both Germanic heroic poetry and classical is a comfort with revealing the outcomes of grand events. Vergil suggests, in a famous apostrophe, that Turnus will come to deeply regret his actions over the dying Pallas before the end (10.501–5, *nescia mens hominum*). Hulbert took certain critics of *Beowulf* to task for their grieving the 'disregard' of suspense on the part of the *Beowulf*-poet: 'Interest in heroic story lay, not in suspense, but in opportunities for emotional effect afforded by tragic complications and for alluring details of narrative'.[105] Haber, in seeking common ground between *Beowulf* and the *Aeneid*, agreed that 'neither epic depends upon suspense as an element of heightening interest in the story'.[106] As Hulbert notes, it is wrong to think that 'precognition destroys suspense', since withholding this sort of knowledge germinates only a poor sort of melodrama: 'in the work of a skillful artist its use results in building suspense as to how the end will be reached, as to the motives of an action or the effect of it upon the characters, or as to some other element in the events'.[107] It is this sense of deferring expectations that allows for 'anachronic time for hermeneutic thickening, for atmospheric amplification'.[108]

Toward Christian Epic, Christian Heroism

In adapting the language and forms of classical heroic epic to accord with their own proclivities, Christian authors managed to create a medium suitable for the depiction of heroic action in a Christian context. An image of a truly Christian hero emerges, whose actions and way of life takes Christ, and also the Jewish King David and the saints

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[105] Lawrence, *Beowulf and Epic Tradition*, p. 113.

[106] Haber, *Comparative Study*, pp. 45–6.

[107] Hulbert, '*Beowulf* and the Classical Epic', 71. See also Brown, *Narrative Studies*, pp. 3–10.

[108] Henderson, *Fighting for Rome*, p. 243.

and martyrs, as models.[109] The heroic episodes essential to epic, scenes of warfare and combat, are either inverted, for example, in the depiction of the gruesome violence *done to* martyrs, and then celebrated in the portrayal of saintly self-sacrifice and martyrdom; violence is also justified, when committed *by Christians* in the name of *Christus victor.*[110] Finally, new structures are provided by eschatological sentiments, by redefining the journey from hell (and earth) to Heaven in the guise of Christianity, and by modeling episodes from the deeds of saints presented in hagiographic epic.[111] By co-opting the blending of panegyric and epic which can be observed even in poets of the late empire, Christian authors found a means to express heroic themes and topoi within an avowedly faith-based context.[112] In the following pages, I will attempt a brief overview of the way that the language of heroic poetry amicable toward Christianity is developed, in the poetry of the Christian Latin poets.

The credit for the first full-scale effort to versify the Bible is usually given to the fourth-century Spanish poet Caius Vettius Aquilinus Juvencus, whose poetic version of the Gospels inspired many similar efforts at Biblical epic in its wake.[113] Juvencus' poem was followed by Sedulius' *Carmen Paschale*, which dates to the second quarter of the fifth century,[114] Arator's *De actibus Apostolorum*, dated to 544,[115] and other efforts which take the Old Testament for inspiration, including the *Heptateuchos* of Pseudo-

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[109] On this immense, topic, see, for example, the very different conclusions offered by Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies*; Staubach, *Rex Christianus*; and Ullmann, *Carolingian Renaissance*; and Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*.

[110] The classic, albeit provocative, treatment of definition of the atonement is Aulén, *Christus Victor*. Although many scholars agree that Aulén has overstated the case, his argument does highlight widespread opinions in the Patristic and early medieval period that have been somewhat overlooked since Anselm.

[111] An overview of 'hagiographic epic', exemplified by Venantius Fortunatus' *Vita s. Martini*, is available in Roberts, 'Last Epic of Antiquity'. Ziolkowski suggests that hagiographic epic blended elements of epic and romance traditions, sometimes leading to a distinct difference in their structure and theme; the *Vita Guthlaci* would be an example of the more epic version, the *Vita s. Alexii* an example of one which borrows more from romance (Ziolkowski, 'Epic', p. 551).

[112] On the concept of panegyric epic see Hofmann, 'Überlegungen zu einer Theorie', and also Fabian, 'Das Lehrgedicht als Problem der Poetik'.

[113] Huemer (ed.), *Juvenci Evangeliorum libri quattuor*, with supplementary textual criticism in Hannson, *Textkritisches zu Juvencus*. For its transmission, see Manitius, *Handschriften*, pp. 169–71.

[114] Huemer (ed.), *Caelii Sedulii Carmen Paschale.*

[115] McKinlay (ed.), *Aratoris De actibus apostolorum.*

Cyprianus (early fifth century),[116] the *Alethia* of Claudius Marius Victor (late fifth century),[117] and the *De spiritalis historiae gentis* of Alcimus Ecdicius Avitus (early sixth century).[118] Perhaps the most thorough attempt at telling the Christian story in Vergilian language belongs to Proba, a fourth-century Roman aristocrat whose *Cento Vergilianus* uses only tags borrowed from Vergil.[119]

While few readers, either medieval or modern, have preferred the poetry of Juvencus to other early Christian Latin poets, in one regard the Spaniard has proven especially valuable, for he has left us a preface in which he explains his reason for writing in verse.[120] The preface of Juvencus supplies evidence of the combination of deeds, fame, praise, and the power of poetry:

> Sed tamen innumeros homines *sublimia facta*
> et *virtutis honos* in tempora longa frequentant,
> adcumulant quorum *famam laudesque* poetae.
> Hos celsi cantus, Smyrnae de fonte fluentes,
> illos Minciadae celebrat dulcedo Maronis.[121] (*Praefatio*, 6–10)

Juvencus' concern will be with the deeds that Christ has done, which are 'sublime' (*sublimia facta*), as well as the 'reputation' (*honos*) of his 'virtue' (*virtus*). The flowing sweetness of Homer and Vergil will celebrate the deeds of Christ in Juvencus' own verse. By seeking to adapt the very language of classical epic to the life of Jesus and the actions of the Apostles, authors such as Juvencus and Sedulius also incorporated certain elements from the pagan poets into this new form of the deeds and words of Christ.

As Vergil sang of *arma virumque*, so Sedulius will take as his subject the

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[116] Peiper (ed.), *Heptateuchos*.

[117] Hovingh (ed.), *Alethia*.

[118] Peiper (ed.), *De spiritalis historiae gestis*. A useful overview of his life and his historical context can be found in Shanzer and Wood, *Avitus of Vienne*, pp. 3–27.

[119] Schenkl (ed.), *Cento Virgilianus*.

[120] For discussion of Juvencus' style, see Herzog, *Bibelepik*, pp. 52–97; Roberts, *Biblical Epic*, pp. 70–6; and more extensively, Green, *Latin Epics*, pp. 36–83; and Kirsch, *Das Lateinische Versepik*, pp. 56–72. On Juvencus' preface specifically, see Carruba, 'Preface'; and Green, 'Approaching Christian Epic'.

[121] 'Their *lofty deeds* and *reputation for virtue* win fame over many ages for countless men, whose *glory* and *praise* the poets augment. Some the lofty strains from the spring of Smyrna hymn, others the sweetness of Virgil the Mantuan' (tr. Roberts, 'Last Epic of Antiquity', 263; emphases mine); Huemer (ed.), *Libri Evangeliorum libri quattuor*. See also discussion in Herzog, *Bibelepik*, pp. 335–6; Kirsch, *Das Lateinische Versepik*, pp. 85–92; and Deproost, '*Ficta et facta*', 109–12.

miraculous deeds of Christ, which have opened the way to heaven through his own sacrifice (lit. 'Paschal gifts'), a route that can be followed by the strong Christian. He will sing 'the brilliant miracles of Christ the salvation-bringer (1.26 *clara salutiferi* [...] *miracula Christi*) [and] the path of salvation (1.35 *via* [...] *salutis*), echoing the language of the Sibyl in her prophecy to Aeneas in *Aeneid* 6 ([at line] 96 *uia prima salutis*). In Sedulius' case the path of salvation leads with firm steps to the paschal offerings (1.36 *haec firmos ad dona gradus paschalia ducit*)'.[122] In the focus on the deeds of a single extraordinary individual, Sedulius is following classical models such as Horace, for whom Homeric subject matter remained '[r]es gestae regumque ducumque et tristia bella' (*Ars poetica*, line 73).[123] To be sure, Sedulius borrows a number of military images, even referring to himself in language that, as I will demonstrate in the next chapter, recalls service both earthly and spiritual.[124] Yet his poem is distinguished by a noticeable and essential difference in subject matter: its extraordinary individual is not a man of war, but of mildness. Instead of the epic's meat, Sedulius offers only cabbage (*Praefatio*, 16).[125]

On the most basic level, this evidence of incorporation can take the form of lexical borrowing, at the level of the word, phrase, or line, so as to emulate Lactantius' dictum, that 'secular eloquence' should be used to 'inculcate Christian truth'.[126] Lexical borrowing will occasionally be verbatim, but often will show some morphological alteration, or a writer will substitute a synonym. Juvencus modulates *Aeneid* 1.209, *premit altum corde dolorem* to achieve *tristi compressit corde dolorem* (*Evang.* 1.410). These verbal 'echoes' occasionally seem to be no more than poetic recycling, as later writers use an earlier poet's metrical language to express a similar meaning when the language is appropriate and ready-to-hand. This is more pronounced in some writers than

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[122] Roberts, 'Last Epic of Antiquity', 264.

[123] 'The deeds of kings and generals, and grievous wars'; the theme is echoed mischievously by Ovid, *Amores* 1.1.1–2, 'arma gravi numero violentaque bella parabam / edere', and in *Met.* 1.452–74, where, with Cupid's aid, *arma* becomes *amor*. See Conte, *Rhetoric of Imitation*, pp. 70–5; and Otis, *Ovid as an Epic Poet*.

[124] Note his *Qui militat*, at 1.339. See Manning, 'La signification de "militare-militia-miles"'. Springer details some of this epic language in *The Gospel as Epic*, pp. 74–83.

[125] Springer, pp. 131–5; Huemer, *De Sedulii poetae vita*, pp. 53–6; see also Gneuss, *Handlist*. Sedulius and Vergil, see Springer, pp. 76–83, pp. 83–4 (see *Praef.* 15–16).

[126] *Inst.* 1.1.10, cited in Roberts, 'Last Epic of Antiquity', p. 263.

in others; some medieval poets, such as Aldhelm, seemed to write large swaths of their poetry in this way, combining earlier lines and half-lines of the Roman poets to create their own verse.[127] At other times, however, the technique of borrowing, of making allusions to other poetry, is performed more complexly, and with a greater intent to call the reader's attention to parallels, or contrasts, between the current poem and the poem to which allusion is being made.

A reader must be cautious, however, when positing intentional echoes between one poem and another. A study of the echoes of Vergil to be found in Juvencus, for example, yields many places where an intentional allusion is highly unlikely, given the incongruity of the passages in question, that the Christian poet intended to draw an analogy between his work, or the context in question in his poem, and the Vergilian context from which the Latin phrase comes. The scene of Christ's transfiguration at *Libri Evangeliorum* 3.316–52, for example, contains descriptive language and epithets that echo 'far more humble' references in Vergil.[128] The phrase *fulgore corusco* at 3.321, for example, is a case in point, for in the *Georgics* it is not Christ who gleams, but honeybees (*Georgics* 4.98).[129] Roger Green is right to urge caution to all those who would seek to imagine Christian poets emulating pagan poets, or seeking to exploit classical allusions.[130] It is all too easy to locate unprovable connections between poets and their poems, or to posit intentionality at the level of theme and narrative, when a poet's own recollections from other poets' verse might be the only reason for the similarity. However, to simply discount the possibility of borrowings and allusions more developed than mere lexical recycling would be to do these poets and their poems a grave injustice, as they were actively engaged not merely in the act of 'translating' Scripture from the medium of prose to that of verse, but were also seeking to 'outdo' their pagan predecessors, whose poems, artistically grand though they may be, were lesser by virtue of the fact that their theme was lesser: no account of the destruction of Troy or Thebes

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[127] See Orchard, *Poetic Art*, pp. 73–125 and 126–238, for an extensive treatment of Aldhelm's hexameter verse techniques and his indebtedness to earlier Latin writers. See also the earlier treatment of Campbell, 'Some Linguistic Features'.

[128] The phrase is Roger Green's, *Latin Epics*, p. 58.

[129] Noted in Green, *Latin Epics*, p. 58; see his discussion of these incongruities at 57–71.

[130] Green, *Latin Epics*, pp. 60–3.

could ever be as worthy as the tale of human sin and salvation. This was often done by contrasting one passage with another, sometimes referred to as *aemulatio* ('rivalry'):

> The fact that an intertextual story can be told [...] does not in itself justify such a link. The feeling that some interpretations 'go too far' (a feeling perhaps no less important in criticism than the feeling that one must 'connect') in general, or seem to go beyond demonstrable allusive practices of Juvencus, whether in terms of allegory or allusion to other parts of the bible, should not, however, discourage the investigation of *Kontrastimitation* [...].[131]

For poets such as Juvencus or Sedulius,[132] this activity of contrasting is most often to take the form of demonstrating the spiritual superiority of the Gospel story to classical myth and legend. At times, a single word, if rare enough, or used pointedly enough, can make the contrast evident to a careful reader. Thus, when one reads Juvencus' version of Mt 16:18–19,

> infernis domus haec non exsuperabile portis
> claustrum perpetuo munitum robore habebit[133] (3.281–2)

one should also recall the Sisyphean *saxum* of *Georgics* 3.39, which is *(non) exsuperabile* and Tartarean, and which is overcome and Christianized by the Petrine rock made strong in Christ.[134] The storm that drives Aeneas into the land and arms of Dido is transformed by Juvencus to even greater effect and pathos.[135] The Christian poet compares the emotional and uncertain words and actions of Aeneas to those of Jesus, and he finds them sorely wanting.[136] Such evident (if subtle) examples show a consistent urge, running like

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[131] Green, *Latin Epics*, p. 59. As Green notes, the term *Kontrastimitation* is from Thraede, 'Epos', col. 1039.

[132] Huemer (ed.), *Paschale carmen*; Huemer has been supplemented by a steady stream of articles discussing the text of the *Paschale carmen*, and these are referenced in Springer, p. 1 n.1. See also Donnini, 'Alcune osservazioni'; Grillo, 'La presenza di Virgilio'; Herzog, *Bibelepik*; Kartschoke, *Bibeldichtung*; Opelt, 'Szenerie'; and Witke, *Numen litterarum*.

[133] Green translates: 'this house, not impugnable by the gates of hell, will have its bulwark fortified with perpetual strength' (*Latin Epics*, p. 59).

[134] Green, *Latin Epics*, p. 60.

[135] See Ratkowitsch, 'Vergils Seesturm', for extensive analysis.

[136] Green, *Latin Epics*, p. 60.

a thread through much Christian Latin poetry, to outdo the classical poets through the greater force and meaning of their narrative.[137]

One need not multiply these examples further here, nor should this be taken as any easy association of Christ with Aeneas, Caesar, or another figure from classical poetry. There is abundant evidence, in fact, that Late Antique Christian authors would have bristled to compare Aeneas to Jesus, even for the purpose of *aemulatio*, so degenerate was the Roman hero thought to be.[138] Neverthless, Christ's status as the (in Milton's words) 'most perfect hero' makes it interesting and profitable to examine heroic topoi in the narrative poetry of Late Antique and medieval authors in order to see how these authors made use of these, whether they feature occasions of combat, praise, lamentation, sacrifice, succession, or heroic suffering, for example, and to see how they were transformed, expanded, or inverted in turn. Poets such as Juvencus and Sedulius adapted the situations of prior epic poetry with an understanding of both the tradition's demands and conventions, and the elements of their own faith, and their own quite different narratives and scenes.

Artistically, there were also noticeable changes of emphasis from classical epic. Christian poets, incorporating the language and imagery of Scripture and the techniques of scriptural exegesis into their compositions, both borrowed from and transformed the epic. The process and the enterprise initiated rather cautiously by Juvencus was brought to a higher level of artistry by Sedulius. Considered by many to have been the Christian Vergil (and the *Christianissimus poeta*), his poem differs strikingly from the *Aeneid* in several of the ways mentioned above.[139] Also of major importance is a change in the Vergilian narrative style, which is episodic rather than connected in Sedulius. Elaboration (or *enargeia*) of individual scenes is given precedent over continuity, a stylistic feature which was shared by certain secular works of the period as well, such as Claudian's *De*

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[137] For additional examples, see Fichtner, *Taufe und Versuchung*, pp. 148–67, and Šubrt, 'Jesus and Aeneas'.

[138] See Opelt, in *Reallexikon*, ii: 88–94; Reinhold, 'Unhero Aeneas'; and Smith, *Prudentius's Psychomachia*, pp. 234–300.

[139] See Springer, *Gospel as Epic*, pp. 84–95, for a brief summary and analysis, including a reading of the image of the snake in the *Paschale carmen*. Texts of Sedulius often follow directly after Vergil's in Carolingian manuscripts: see, for example, Contreni's edition of Codex Laudunensis 468.

raptu Proserpinae. The *sublimia facta*[140] themselves are especially treated in this way, as 'miracle stories in particular are treated as discrete episodes, with little attempt on the poet's part to create a chronologically and topographically unified narrative.'[141]

This intensification of focus on the episode, at the expense of connective structures and larger coordinative linkages, could instead be read as the poets' own reliance upon the already-given structure of salvation stories, rooted in typological and figural exegesis of the Old and New Testaments, and given renewed life in hagiography, which saw each saint, and their individual *sublimia facta*, as part of a larger tableau, a larger body of legendary material and belief, the *communio sanctorum*, examples of the *Nachfolge* of Christ.

> Christian allegory encouraged thinking of individual episodes, especially miracle stories, as at a certain level semantically equivalent dramas of salvation. From that perspective poetic composition involved the cumulative inculcation of a repeated message rather than an organically evolving continuous narrative sequence. Sedulius' text breaks up into a series of individual *narrationes*, treated as discrete units, with the narrative proper heavily abbreviated, though key details may be subject to amplification: in miracles of healing, for instance, the account of the symptoms of sickness and of their reversal.[142]

This complex process of adaptation of classical epic (complex since, as the classical epics were being altered to the Christian narrative, so, too, were Christian narratives being adapted to fit the exigencies of classical epic form) is even more visible in those poems which seek to tell a story (or express a truth) which allowed a poet more room for innovation and alteration than did the Gospel narratives, such as the hagiographical epic.[143] Lives of saints, therefore, although they would be structured and elaborated to conform to accepted knowledge concerning the life and deeds of the holy man, allowed a poet far more room for expansion, excision, and elaboration, and more room for those

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[140] Recalling Juvencus' *Praefatio*, line 6.

[141] Roberts, 'Last Epic of Antiquity', 265. See also Roberts, *Biblical Paraphrase*, pp. 165–71; and Green, *Latin Epics*. Herzog, *Bibelepik*, argued that Sedulius' efforts in this regard created what amounted to rhetorical meditative verse.

[142] Roberts, 'Last Epic of Antiquity', 265.

[143] Roberts, 'Last Epic of Antiquity', attempts to provide a map of the issues and problems associated with this sub-genre of epic. In so doing, he borrows concepts (such as *Erwartungsrichtung*) from Jauß, 'Theory of Genres and Medieval Literature', *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, pp. 76—109, and Mora-Lebrun, *L'Éneide médiévale*, pp. 26—34. See also Conte, *Genres and Readers*, p. 110–15.

particular epic 'events' that would not have been possible in retelling the 'divine writ' of the Gospel message. It is also probable that poets following the example of Sedulius' *Carmen Paschale* began to focus on an individual's deeds (or miracles) as much as on a specific narrative. The content of the epic genre reflects a considered and consistent change from biblical themes to hagiographical, yet there is significant continuity in the epic tradition, for by 'following the example of Christ, each saint becomes a holy figure in real life and an epic hero in poetry'.[144] This embracing of heroic action led, when combined with panegyric verse and a growing historical concern reflected in poetic compositions, resulted in the new forms that narrative verse took in the ninth century, and subsequently. The influence of Sedulius' *Carmen Paschale* on early medieval poets was quite strong, not only in structure, but in style as well, and a similar influence was achieved by Paulinus of Périgueux's late fifth-century *De vita Martini*,[145] and Venantius Fortunatus' *Vita s. Martini* after him.[146] The prose *vita* of Sulpicius Severus was the working model and foundation for both Paulinus' and Fortunatus' versifications, yet it is instructive how each in turn stress different details of St Martin's life than Sulpicius' version. The version of Fortunatus, in particular, would prove to be extraordinarily influential on later poets. His *Vita s. Martini* offers one of the earliest, and most influential, forms of what some scholars have termed 'hagiographic epic', heroic verse which takes as its epic hero a particular saint.[147] Like epic, the focus in his poem remains upon the deeds (Horace's *res gestae*) of the saint rather than on his teaching or on spiritual matters. This poem is quite unusual in Fortunatus' work, an oeuvre which consists mainly of *carmina publica*.[148] Although the *Vita s. Martini* certainly conforms to many of the expectations of epic, Fortunatus does avoid mention of classical predecessors in his invocation (1.14–25), citing instead authors such as Juvencus, Orientius, Prudentius, Paulinus (although Fortunatus seems to have confused Paulinus of Périgueux

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[144] Dinkova-Bruun, 'Alexander of Ashby's *Brevissima*', p. 23.

[145] Petschenig (ed.), *Poetae Christiani Minores*, pp. 17–159; BHL no. 5617.

[146] Quesnel (ed.), *Venance Fortunat*; BHL no. 5624.

[147] An overview of 'hagiographic epic', a subgenre exemplified by Venantius Fortunatus' *Vita s. Martini*, is available in Roberts, 'Last Epic of Antiquity'.

[148] See Godman, *Poets and Emperors*, pp. 1–37, and George, *Venantius Fortunatus*, for discussions of the Merovingian court poetry of Fortunatus.

with Paulinus of Nola at 1.20–1),[149] Arator, and Avitus. He writes with some confidence as the heir of a Christian tradition that had successfully incorporated many of the essential features and qualities of classical epic into itself, and which was also the inheritor of many of the heroic topoi which had become nearly commonplace in the poetry of late antiquity.[150]

Fortunatus uses a wide range of rhetorical devices in his *Vita s. Martini*, some of which mark his own innovation in epic form and which were, along with his skill at panegyric, to influence greatly his imitators. He is fond of an episodic style and a 'clipped brevity', and his account of the miracles of St Martin is usually shorter than Paulinus', while significantly longer than that of Sulpicius.[151] This abbreviating effect (*percursio*) is one which Augustine suggests alternating with its opposite effect, achieved by 'lingering over' the text (*immorando*), as well as the device of 'amplification' (*resolvere atque expandere*).[152] The technique of *percursio* should be used along with *enargeia* or *evidentia*, the visual immediacy gained in the description of events. Fortunatus' treatment is also longer than that of Sulpicius, and he also uses the rhetorical figure of *interpretatio* to develop Sulpicius' rather simple, yet pithy, descriptions of scenes from Martin's life.[153]

The episodic and intense style of Fortunatus was to prove especially influential upon later Latin poets, who perhaps were thinking of him when they drew back from larger architectural structures in their narrative poems, and paid more attention to the 'heroic episode'[154]; his focus on, or at least willingness to indulge, deeds over dogma,

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[149] As suggested by Roberts, 'Last Epic of Antiquity', 261, based on line 20, 'Stemmate, corde, fide pollens Paulinus et arte'.

[150] See Roberts, 'Last Epic of Antiquity', 266–74, for a discussion of some of the epic features of the poem.

[151] Labarre, *La manteau partagé*, has carried out a thorough analysis of the versions of Paulinus and Fortunatus; Roberts, in 'Venantius Fortunatus', offers a close reading of Fortunatus' version, with an especially close eye to his use of rhetorical devices and tropes.

[152] Augustine, *De catechizandis rudibus*, 3.5 (CCSL 13.2:124.9–125.17). The terminology differs only slightly from that of Cicero, who had earlier suggested a mixture of *commoratio* and *percursio* in *De oratore*, 3.53.202.

[153] See Brinkmann, *Zu Wesen und Form*, pp. 111–39, 177–84; and for discussions of *apostrophe* and *interpretatio* see pp. 50–2 and 55–7, respectively.

[154] The expression is from Szarmach, 'The (Sub-)Genre'.

and his interest in panegyric, seems arguably to have become the model for the poets of ninth and tenth century Francia seeking an exemplar whose work could serve as the frame for their own efforts in the epic form. Carolingian leaders were praised, and had their deeds commemorated, along the basic lines laid down by Venantius Fortunatus, the 'last epicist' of Late Antiquity.[155]

Latin Poetry of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries: Glancing towards and Away from Epic

> Ad unum terminum cuncta referenda sunt, et quae in libris gentilium utilia, et quae in Scripturis sacris salubria inveniuntur, ut ad cognitionem perfectam veritatis et sapientiae perveniamus, qua cernitur et tenetur summum bonum.[156]

The presence and power of Christian adaptation of Vergilian epic did not remove the classical epic from the curriculum, or from the consideration of Carolingian and Anglo-Saxon poets.[157] Henri Lubac has succinctly noted, Vergil's 'poetry was more than just a simple vehicle for self-expression. He was familiar to the literate people of the time, to theologians and the spiritually minded as well as to others'.[158] The models for this cozy caution were legion. It is perhaps unsurprising that St Cadoc of Llancarfan, the cattle-raider's son and Welsh monk, 'translated Virgil in his moments of leisure'.[159] Even though Alcuin assumed an antagonistic stance toward classical literature, as he would

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[155] The phrase is Roberts, 'Last Epic of Antiquity'.

[156] Hrabanus Maurus, *Cl. inst.* iii.2: 'Toward one end ought all matters tend, that what is useful in pagan books and what is soteriological in sacred Scipture is discovered so that we might approach toward perfect understanding of truth and wisdom, by which the highest good is sifted and retained' (Knöpfler (ed.), *De clericorum institutione libri tres*). Cited in Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, i: 35. See also Rissel, *Rezeption antiker und patristischer.*

[157] On Vergil in particular see Fontaine, 'La conversion du christianisme à la culture antique: la lecture chrétienne de l'univers bucolique de Virgile'. For the broader picture, see Glauche, *Schullektüre*; Glauche, 'Die Rolle der Schulautoren'; and see further Bischoff, 'Libraries and Schools'.

[158] Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, i: 38.

[159] The earliest life is by Lifris (BHL 1491), and dates from 1073 x 1086. For text see Rees (ed), *Lives of the Cambro British Saints*, pp. 24–100. For dating, see Grosjean, 'Vie de Saint Cadoc', 42.

later do toward Germanic heroic poetry, insisted on rejecting 'Vergilian lies' for Gospel truth,[160] and chastised his student Ricbod for a fondness for the poet,

> from the playful way he does this, it is quite evident that [Alcuin] is a man who understands such a love. The same applies to Paschasius Radbertus, who protests that he does not plan, in his theological work, 'to concoct a tale from the vinegar of Virgil.' Even so, he does not refrain from citing the *Eclogues*. In truth, doctrine, with its indispensable intransigence, is one thing, while beauty, culture, and human sensibility are another.[161]

It was also Alcuin who, in his description of the library at York, included classical poets, admittedly positioning them after their Christian counterparts:

> Quid quoque Sedulius, vel quid canit ipse Iuvencus,
> Alcimus et Clemens, Prosper, Paulinus, Arator,
> Quid Fortunatus, vel quid Lactantius edunt,
> Quae Maro Virgilius, Statius, Lucanus et auctor.[162] (1550–3)

Theodulf of Orléans, in his poem 'De libris quos legere solebam', reminisces over a similar course of study:

> Sedulius rutilus, Paulinus, Arator, Avitus,
> Et Fortunatus, tuque, Iuvence tonans;
> Diversoque potens prudenter promere plura
> Metro, o Prudenti, noster et ipse parens.
> Et modo Pompeium, modo te, Donate, legebam,
> Et modo Virgilium, te modo, Naso loquax.
> In quorum dictis quamquam sint frivola multa,
> Plurima sub falso tegmine vera latent.[163] (13–20)

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[160] 'Haec in Virgiliacis non invenietur mendaciis, sed in evangelica affluenter repperietur veritate' (Alcuin, *Ep.* 309, a text also known as *De animae ratione*, and which was written for Gundrada, the sister of Adalhard of Corbie); Dümmler (ed.), MGH *Epp.* ii:475.

[161] Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, i: 38–9. Alcuin's remarks are in *Ep.* 13 (MGH *Ep.* iv: 13, 38–9), and see *Ep.* 162. The *Vita Alcuini* attributes an anti-Vergil line to Alcuin (ch. 10.19, PL 100, col. 101), although Lubac finds it un-Alcuinian. See also Augustine's *Confessions*, 1.13.21–2. On the line 'Aurea Roma iterum renovata renascitur orbi', see Ebert, *Allgemeine Geschichte des Literatur*, ii: 77. See also Walahfrid Strabo's remark at Dümmler (ed.), PLAC ii: 373, and Theodulf of Orléans, cited in Raby, *Secular Latin Poetry*, i: 190.

[162] 'What Sedulius, or what Juvencus himself sings, Avitus and Clemens, Prosper, Paulinus, Arator, what Fortuatus or Lactantius publish, what Vergil, Statius, Lucan say'. *Versus de ... sanctis Euboricensis ecclesiae,* PLAC i: 204. S-K 2176.

[163] 'Gleaming Sedulius, Paulinus, Arator, Avitus, and Fortunatus, and you, thundering Juvencus; and you, Prudentius, our own powerful parent [or 'countryman'] prudently putting forth many things in a variety of meters. And now Pompey, now you, Donatus, I have read, and now Vergil, now you, chatty Ovid. In whose words, although there are many things that are frivolous, under a false covering many truths lie hid'. *Carm.* xlv, lines 13–20; Dümmler (ed.), PLAC i: 543, Schaller-Könsgen no 9975.

Likewise, Walahfrid Strabo names Vergil, Horace, Ovid, Lucan, Ausonius, Probus, Prudentius, Boethius, and Arator as influences;[164] for his part, Hrabanus Maurus names Vergil, Ovid, Horace, and Homer (as well as lesser lights such as Corduba, and Affrica).[165] Ninth- and tenth-century poets would find many opportunities for summoning such classical influences into their own poetry, despite the enthusiasm for Christian models of epic and heroic action.

Examining the manuscript evidence, one would rightly conclude that the composition and copying of secular poetry was not the predominant task of early medieval men of letters. Yet, a history of secular letters can be traced, through the Merovingian poets of princes such as Fortunatus to the early Carolingian period, and throughout the ninth and tenth centuries. Peter Godman has noted that a resurgence of interest in panegyric took place prior to the court of Aachen,[166] and points to the poem on the Easter celebration of 774 following Charlemagne's Lombardic campaign, and to the poem titled *Carmen de conversione Saxonum*,[167] as precursors to Alcuin's own *Versus de...Sanctis Euboricensis Ecclesiae*, which marks the first attempt at a celebration of secular and sacred leadership in an epic form.[168] The poem is an attempt to establish the historical and intellectual traditions of York, and presents the poles of royal and ecclesiastic rule as being 'firmly theocratic'.[169] The approach Alcuin takes is episodic, as is typical of epic poetry of the era. The elements of panegyric remain high, but Alcuin also makes an effort to deliver the series of events as short narratives, complete with the saintly miracle of hagiographic epic, and the battle sequence of secular heroic verse.

Alcuin's foray into narrative verse may have provided a model for later Carolingian poets seeking to write on political and historical events, but it remains a

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[164] Strecker (ed.), PLAC iv: 1079. The short poem, titled 'Versus Walahfridi', whose attribution is not certain, is contained in Reims 130 (E 348), f. 74.

[165] *Carmen* x, in Dümmler (ed.), PLAC ii: 172. Hrabanus also, in *De institutione clericorum*, mentions only Iuvencus, Sedulius, Arator, Alcimus, Clemens, Paulinus (of Nola), and Fortunatus; see Knöpfler (ed.), *Rabani Mauri de institutione clericorum libri tres*, p. 224.

[166] Dümmler (ed.), PLAC i: 90–1. On the historical context, see Noble, *Republic of St Peter*, pp. 138–45.

[167] Edited by Hauck, 'Karolingische Taufpfalzen', 3–95.

[168] Godman, *Poets and Emperors*, pp. 38–43.

[169] Godman, *Poets and Emperors*, p. 42.

poem that is concerned with celebrating holy men, not kings. For this development, we must take stock of the historical writings of the period, beginning with the *Royal Annals* of Charlemagne's court. These take a finished shape by 780 x 790, become the primary source of information concerning his reign, and, notably, foreground Charlemagne as warrior.[170] They are less concerned with imperial or political aspirations proper—indeed, they take mature form prior to his coronation as emperor—but are rather concerned with war as a means by which order might be maintained despite enemies and disturbances inside and outside the shifting boundaries of the realm.[171] This renewed concern with the practice and results of warfare seem to lead in turn to the desire to secure an interpretation of the Carolingian past in terms of a family history, which in turn leads to the greater project of productive remembrance and panegyric, the *Vita Karoli Magni* of Einhard, for only in the form of biography could the imperial courtier write a document 'more worthy, more personal' to the emperor than mere annals might allow.[172] Even if, as Wallace-Hadrill suggested, Einhard's version of Charlemagne was probably 'more or less accurate historically', he rightly insists that the work should be read as a literary effort which wishes to establish a model of behavior for his heirs at a time when the internecine squabbling had begun in earnest.[173] This concern with behavioral precedent comes to a head during the reign of Charles the Bald, who saw himself as particularly and emphatically 'Carolingian', and was encouraged to do so by counselors such as Hincmar of Reims.[174] Charles chose to cultivate a life featuring archaisms, and one filled with *moribus antiquis*.[175]

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, begun in its current form likely during the reign of Alfred, was begun by cobbling together from earlier regnal lists and patches of previous

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[170] Wallace-Hadrill, 'The Franks and the English', p. 204.

[171] See Fichtenau, *Das Karolingische Imperium*, p. 188–90, and MGH *Leges*, *Capitularia regum Francorum*, i: 161, which discusses measures taken against deserters.

[172] Wallace-Hadrill, 'The Franks and the English', 205.

[173] Wallace-Hadrill, 'The Franks and the English', 205–6.

[174] Wallace-Hadrill, *The Franks and English*, pp. 205–6.

[175] Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae*.

annals, and is, like the Frankish annals, 'a record of a people at war'.[176] [177] The enemies were the same: territorial disputes begun by rivals, and, in some ways more disruptive, the northern *pagani*, the Vikings, raiders who appeared suddenly and in great numbers, and whose progress Alfred halted only after many decades of warfare in his country. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* 'A' (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 173, the 'Parker Chronicle') begins its entry for 891/2 in a new hand and with a new style. Originally evidencing a rather unexpressive prose style, one having much in common with (and probably originating in) the short comments made in Easter tables, the new style shows greater complexity of syntax and description, rich in subordination and detail. Connectives become more varied, and more skillfully used, and there is a greater use of rhetorical devices. This is neither a unanimous nor everlasting style, for many entries differ little from the earlier terseness and simple syntax.[178] Nevertheless, the change is notable, and underlines a difference also in the substance of the entries, for a deeper insight into King Alfred's actions, into his motives, also becomes evident. This development suggests a strong similarity with the Frankish *Royal Annals* of a century before, as a project of historical writing takes pains to present a conscious picture of a successful and motivated ruler defending and unifying his realm. Like Charlemagne before him, Alfred came to be biographized and lionized; this was undertaken by the Welshman Asser, one of the scholars whom Alfred had invited to his court for the purposes of scholarship and reform, and who, according to his version of events, plays a central role in the king's education.[179] Both efforts at biography and encomium sprung from the same need, the need of the royals to assert the security and excellence of their own reigns. More importantly, perhaps, his gaze lay ever toward the continent, and this

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[176] For a recent and extensive analysis of the *Chronicle*'s history as literate practice, see Bredehoft, *Textual Histories*, pp. 14–38, and his conclusions, pp. 137–54.

[177] The fact that the surviving manuscripts share substantially the same material up to the years 890 or 892 remains a good indicator of the date of the project's origin (Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, pp. 276–8). Stenton noted, in 'The South-Western Element in the Old English Chronicle', that a Wessex origin for the project is not a sure thing.

[178] Clark, 'The Narrative Mode of "The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle"', pp. 221–2. For a recent study of the language of the *Chronicle*, see Bately, 'The Compilation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle'. Keynes and Lapidge assemble in brief some significant textual evidence for a significant break (or new beginning) occurring at the same point in the tradition (Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, pp. 278–9).

[179] Detailed by Asser himself in *De rebus et gestis Alfredi*, c. 79.

focus was what his heirs chose to duplicate, most fruitfully in the reign of Æthelstan and Edgar, whose continual commerce and conversation with Continental scholars provided the impetus and knowledge for the Benedictine Reform as it took shape in Anglo-Saxon England.

Despite the picture of Alfred as a lover of learning and of poetry, who might even be considered, as Wallace-Hadrill considered him, as a 'warrior *malgré lui*', who would have, given his way, spent his time in the study with his teachers, no record of any attempt at epic poetry intended to commemorate his memory and his reign has survived.[180] This is not an issue with the early Carolingian era, thanks to the partial survival of the poem known as the *Paderborn Epic*, or as *Karolus magnus et Leo Papa*, and which has come down to us in a fragmentary state (the third book has survived) and by an unknown author. There is more significant consideration given to structure in this poem than in the poems of Fortunatus, Prudentius, or Alcuin.[181] The poem is keen to represent Charlemagne not only in the image of St Martin, but also in that of Aeneas, whom he surpasses in his accomplishments. The author begins his poem with panegyric concerning Charlemagne's excellent martial and moral qualities, as well as his cultural and intellectual abilities. Indeed, the emperor outstrips Homer in wisdom, and the ancient orators (even Cicero) in rhetoric. Following the initial encomia, the poet uses flashback to describe the emperor's earlier accomplishment, and the 'abstract eulogy' of the earliest section transitions into 'detailed vignette', with consistent 'Virgilian' shifts in perspective.[182] The crucial scene of Charlemagne's boar hunt transforms the hagiographical commonplace of the saint's control of the natural world and its creatures from a sacral setting to the secular and imperial context of the martial emperor. Following Brooke, Godman has traced the language of this passage backwards chronologically, with evidence of varying degrees of verbal allusion, through a similar scene in several *vitae* of St Martin, from the verse lives of Venantius Fortunatus and

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[180] The picture of Alfred bemoaning his troubles and his lack of time for study is directly from Asser's *De rebus et gestis Alfredi*, c. 25.

[181] On the poet's debts to Fortunatus, see Ratkowitsch, *Karolus Magnus: alter Aeneas, alter Martinus, alter Iustinus*, and the earlier work of Tardi, *Fortunat. Étude sur un dernier réprésantant de la poésie latine*, pp. 272–4, and Schaller, 'Aachener Epos', p. 168.

[182] Expressions of Godman, cited above.

Paulinus of Périgueux to Sulpicius Severus' prose original.[183] This hunt is essential for foregrounding the eventual (although now-lost) section of the poem that would have detailed Charlemagne's actions on behalf of, and in defense of Pope Leo. Charlemagne's dispatch of the hunted boar and the preparation for a similar action against the angry mob that had rebelled and maimed Pope Leo is an essential feature of the poet's portrait of Charles as a ruler.

The artistic achievements of the reign of Louis the Pious (814–40), have been traditionally seen as pallid in comparison with those of his father, Charles. Yet a series of revisionist efforts has successfully demonstrated that, although perhaps excelling less at self-biography than Charlemagne's poets, and lacking a central location around which group artistic accomplishment such as that of the (late) Aachen court palace, the poets of Louis' reign were highly gifted, with Walahfrid Strabo and Ermoldus Nigellus chief among them. Ermoldus offers us the closest thing to a mid-century epic with his long poem on Louis the Pious, *In Honorem Hludowici Pii*, alluded to in his second Epistola to Pippin.[184] An apparently complete text does survive of this later (826 x 828) work, written about Louis the Pious and dedicated to his brother King Pippin.[185] The poem extensively borrows from and develops the efforts of the *Paderborn Epic*,[186] and continues 'the process of secularization' begun by the earlier epic.[187] Notable among his poetic efforts is his attempt to transform the Aldhelmian praise of saints to his emperor; such panegyric, possibly originating in Ermoldus' desire to be released from his exile, operates at a further remove from the praise of the *Paderborn Epic*, and its comparisons of Charlemagne to Aeneas, Justinian, and Corippus. The poem continually evinces the epic concern with past history and future, as the protagonist Louis is referred to as the son

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[183] Godman, 'The Poetic Hunt: From Saint Martin to Charlemagne's Heir', pp. 575–9. Godman is sharply critical of the claim of Thiébaux, 'Mouth of the Boar', 287–8, that the boar killed by Charlemagne represents the conquest of the pagan Saxons. I will return to the boar-hunting scene in chapter three.

[184] Godman, 'Louis the Pious', p. 255, 259–66. See also Godman's argument against attributing *Waltharius* to Ermoldus, and the vexing dating question, for which Kratz, *Waltharius and Ruodlieb*; and Werner, 'Hludowicus Augustus', 101–23.

[185] Also existing in Harley 3685, a fifteenth-century copy which possibly had an Anglo-Saxon exemplar. There is a quire of pages missing in the ninth-century Vienna 614 manuscript, unfortunately; see Dümmler (ed.), MGH PLAC ii; Schaller-Könsgen 3243.

[186] See Ranieri, 'I modelli formali', pp. 161–214.

[187] Godman, *Poets and Emperors*, p. 112. See discussion of the poem at pp. 106–25.

of Charlemagne repeated (at 1.112 and 1.119 for example), while events are also adapted so as to be relevant the poem's addressee, King Pippin (a process duplicated by Nithard's *Histories*). The events of the poem range widely, with the primary battle-sequences coming in Book One's depiction of the siege of Barcelona and Book Three's depiction of the war with the Bretons, and especially the conflict with their enigmatic and rebellious leader, Murman. Ermoldus is fond, during these martial sequences, of the Tacitean device in which a member of the enemy's troop upbraids or chastises his own leader or his people for a lack of bravery and resolve, qualities all too evident in the Franks.

The historical writing undertaken for Charles the Bald, such as that of Nithard's *History of the Sons of Louis the Pious*, casts a wistful and concerned eye backward at the age of Charlemagne,[188] and provides valuable insight to the worries of lay and clerical minds alike at the gradual dissolution of peace within the Frankish empire.[189] There was a growing interest on the irruption of violence from without, as well as the weakening of the solidarity of Charlemagne's empire following the death of Louis the Pious in 840. The Viking raids (or, in some eyes, invasions) were among a host of elements of external discord that was to prove troublesome throughout the century, and in England, would continue into the tenth.[190] Dissatisfaction with the ability of the earthly monarchs to stop it, and to protect their people and their churches, remained a theme both in the historical annals (such as those of St-Bertin and Fulda) and in poetry. Moreover, the even-greater horror of civil war, reaching a climax perhaps in the events of 843, also inspired both laments and an attempt at an explanation. A desire to explain the warfare and the violence from within and without would lead certain men to writing historical and poetic narrative in an effort to bring an order to the chaos.

The *Gesta Karoli*, composed at the request of Charles the Fat during the trying years of struggle with Danish forces on the coast and in the fields of France, was undertaken in order to 'sustain one of the most vigorous and most unhappy of the Carolingian kings in his subjects' esteem while he struggled to concentrate their energies

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[188] Müller (ed.), *Nithardi historiarum libri IIII*, MGH SSrG.

[189] Lauer (ed.), *Histoire des fils de Louis le Pieux*. On the interpretation and significance of this text, see Nelson, 'Public *Histories*'; and Schlesinger, 'Die Auflösung des Karlreiches'.

[190] A succinct overview is offered by Coupland, 'Vikings in Francia'.

upon the Danes'.[191] They were written by Notker *Balbulus* ('the Stammerer', *ca.* 840–912), a Benedictine monk of St Gall known best for his sequences,[192] and can be dated to approximately 885–886.[193] This composition has been compared unfavorably to works such as Einhard's on which it clearly is modeled, and modern historians have usually found little to praise in Notker's elaborate, sometimes legendary or folktale-like anecdotes which are likely to have at least some historical merit (such as the story of the emperor seeing the first Viking ships in a Frankish harbor, and weeping over the fate of future generations).

Many scholars have argued for reading the *Gesta Karoli* as an allegorical history, wherein events from the life of Charlemagne are selected, adapted, and even altered to offer commentary and judgement on contemporary events of Charles the Fat's own time.[194] For example, chapters 16–19 of the *Gesta Karoli* offer a number of stories about an anonymous bishop, who is bested for his pride and arrogance by Charlemagne in a succession of encounters all of which succeed in humbling the man.[195] It is a strong possibility that these attacks were actually meant for a contemporary of Charles the Fat, possibly Liutbert of Mainz, with whom Charles had disagreed strenuously concerning perhaps the most important question of his realm, his efforts to have his illegitimate son Bernard made a legitimate heir for the Carolingian crown.[196] In Notker's mind, the

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[191] Wallace-Hadrill, 'The Franks and the English', 210. The work's composition has been put at some point between December 883 and May 887, making it contemporary with Abbo's *Bella Parisiacae urbis*. For text, see Haefele (ed.), *Notker von St-Gallen. Die Taten Karls des Großen*. For commentary, see von den Steinen, *Notker der Dichter*; Ganz, 'Humour as History'; Rankin, 'Ego itaque Notker scripsi'; and Siegrist, *Herrscherbild und Weltsicht*.

[192] For Notker's musical and liturgical accomplishments, see Crocker, 'The Early Frankish Sequence'; and Husman, 'Die St. Galler Sequenztradition'.

[193] Haefele (ed)., *Notker der Stammler*. For dating, see the recent study of the question by MacLean, *Kingship and Politics*, pp. 201–4. Traditionally, the work has been dated between December 883 and November 887: see Löwe, 'Das Karlsbuch Notkers', pp. 123, 136; Penndorf, *Problem der "Reichseinheitsidee"*, pp. 150–1; and Eggert, 'Zu Kaiser- und Reichsgedanken', 74.

[194] Sigrist, *Herrscherbild und Weltsicht*, pp. 71–108; Ganz, 'Humour as History'; MacLean, *Kingship and Politics*, pp. 204–5.

[195] Hincmar's *De ordine palatii* (role of *apocrisarius*), Maclean, *Kingship and Politics*; Löwe, 'Hinkmar von Reims und der Apocrisiar'.

[196] MacLean, *Kingship and Politics*, pp. 204–13. Another suggestion was Liutward of Vercelli, which was made by Löwe, 'Das Karlsbuch Notkers', pp. 140–2. See the reference in the Annals of Fulda, *s.a.* 885, p. 103. For a discussion of Bernard, see MacLean, *Kingship and Politics*, pp. 129–34.

famous example of *adynaton* from Vergil's first *Eclogue*, 'aut Ararim Parthus bibet aut Germania Tigrim' (*Eclogues* 1.62) had been fulfilled by Louis the German, who had himself touched upon the Holy Land when he raised a tax for freeing Christians in Jerusalem, and who had inherited the 'mantle of world leadership from Charlemagne'.[197]

Such a picture of growing gloom arguably culminates with Abbo's *Bella Parisiacae urbis*, a final attempt of the century to provide a historical and literary look at worthy defenders of the realm, and yet is a poem which arguably lacks any hero save the Frankish people themselves, behind whom stands, as a source of the barely memorable strength of the Carolingian line, the distant figure of Charles 'the Fat'.[198] With his reign, the pieces begin to lack cohesion, and the picture loses focus as well as appeal. Intellectual and artistic life in the monastic and court settings continued, but there has been little agreement on its importance, and its centrality. The questionable achievement of Charles's own accomplishments has made such a process of evaluation much harder, as, perhaps, does his origination in far-off Alemannia, a geographical fact which has been imagined to have caused consternation among his West Frankish contemporaries, and has certainly done so among modern Carolingian historians.

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[197] MacLean, *Kingship and Politics*, p. 224.

[198] The pronouncement of Wallace-Hadrill, 'The Franks and the English', 210.

CHAPTER TWO

The Function and Meaning of Heroic Sacrifice and Sacrificial Topoi

tune hinc spoliis indute meorum
eripiare mihi? Pallas te hoc uulnere, Pallas
immolat[1]

Þær ic þa ne dorste ofer Dryhtnes word
bugan oððe berstan, þa ic bifian geseah
eorðan sceatas. Ealle ic mihte
feondas gefyllan, hwæðre ic fæste stod.
Ongyrede hine þa geong hæleð, þæt wæs god almihtig,
strang ond stiðmod. Gestah he on gealgan heanne,
modig on manigra gesyhðe, þa he wolde mancyn lysan.[2]

In chapter one, I emphasized the importance in heroic poetry of the relationship of the hero to the group, the one to the many, as well as the various boundaries that epic narrative challenges: those between the hero and his opponent, between the hero's society and the larger world, and between history and destiny. Epic poetry places the focus on a single individual hero as part of a group, but also as separate from it—standing as its warrior and protector, and also as its sacrificial victim, if necessary. The hero can be both sacrificant and sacrificand. It is this dual role that I will focus on in this chapter, in an attempt to map out the basic principles of the sacrificial topoi I will be considering more closely in the chapters to come. An individual hero acts as the warrior in battle, as the leader of his army, or as the solo warrior; he is the living example of the sacrificial principle of *unus pro multis*, 'one for the many'. He plays the same role for the city and

[1] *Aeneid*, 12.947–9: 'Are you, clad in the spoils of my own folk, to be snatched hence away from me? With this wound, Pallas, Pallas sacrifices you [...]'.

[2] *Dream of the Rood*, ll. 36–42: 'There I dared not against the word of the lord bend, or break, when I felt the surface of the earth tremble. I might have felled all the fiends, yet I held fast. The young hero stripped himself, that was God almighty, strong and single-minded. He climbed upon the lofty gallows, bold in the sight of many, so to redeem mankind'.

the citadel, often functioning in an official social capacity as well, as a king, or royal heir. Sacrificial topoi also function in literary contexts where the principal character is modeling a hero; an example of this is found in the lives of Christian martyrs, who, most often not as kings themselves, but rather as imitators of Christ the king, fulfill their sacrificial role in imitation of his own self-sacrifice. Moreover, the growing importance in narrative poetry of the 'heroic episode' raises the sacrificial topoi of those episodes to greater prominence and importance. Early medieval epic poetry formed a preference for an episodic style, and included the tendency in poetry to enlarge upon, and make vivid, individual scenes of action; the reliance of a writer such as Venantius Fortunatus upon *enargeia*, for example, as seen in his re-writing of the life of St Martin, is a strong case in point.[3] Simultaneously with the epic becoming more episodic, poets show a growing concern with relating historical figures to their heroic, and poetic, counterparts. The desire to see rulers and leaders acting heroically inspires poets to graft upon these men the guise of heroic sacrifice: poets come to attempt to portray the men as heroes, their actions as heroic. Sacrifice is one of the recurring topoi in heroic narrative around which the action coalesces, and which acts as a focus for both narrative and character development (or revelation). Sacrifice occurs from a desire to share in the divine (whether by means of purification, forgiveness, or the seeking of favor), and it results in an alteration or assertion of one's status in relationship to God or to the community.[4] The action coalesces around the hero in specific patterns common to sacrifice—those of narrative closure and commencement, of violent ends and beginnings, and these connect historical time to the future, and form connections across space as well.

My survey of sacrificial topoi will begin with an overview of their appearance and treatment in classical epic texts, and continue on to the Christian mode of sacrifice that was developed in Christian writings, including Christian Latin poetry. The central model in classical studies of sacrifice remains Vergil's *Aeneid*, with considerable mention as well of Greek tragedy (especially since it is a central consideration for the majority of theorists of classical sacrifice, such as Girard) and Lucan, who elaborated upon Vergilian

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[3] See above, pp. 70–72.

[4] See Biviano, 'Hermeneutics of Sacrifice', pp. 15–24.

motifs in his *Bellum civile*, drawing from them even more horrifying, although not less logical, conclusions. Turning to Christian literature, I will examine two New Testament models of Christ's sacrifice, primarily those presented in Philippians and Hebrews, arguably the two most significant non-Gospel texts in the New Testament for any discussion of Christian ideas of sacrifice, and the model presented in the writings of St Augustine, who provided some important interpretations of sacrifice of his own. After this overview, I will look at how these ideas on sacrifice informed the poems on the Cross written by Venantius Fortunatus, as well as Prudentius' collection of poems celebrating early Christian martyrs, the *Peristephanon Liber*. Finally, I will look at an Old English text, the *Dream of the Rood*; while it is not, strictly speaking, a heroic narrative, the poem features an important early medieval depiction of heroic sacrifice: in this case, accomplished by Christ himself at his crucifixion.

The Greeks 'clearly preferred the fiction of human sacrifice to its reality', and this distinction is an essential one to make in order to move from an anthropological approach to sacrifice toward one that is more clearly focused on narratives.[5] While Henrichs made the assertion about the Greeks, it could have been made for nearly any modern society, for the actual evidence of human sacrifice or 'ritual killing' (sacrifice made with no specific recipient in mind) remains rare.[6] In his study of images of human sacrifice in Greek texts, Henrichs interprets the fictionality of various reports of actual sacrifice, many of which were read as explanatory of cultural changes and practices through the acquisition of civilization. The slaying of Agamemnon's daughter Iphigeneia, for example, which in tragic drama is manifested as a genuine event, was, in the earliest versions of the story, rather an example of the means by which animal substitution can instead relieve the burden of the necessity for human (or child) sacrifice, a concept which was considered by Greeks as a thing barbaric.[7] This did not stop them from making exceptions for the sacrifice of foreigners or from ascribing its practice to what were considered novel and 'bizarre' cults, such as second-century Christianity; tales of

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[5] Henrichs, 'Human Sacrifice in Greek Religion', p. 195.

[6] On the distinction between sacrifice and 'ritual killing', see Versnel, 'Self-Sacrifice, Compensation, and the Anonymous Gods'.

[7] Henrichs, 'Human Sacrifice in Greek Religion', pp. 198–208, 232–3.

Christian omophagy from the second century C.E. inspired the outraged response of Porphyry to John 6:53.[8] The legend of the ritual sacrifice of Persian prisoners before the battle at Salamis is another case in point.[9] As described by Plutarch in the *Life of Themistokles*, three young, handsome, and splendidly-dressed young male prisoners, captured during the conflict at Psyttaleia, were led before Themistokles at the moment that the standard pre-battle animal sacrifice was being readied. Their appearance coincided with certain portents that the seer Euphrantides interpreted as signs that the young men should be sacrificed in place of the animal. Despite reluctance on the part of Themistokles, the rabid 'polloi' anxious for salvation demanded that this be done, and so it was.[10] Whether accurate or not (and this remains disputed), the story illustrates the powerful connection between the violence of war and the ritual violence of sacrifice.[11] Plutarch relates several tales in which human sacrifice plays a role, among them the story of how a certain tribe of barbarians called 'Bletonesioi' was reprimanded by Rome after it was discovered that they had sacrificed a man to their gods. Because this was done in accordance with their customs, no punishment was required, but future recurrences of the sacrifice were forbidden. Plutarch observed that the Romans acted somewhat hypocritically toward the Bletonesioi, since he could recall a sacrifice of four people, one couple each of Greek and Gaulish extraction, who were buried alive in the Forum Boarium only a few years before this sacrifice among the barbarians. It is possible that the human sacrifice of the Bletenesioi was part of the tribe's preparations for battle with Rome, and this may have caused the excessive hostility to an otherwise unshocking

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[8] As reported in Macarius Magnes, *Apocr.* iii.15, Henrichs, 'Human Sacrifice', pp. 224–32. See also Henrichs, 'Pagan Ritual', in *Kyriakon*, pp. 18–35.

[9] As Henrichs notes ('Human Sacrifice', pp. 210–11), the story is considered historically suspect since it contradicts the accounts of both Aeschylus (*Pers.* 441–64, in Hall (ed.), *Persians*), and Herodotus (viii.95, in Macan (ed.), *Herodotus: The Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth Books*), who claim a different chronology (Greek victory in which the young Persian men were captured occurred after Salamis) and a contradictory result (there were no enemy survivors).

[10] Plutarch, *Them.* 13.2–5. Plutarch attributes the story to Phainias of Eresos (see Phainias Fr. 25, Jacoby (ed.) *Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker.* pp. 269–71). See Henrichs, 'Human Sacrifice', p. 210 n. 1 for further references to even earlier reports of pre-battle human sacrifice among the Greeks and others.

[11] See further the Roman evidence collected by Reid, 'Human Sacrifices at Rome'.

practice.[12] In each case I have mentioned, the report of a human sacrifice would have taken place as a precursor to a battle, in the hopes of ensuring a positive outcome. Such 'ritual killings' serve a function similar to that of sacrifice: they are intended to inaugurate a new age, one in which the sacrificants will be the victors.

The willing self-sacrifice of a hero before a battle is exemplified by the stories of Roman *devotio*, when a commander (in the role of both sacrificant and sacrificand) dedicates his own life to assure victory for his people in war.[13] The legendary history of the Decii was long-considered to be the prime example of Roman patriotism, of *virtus*, the willingness to place Rome ahead of one's own safety and prosperity. St Augustine says this about the Decii, in a passage that criticizes their motives in comparison to Christian martyrs:

> Si se occidendos certis uerbis quodam modo consecrantes Decii deuouerunt, ut illis cadentibus et iram deorum sanguine suo placantibus Romanus liberaretur exercitus: nullo modo superbient sancti martyres, tamquam dignum aliquid pro illius patriae participatione fecerint, ubi aeterna est et uera felicitas, si usque ad sui sanguinis effusionem non solum suos fratres, pro quibus fundebatur, uerum et ipsos inimicos, a quibus fundebatur, sicut eis praeceptum est, diligentes caritatis fide et fidei caritate certarunt?[14]

The text indicates that while Decius does not shy away from self-immolation, it is still the will of the gods that he do so—this is confirmed by the two successive sacrifices (8.6.11–12 and 8.9.1), and by the retreat of his own wing of the army (at 8.9.3–4). Zonaras's account has Decius being killed by one of his own men, and this is left out of the account of Livy, who is eager to contrast the heroic actions of Decius with the unheroic choices more likely in his own degenerate age (8.10.11–11.1): to reinforce this contrast, Livy works 'on two levels; he gives explanations in both human and supernatural terms'.[15] Less motivated by a concern with demonstrating the benefits of heroism, perhaps, both

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[12] Reid, 'Human Sacrifice in Rome', 36–7, who suggests that the name may have been a corruption of 'Lusitanians' (Λουσιτανο□), and references the attack upon them by Servius Galba after a report of the sacrifice of a man and horse become known (Livy, *Epit.* 49).

[13] This phenomenon has been explored in great depth in several articles by Versnel: 'Destruction, *Devotio*, and Despair'; 'Self-Sacrifice, Compensation, and the Anonymous Gods'; and 'Two Types of Roman *Devotio*'.

[14] Augustine, *De civitate dei*, 5.18.

[15] Levene, *Religion in Livy*, p. 222.

Dio and Zonaras express scepticism at the story.[16] Kajanto notes that Livy interprets Decius's self-delivery into the enemy as a *piaculum* ('sicut caelo missus piaculum omnis deorum irae qui pestem ab suis aversam in hostes ferret. Ita omnis terror pavorque cum illo latus signa prima Latinorum turbavit, deinde in totam penitus aciem pervasit', 8.9–12).[17] The hero must position himself in the position of the one to protect his people, and the one willing to die for them in turn.

One famous (and much-discussed) scene pertinent to a distinction between hunting and sacrifice occurs in Greek tragedy, in the 'lyrical part of the parodos' from Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, 104–257, 'the longest and richest extant in Greek tragedy'.[18] Its language is filled with images of untimely death and sacrifice—vultures circling, fruitless libations and burnt offerings, old men surviving as no more than phantoms—language which will recur throughout the *Oresteia*. The Chorus speaks of the 'auspicious command' that augured the expedition to Troy: two eagles, warlike 'kings of birds', one white and one black (or white- and black-tailed), catch and kill a pregnant hare. The seer Kalchas interprets the portent: the eagles represent the Atreidae (the kings Agamemnon and Menelaus, the sons of Atreus), the hare is representative of Troy, and in the 'course of time this expedition captures Priam's town; and all the herds before the walls, the plentiful possessions of the people, shall fate lay waste with violence'.[19] Kalchas also issues an ominous warning, that 'out of pity pure Artemis bears a grudge against the winged hounds of her father which slaughter for a sacrifice [θυομένοισιν] the poor trembling hare with her young before the birth; and she loathes the feast of the eagles.'[20]

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[16] On the death of Decius's son (10.24–30), see Schönberger, 'Motivierung', 217. One related aspect of the narrative that Versnel does not discuss is the execution of the son of Manlius by Manlius himself, a deed which Manlius himself denounces as *delictum* (8.7.17).

[17] See Price,'Between Man and God', 40–3, and the references there to Kajanto, *God and Fate in Livy*. Price emphasizes concerning imperial ruler sacrifice in Rome, that there were two types which ought to be differentiated: the heroic (*enphagismata*) and the divine (*thysiai*).

[18] Fraenkel, *Agamemnon*, ii: 57. Among the numerous studies of this section of the tragedy, see Lawrence, 'Artemis in the *Agamemnon*'; Lloyd-Jones, 'Guilt of Agamemnon'; Peradotto, 'Omen of the Eagles'; Reeves, 'The Parodos of the *Agamemnon*'; Rosenmeyer, *Art of Aeschylus*, pp. 125–7; Seaford, 'Homeric and Tragic Sacrifice'; West, 'Parados of the *Agamemnon*'; Whallon, 'Why is Artemis Angry?'; Zeitlin, 'Motif of the Corrupted Sacrifice'; and Zeitlin, 'Postscript to Sacrificial Imagery'.

[19] Fraenkel, *Agamemnon*, i: 99

[20] Fraenkel, *Agamemnon*, i: 99.

Linked here are two events, the anger of Artemis and the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, with most scholars seeking to understand the reason for the anger of Artemis. The significance of this episode to the study of sacrifice is how it offers a sharp distinction between two forms of sacrificial death. The first, which can be characterized as a hunt, chaotic and untamed, disturbs the status of society, angers a goddess, and leads to a cycle of vengeance killings that can only be brought to a close through radical and unearthly means (and which occurs in *Eumenides*).

The scene functions as a reminder of the original 'corrupt sacrifice' of Iphigenia, for which judgment and revenge will finally be meted out, through the slaying of Agamemnon and Cassandra. Yet this corrupted sacrifice cannot function as cessatory, but will serve only to continue a cycle of vengeance killings throughout the *Oresteia*. The flawed nature of this sacrifice (what I will term 'horrific sacrifice') can deepened by contrast with another, the epic portent occurring at *Iliad* 2.303–30, and takes place during a traditional Greek act of sacrifice: a snake emerges from underneath the altar and, before it is turned to stone by Zeus, devours a nest of young sparrows along with the mother bird.[21] Kalchas interprets the nine birds as representing nine years of fighting, after which the Greeks will be victorious. Richard Seaford considers these two different portents as representing the nature of tragedy and epic, respectively; solidarity is exhibited inside the kinship circle, brutality outside it, for in the case of the epic model, the portent enters the sacrifice already underway, marking it as acceptable to the gods.[22] The tragic portent, exemplified in *Agamemnon*, marks for us the rupture of the kinship circle, traced back to the slaying of Iphigeneia. It is this essential sense of rupture and corruption that connects the sacrifice within the tragedy to the traumatic and horrific forms I will be considering in chapter four.

Christian Interpretation of Heroic Sacrifice

The coalescence of all acts of human sacrifice into the Crucifixion—and its

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[21] Seaford, 'Homeric and Tragic Sacrifice', 89; see also *Agam.* 65, 357–60, 694–5, 735, and Vidal-Naquet, 'Hunting and Sacrifice', 150–74. Also, see *Agam.* 827–88, and the sacrifice at line 735. This is 'traditional' in the sense that an altar is present.

[22] Seaford, 'Homeric and Tragic Sacrifice', 89. Compare this to *Agam.* 105–59.

significance, the Redemption—dwarfs all other forms of sacrifice in the Christian world-view, and it is this central image of Jesus' *self*-sacrifice which becomes the model for so much Christian Latin poetry, despite the inevitable presence of the classical heroic epic as a template for narrative and heroic action. Daly rightly calls the 'incarnational spiritualization of sacrifice' the defining mode of Christian existence.[23] His division of sacrificial acts into categories, and Christian sacrifice in particular, are not very different from those categories considered by anthropologists.[24] These consist of sacrifice as a gift, as homage, as expiation, as communion, and as life released and transformed.[25] Comparison to the views expounded by scholars such as Hubert and Mauss, Robertson Smith, Detienne and Vernant, and Burkert demonstrates an easy solidarity thus far; typologically, the pagan and Christian models easily overlap.

The Catholic theologian Edward Schillebeeckx has argued that out of the three traditional readings of the Gospels' varying versions of the death of Jesus, only one involves a reading of his death as an atoning sacrifice.[26] He labels this reading the 'atoning death-soteriological' scheme, the earliest traces of which can be found scattered in two of the synoptic Gospels (Matthew and Mark), several of the Pauline letters, and Hebrews.[27] These central *loci* were also developed in other Biblical texts, including several of the Deutero-Pauline letters, the Gospel of John, and Revelation.[28] The precise origins of this the sacrificial model or tradition of interpretation regarding the death of Jesus remains disputed. Certain Jewish elements such as the Suffering Servant of Isaiah, are likely to have had some influence, but Christian theologians have tended to see the roots of this interpretation in Jesus' own words. Schwager and Schillebeeckx both feel

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[23] Daly, *Origins*, p. 138.

[24] Outlined in my Introduction, pp. 9–15.

[25] Daly, *Origins*, p. 5. See also Turner, 'Sacrifice as Quintessential Process', 200–1.

[26] Biviano, 'Hermeneutics of Sacrifice', pp. 52–5; Schillebeeckx, *Jesus*, pp. 275–94.

[27] Schillebeeckx, *Jesus*, p. 293. Biviano lists the central *loci* for this scheme as Matt 8:17; Mark 10: 45 and 14:24, 61; Acts 8:32–3; I Cor 15:3–5; Rom 4:25 and 5:8; Gal 1:4; Eph 5:2; Hebrews *passim*; and I Pet 2:21–4.

[28] New Testament authors on sacrifice: Matt 5:23–4, 9:13, 12:3, 23:21, 25–8; Mark 7:1–23, 12:33–4, 7:9–13, 14:58; John 2:19, 21, 19:31; Acts 6 and 7, 17:22, 21:23–6; Old Testament citations include Mal 1:11; Ps 50, 51:17, 69; Macc 4 (models for the Jewish and Christian martyrs); Deut 21:23; Isa 53; Jer 31:31–4.

that some saying of Jesus was responsible for initiating this scheme of reading, possibly centered in the fact that he claimed *to have been sent*, and the messenger was thus also the message.[29]

Paul sets out his own understanding of the significance Christ's sacrifice had for the older forms of sacrifice, subsumed within the Old Testament 'law', throughout his writings, but particularly in Romans and Galatians.[30] In Romans, Paul defines the law's purpose as having been to increase the 'knowledge of sin' (*cognitio peccati*; Gk. *epignosis hamartias*, 'genuine perception of sin'), Rom 3:20–1), which had as its purpose to demonstrate the weakness of the human condition when deprived of God's grace.[31] In a sense, Pauline theology defines the law as acting as an occasion (*aphormē*) for sin. Rom 3:20 contains a clear gesture to Ps 143:2: without the law, or before the law, the evil mankind did was of a different sort, since the transgressors did not know that they had transgressed (see also Rom 4:15). In Rom 5:13, Paul notes that 'Usque ad legem enim peccatum erat in mundo: peccatum autem non imputabatur, cum lex non esset' ('until the law sin was in the world; but sin was not imputed, when the law was not'). The Law served to condemn mankind under its 'ministratio mortis litteris deformata in lapidibus' ('ministration of death, engraven with letters upon stones', II Cor 3:7). In Galatians, Paul likens the Old Testament law, with its sacrificial demands, to a *paedagogus* ('pedagogue', Gal 3:24), a term which might also be rendered 'disciplinarian'. The Law governed men as a teacher guides students while they are yet minors, but the sacrifice of Christ has brought about the end of the Law: 'Finis enim legis, Christus, ad justitiam omni credenti' ('For the end of the law is Christ, unto justice to every one that believeth', Rom 10:4). As long as we die with Christ by our believing (Gal 2:19), we are liberated from such slavery to the Law, from the curse that is the Law, and we are redeemed ('Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written: Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree', Gal 3:13). This last remark from Galatians, which in turn references Deut 21:23, remains close to the earlier-seen

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[29] See Schwager, *Jesus in the Drama of Salvation*, p. 103.

[30] See also Heb 13:15–16, ch 8, 9:18–21, 2:17, 10:31, 12:29, 6; I Cor 8–10, 5:7–8; II Cor 3:6, 3.14; Gal 4:24; Phil 4.18, 2.15–17; Rom 12.1, 6, 3.25, 1.18; and Col 1.24.

[31] Cerfaux, *Christ in the Theology of Saint Paul*, pp. 147–8, and *passim*.

relationship established between the sacrificed being and the transgression which is being atoned by the sacrifice. The being sacrificed for the sin in turn becomes the sin—the messenger is the message.

PHILIPPIANS AND HEBREWS

Two New Testament texts that are essential for understanding the Pauline interpretation of the 'atoning death-sacrifice' scheme are the Letter to the Philippians and Hebrews. Philippians is notable for Paul's unusual referral to himself as a 'servant of Christ' rather than an apostle, and for the persistent expressions of joy despite his being in prison while writing the letter (Phil 1:7, 1:12–18), stressing throughout that his own suffering is really allowing him an opportunity to spread the Gospel of the crucifixion-resurrection.[32] The essential section of the letter for my purpose is Phil 2:6–11, a passage which has exerted enormous influence on Christology, medieval and modern.[33] Despite a vast bibliography focusing specifically on this passage of Philippians, there remains a division of opinion on issues of its authorship, its structure, the intellectual background against which it was formed, and its exegesis.[34]

Paul urges the Philippians to adopt the attitude shown by Christ himself,[35] and the language he uses, reminding them of how Christ 'emptied' himself, and as a result of this they are 'in Christ'. 'The theology of preexistence, kenosis, and exaltation, based on Philippians 2:6–11, was taken as an assertion that the Son of God "together with the Father and the Holy Spirit determined that he would not manifest the sublimity of his omnipotence to the world in any other way than through death."[36] Importantly though, his death was voluntary, and this was the chief means by which salvation was accomplished.

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[32] Hooker, 'Philippians', p. 110.

[33] Sometimes referred to as the Philippian 'hymn'. See Hooker, 'Philippians 2:6–11', in Ellis and Grässer (eds.), *Jesus und Paulus*, pp. 151–64; idem, 'Adam *Redivivus*: Philippians 2 Once More', in Moyise (ed.), *The Old Testament in the New Testament*, pp. 220–34; and Wright, '□ρπαγμός and the Meaning of Philippians 2:5–11'.

[34] For a more detailed overview of these divisions, see O'Brien, *Epistle to the Philippians*, pp. 186–202. The bibliography O'Brien has collected at p. 186, n. 1, lists ninety-nine items. See also Martin, *Carmen Christi*, for a monograph-length analysis, albeit now somewhat dated.

[35] Hooker, 'Philippians', p. 111.

[36] Pelikan, *Doctrine*, p. 142, citing Anselm, *Cur deus homo*, 1.9 (Schmitt 2: 62).

'The blood of the suffering God-man possessed infinite worth, far beyond any of the bloody sacrifices of the Old Testament. What gave it such worth was the utterly voluntary and spontaneous character of Christ's suffering, which was motivated not by any debt but by the honor of the Father and the plight of mankind. 'Satisfaction was another term for sacrifice, and Christ's sacrificial act of penance made even human acts of satisfaction worthy, since of themselves they were not'.[37]

The number of writers who made reference to and who commented on this passage of scripture is immense. It was certainly one of the favorites of St Augustine, who wrote in *De fide et symbolo* that 'Deus sapiens, sempiternam secum habet sapientiam suam: neque impar est Patri, id est, in aliquo minor; quia et Apostolus dicit, *Qui cum in forma Dei esset constitutus, non rapinam arbitratus est esse aequalis Deo*'.[38] Again, in *Contra Faustum*, he writes 'Neque enim ob aliud exinanisse se dictus est, nisi accipiendo formam servi, non amittendo formam Dei. Illa enim natura, qua in forma Dei aequalis est Patri, incommutabiliter permanente, suscepit mutabilitatem nostram, per quam de virgine nasceretur'.[39]

This interest in the obedience and 'emptying' action of Jesus was not limited to Patristic authors; it continued into the early medieval period, and is clearly evident in the Anglo-Saxon exegete and historian, Bede. Such willing and sacrificial obedience was necessary to bring about a cleansing of sin; reflecting on Phil 2:8–9 in his homily on the Gospel of Luke 24:44–53, Bede writes the 'Lord himself was made obedient to his Father even unto death, so that he might restore the lost grace of blessing to the world'.[40] The form of his sacrifice was also specifically, and necessarily, humbling. Meditating on Mt 28:16–20 (Easter), Bede wrote that 'He came to Bethany, because, as the Apostle says,

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[37] Pelikan, *Doctrine*, p. 143. Rather of Verona, in *Exhortationes et preces* (PL 136:448): 'Praebe, Deus, aurem sacrificiis nostris, me mihique commissos tuis ascribe in paginis, quo cum grege mihi credito et a cuncto eluar crimine, et ad te merear pervenire in pace' ('Offer, Lord, an ear to our sacrifices, inscribe me and those who are committed to me in your pages, whereby I may be washed clean from all crime along with the flock entrusted to me, and I may merit to come toward you in peace').

[38] *De fide et symbolo c.* 4.

[39] 'He is said to have emptied himself only by taking the form of a servant, and not by losing the form of God. For that nature in which he is equal to the father in the form of God, remained immutable while he took our mutable nature, through which he was born of the virgin': *Contra Faustum*, 3.6. Compare Faustinus, *De Trinitate* 17, who also mentions that Jesus was not coerced.

[40] Martin and Hurst (trans.), *Bede the Venerable. Homilies on the Gospels*, 'On the Ascension', ii.15.

"He became obedient to his Father even to death, death on a cross; wherefore has God also exalted him". We too come to the same place if we do what He has advised us, if we direct ourselves toward what He promised'.[41] Bede's impassioned description of the crucifixion, emphasizing the paradoxical yet necessary elements of humiliation and exaltation, point us toward a similarly impassioned poetic celebration of the same theme, and involving similar imagery: the Old English poem *The Dream of the Rood.* We also read in his description of the extensiveness of the man, stretching out over all lands and connecting Heaven and earth, a trace of the epic spirit, driving to connect the hero to all spaces and all times in the quest for unity, especially in the moment of sacrifice.

The letter to the Hebrews provides the most elaborate and comprehensive overview of sacrifice in a Christian context, yet its precise status in this context has often been a matter of debate. It provides an important reinterpretation of the nature of Christian priesthood, one which directly opposes itself to Jewish practice.[42] The image of the priest Melchisedek is reinterpreted as a type of Christ, and Jesus as the High Priest has obliterated the cult of the sacrifice.[43] Jesus transcends the priesthood and the cult partly by virtue of his being the Messiah. Hebrews belongs to the Jewish messianic-eschatological tradition, and its eschatological emphasis makes clear that by His death and resurrection, 'the messianic age is set in motion'. By examining the conventions of the Jewish apocalyptic tradition, we note that Hebrews draws upon an 'apocalyptic cosmology' widely familiar among adherents to Judaism in the first century C.E.; the texts of that belief system provide a framework to understand Jesus' message. Christ has made a journey into the innermost sanctuary of Heaven, and his access is direct—and through him, the earthly community of believers also has direct access. By means of their own earthly worship, the community of the Church can reflect the heavenly worship of God. The differences between Christ's sacrifice and the earlier cultic sacrifices are

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[41] Martin and Hurst (trans.), *Bede the Venerable. Homilies on the Gospels*, Homily ii.8 ('Easter').

[42] On the Christology of Hebrews, see Nairne, *The Epistle of Priesthood*; Clarkson, 'The Antecedents of the High-Priest Theme in Hebrews'; Zimmermann, *Die Hohepriester-Christologie des Hebreierbriefes*; Dunbar, 'The Relation of Christ's Sonship and Priesthood'; Loader, *Sohn und Hoherpriester*; and Nissila, *Das Hohenpriestemtiti im Hebraerbrief.*

[43] See the references to Melchisedek in Gn 14:1–20, and Ps 110:4. Subsequent tradition is rife with speculation about his identity and function. For detailed treatment of the tradition, see Bardy, 'Melchisédech dans la tradition patristique'; and Horton, *The Melchizedek Tradition.*

numerous.[44] Yet by shedding his blood, Jesus has met the requirements of cultic law. Moreover, unlike Isaac, who offered himself but did not die, Christ did die. The High Priest has made a sacrifice of himself.[45] Hebrews claims that Jesus' shameful death was essential in order for his subsequent exaltation to occur (Heb 10:9–10).[46]

As in his sermons on Philippians, Bede makes the sacrificial element of Hebrews clear to his listeners. In Homily 1.15, on Jn 1:29–34 (Heb 7:17):

> The lamb in the law of Passover rightly shows [us] a type of him, since having once liberated the people from their Egyptian servitude, it sanctified the people every year by being immolated in memory of their liberation, until he came, to whom such a sacrificial offering gave testimony. When he was offered to the Father for us as a sacrificial offering and for a sweet savor, he transformed, by the lamb that was offered, the mystery of his passion into a created thing, bread and wine, having been made *a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedek.*[47]

In Bede, we see these traditions combine by the early medieval period into a type of humbling, even humiliation, for the purpose of sacrificial immolation. The conventions were familiar and conscious, and were available for use by writers and poets. The remaining link to be explored in this overview is the contribution of St Augustine, arguably the most important writer and theorist on the meaning of Christian sacrifice after the Bible.

THE ROLE OF ST AUGUSTINE

> Proinde verum sacrificium est omne opus, quod agitur, ut sancta societate inhaereamus Deo, relatum scilicet ad illum finem boni, quo veraciter beati esse possimus.[48]

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[44] Chester, 'Hebrews: The Final Sacrifice', p. 63.

[45] See also the '*akedah* tradition discussed in Swetnam, *Jesus and Isaac.*

[46] Further, see Barrett, 'The Eschatology of the Epistle to the Hebrews'; Horbury, 'The Aaronic Priesthood in the Epistle to the Hebrews'; and Horton, *The Melchizedek Tradition.*

[47] Martin and Hurst (trans.), *Bede the Venerable. Homilies on the Gospels*, i:15. Compare also Bede's Homily 1.17, on Jn 1:43–51 (Heb. 7:26): 'the very Lord and Saviour of the world, who is in a unique way holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sins'.

[48] Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 10.6: 'So a true sacrifice is a work which is done in order that we might cling unto God in holy association, namely, carried back to that ultimate good, whereby we are able to be truly blessed'. Compare Pascal, *Pensées* 268: 'Circumcision of the heart, true fast, true sacrifice, true

The role of St Augustine in formulating the concept of sacrifice that early medieval Christians would have been most familiar with cannot be overestimated. Although he cannot be credited with complete originality in his formulations, Augustine provided the earliest comprehensive examination of what sacrifice ought to mean for Christians in the process of mediation between Scriptural and Patristic pronouncements on sacrifice, while simultaneously acting to refute certain Neoplatonic and heretical Christian claims about the importance of exterior sacrifice.[49] Moreover, since he was writing and thinking at a time when the controversies surrounding the appropriateness of earlier sacrifice, both pagan and Jewish, were still current concerns (especially in North Africa), Augustine was in a position to fashion powerful opinions on the form and meaning that Christian sacrifice should take in distinction from these other, traditional forms of sacrifice. Although later writers sought to offer clarifications and corrections to certain elements of Augustine's formulation (as, for example, to the meaning of atonement, written on by Anselm, Abelard, and Aquinas, or on the purpose or frequency of the daily and repeated sacrifice of the Eucharist), that the majority of Augustine's thought was both relevant and orthodox to mainstream medieval Christians can be seen in the relative kinship his formulations have to those of the Council of Trent.[50]

The ways that Augustine conceived of 'verum sacrificium' can be loosely adapted to a tripartite division, although it must be remembered that sacrifice was a concept that exercised Augustine throughout his life and in many, if not most, of his writings, and it is not expounded in a single location.[51] This tripartite structure consists of the recipient of the sacrifice, the purpose of the sacrificial offering, and the most perfect model for said sacrifices, which is in turn a perfected type of previous models of sacrifice.

The first category, concerning the object of or recipient of the sacrifice, is the

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temple: the prophets showed that all this must be spiritual. Not the flesh that perishes, but the flesh that does not perish'.

[49] See further Krueger, *Synthesis of Sacrifice*, Lécuyer, 'Sacrifice selon Saint Augustine', and Bonner, 'Doctrine of Sacrifice'. See also Grabowski, 'Holy Ghost'; Grabowski, 'Sinners and the Mystical Body'; Gallerand, 'Rédemption dans l'église'; and especially Gihr's *Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*.

[50] See Bonner, 'Doctrine of Sacrifice'.

[51] Frankovich, 'Augustine's Doctrine of Sacrifice', p. 78. My account on the following pages is deeply indebted to Frankovich's succinct overview and analysis.

simplest to cover. A true sacrifice, in Augustinian terms, must be latreutic; that is, it must be offered only to God. The pagan sacrifices were abominations not because they involved animals and bloodshed, but because, being offered to false gods, they offered what was rightly owed to God alone to demons.[52] In this distinction, which allowed for the worthiness of material sacrifice, Augustine was clearly opposed to the notions of Neoplatonists such as Porphyry, who opposed any 'bloody sacrifice' being offered to the 'intelligible gods',[53] as well as to a thinker such as Apollonius of Tyana, who claimed that the only proper oblation is *logos*.[54] Augustine's thinking on these as on other matters pertaining to sacrifice was molded by both Old and New Testament writings, such as the Psalms and the Letter to the Hebrews.[55]

In his most famous extended discussion of the notion of Christian sacrifice, *De civitate Dei*, 10.6, 'De vero perfectoque sacrificio', Augustine refines this by touching upon a concept akin to that of 'identification', as he emphasizes that the sacrificant himself, as well as the sacrifice, must be devoted to God:

> Proinde verum sacrificium est omne opus, quod agitur, ut sancta societate inhaereamus Deo, relatum scilicet ad illum finem boni, quo veraciter beati esse possimus. Unde et ipsa misericordia qua homini subvenitur, si propter Deum non fit, non est sacrificium. Etsi enim ab homine fit vel offertur, tamen sacrificium res divina est: ita ut hoc quoque vocabulo id Latini veteres appellaverint. Unde ipse homo Dei nomine consecratus, et Deo votus, in quantum mundo moritur ut Deo vivat, sacrificium est.[56]

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[52] Bonner, 'Doctrine of Sacrifice', pp. 104–6.

[53] Porphyry, *De abstinentia* 2.34–7, Boffartigue and Patillon (eds.), ii: 100–4. Compare Porphyry's famous remark on the Gospel of John. Justin I (in *Apology*, xiii), declared that worship worthy of God does not involve destruction of one of His creations by fire, but rather prayer, praise, and thanksgiving for His having provided it. Porphyry also denounced propitatory offerings in his *Epistle to Arebo* (4.5). Contrary to these writers, Iamblichus argued (in *De mysteriis*, v.5) that all sacrifices, regardless of their nature, have a purpose. Burnt offerings help to assimilate us to the gods; propitiatory offerings help convert us to divine life (Price, 'Between Man and God', 36).

[54] We know Appollonius' writing only through the testimony of other writers, such as Eusebius of Caesarea, *Preparatio Evangelica* 4.13 (*SC* 262, p. 144); see Mead, *Apollonius of Tyana*, and Bonner, p. 102.

[55] Bonner, 'Doctrine of Sacrifice', pp. 103–6.

[56] 'So a true sacrifice is each work which is done in order that we might cling unto God in holy association, namely one related to that chief good, in which we might be truly blessed. Thus even mercy itself, which is granted to man, if it does not happen on account of God, it is not a sacrifice. For even if it occurs or is offered by man, nevertheless a sacrifice is a divine matter; it was for this reason that the ancient

The devotion of not the offering alone but also of the one making the offering is essential to the sense of a true sacrifice. The concern with the 'inner disposition' of the sacrificant leads into Augustine's second requirement for true sacrifice, that the spirit of the one offering must be reflective of that same focus, that same directedness toward God. The concern with spirit has much to do with Augustine's own Platonic background, a tendency to search constantly for the presence of the spirit, in his attempts to transcend the literal. His own soul-searching is given the vocabulary of sacrifice. He refers to his conversion as a sacrifice, as well as the rejection of his former life and self.[57] Such a view is dependent also upon figural reading of passages of the Old Testament, those that focus on God's preference for spiritual sacrifices rather than fleshly ones. It is these 'interior sacrifices', those of love towards others, that truly lead the sacrificant toward God.[58]

The most important sacrifice of all was, of course, Christ's own sacrifice of himself on the Cross. Centrally important is the fact that God willed it, and it was in turn chosen willingly by the Son of God. Also, this sacrifice was prefigured, and, for the allegorizer in Augustine, this ultimate sacrifice represented the 'fulfillment' of all the sacrificial elements of the Old Testament that had preceded it. If the statement made by Paul about Jesus 'becoming sin' (God 'made him who knew no sin to be sin for us' (II Cor 5:20–21) is to be taken with due seriousness, a compromise must be reached: although Paul's language 'could suggest ransom from the devil, Augustine felt compelled to read it as a reference to the sin offering (Lev 4:29), called *hattath* in Hebrew and duly translated *hamartia* in the Septuagint and *peccatum* in the Old Latin'. Augustine wished to find a way to interpret the Crucifxion as a latreutic sacrifice offered to God for the purpose of cleansing the sins from mankind, while maintaining the alternative sense of 'ransom (by which bondage to sin, guilt, or the devil is cancelled)'.[59] For Augustine, Jesus' sacrifice combined terrible death with continued life, bloodshed with resurrection;

Latin called it by this name. Wherefore a man himself, consecrated to God, and devoted to God, inasmuch as he dies in this world so that he may live in God—that is a sacrifice'.

[57] '[P]ro me sacrificabatur tibi': *Confessiones*, 5.7.13; and 'sacrificem tibi sacrificium laudis': *Confessiones*, 8.1.1; cited in Frankovich, 'Augustine's Doctrine of Sacrifice', p. 81.

[58] See also O'Grady, 'Priesthood and Sacrifice'.

[59] Teselle, 'The Cross as Ransom', p. 156.

a bloody death comes first, but what lingers eternally is the life of the one resurrected. Salvation and redemption are necessary consequences of Christ's sacrifice upon the Cross. More surprising, perhaps, is how this process of thought brings Augustine to define what is, to him, the most essential desire of man, his union with God, as a 'death-event',[60] whose central aspect is the willing and prefigured bloodshed of Christ in the guise of the Paschal Lamb, itself a central figure in Jewish sacrifice. This blood shed by the lamb is redemptive, for by shedding his own blood Christ allows for the salvation of man, and man's reunion with God (a concept itself dependent upon Is 53:7). Each aspect of the Lamb is allegorized in turn, and it, as well, represents all Old Testament sacrifices; the sacrifice of bulls and goats also illuminates some aspect of the sacrifice of Jesus.[61] For Augustine, the 'thrust of the action [of bloodshed, of destroying life] is not destruction itself; the destruction is originated toward the releasing of life itself within man from the bonds of sin (death) to the freedom of God (resurrection)'.[62]

SACRIFICIAL TOPOI IN THE HYMNS OF VENANTIUS FORTUNATUS AND THE *PERISTEPHANON LIBER* OF PRUDENTIUS

As we have seen, the narrative of Christian sacrifice involved a two-fold vertical movement, from elevated status down into humiliation and abjection, and from there upward again into even greater exaltation and triumph. The prime example of this was, of course, the Gospel-narrative of Jesus' Passion on the Cross; a common secondary example was the imitation of Christ enacted by the Christian martyrs. In this section I wish to consider a series of praise-poems on these two topics. The poems of praise on the weapon of Christ's sacrifice, the Cross, written by Fortunatus provide some background for reading a poem such as the Old English *Dream of the Rood*, with its brilliant blend of

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[60] This term (for which see Frankovich, 'Augustine's Doctrine of Sacrifice', p. 85) should not be confused with the term as used in the recent discussions of Wyschogrod in, for example, 'Man-Made Mass Death', 166–7.

[61] Christ is depicted quite clearly as a sacrifice in the Bobbio Missal, presented in the *secreta* for the feast of *Inventio crucis* (May 3): a *titulus* reads 'et propter expellendum venenum quod in adam fuerat suasione serpentes infusam preciosi sanguinis porrexit antidotum ut criminis antiqui peccatum tam nouo sacrificio purgaritur et mors quo processit gustando de sciencie ligno moriretur'.

[62] Frankovich, 'Augustine's Doctrine of Sacrifice', p. 87.

the language of heroism and abnegation. Following that, I will present an overview of the sacrificial imagery of the martyr presented by Prudentius in his *Peristephanon Liber.*

Although an earlier poem on a similar theme was composed by Sedulius,[63] and even earlier references to the Cross appear in some hymn-fragments of Hilary of Poitiers (*ca.* 300–367),[64] the hymns of Venantius Fortunatus (*ca.* 530–*ca.* 600/609) on the Holy Cross are far more important and influential.[65] That his poetry was received with enthusiasm throughout the early Middle Ages has been demonstrated in the citations collected by Dümmler in his edition of the poems, and separately by Manitius.[66] Knowledge of the hymns by Carolingian writers seems to have been striking and widespread, especially in the work of the writers of the later ninth-century, perhaps a result of the growing interest in the exaltation of the Cross and the willingness to acknowledge the figure of a suffering Christ.

> The three hymns to the cross by Venantius Fortunatus were probably quoted on more numerous occasions by the Carolingians than were any other poems from before their era, though more often by the later ninth-century writers than by ones in Charlemagne's circle. They intermingle reminders of the agony of Christ and brief allusions to His sacrificial death with descriptions of the Cross's everlasting splendor, as "the trophy" on which took place Christ's triumph, and as "the banners of the king," decorated with the royal purple of His blood.[67]

The widespread use and appreciation of all the works of Fortunatus in Anglo-Saxon England can also be convincingly demonstrated, as evidenced by studies of the manuscript tradition of Fortunatus by Hunt, and Lapidge.[68]

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[63] The poem is *A solus ortus cardine*, a hymn for the Nativity. Sedulius writes that the *species crucis* [...] *colendam* [...] *ovans*, 'carries' the Lord. A chronology of hymns on the theme of the Cross is provided by Laurion, 'Essai de groupement'.

[64] See Bulst, *Hymni latini antiquissimi*, p. 33; cited in Szövérffy, '"Crux fidelis...", 5.

[65] The first volume of a new edition of the works of Fortunatus is now available: Di Brazzano (ed.), *Venanzio Fortunato Opere*. The poems have also been edited in two volumes by Reydellet (ed.), *Venance Fortunat*. Both supersede the earlier MGH edition of Leo. Useful addenda to the text of Reydellet appeared in Johannes Schwind's review, *Classical Review* 50 (2000), 65–7, at 66.

[66] Dümmler (ed.), *Opera*, MGH PLAC 2 (Berlin, 1884), pp. 687–701; Manitius, 'Poetarum posteriorum'.

[67] Chazelle, 'The Cross, the Image, and the Passion', p. 8. See also Tongeren, *Exaltation of the Cross*, pp. 255–76.

[68] Hunt, 'Manuscript Evidence'; Lapidge, 'Appendix: Knowledge of the Poems in the Earlier Period', pp. 287–95.

The *Historia Francorum* of Gregory of Tours records the circumstances of the composition of two of Fortunatus' hymns, *Vexilla regis prodeunt* and *Pange lingua gloriosi*. These can be dated to his sojourn in Poitiers, and specifically to the year *ca.* 568/569. St Radegund, who had become wife to the Merovingian king Lothar after her abduction from Thuringia, fled her husband after he had murdered her brother, and arrived in Poitiers in *ca.* 544. With the help of bishop Germanus of Paris, she established a religious community under bishop Pientius, and set up life there according to the Rule of Caesarius. One of her most successful triumphs for the community was her successful effort to obtain a fragment of the True Cross from the Byzantine Emperor Justin II (*ca.* 520–578) and empress Sophia.[69] Fortunatus was involved in this quest from the earliest stages, composing three poems of panegyric to accompany Radegund's emissaries. For the *adventus* of the relic, which was modeled upon the Roman imperial *adventus*, and which was overseen by Euphronius of Tours (d. 573, bishop of Tours 555–573), Fortunatus composed the hymn *Vexilla regis prodeunt* (*carmen* 2.6). His hymn *Pange lingua gloriosi* (*carmen* 2.2) was composed for the installation of the relic in the church.[70] That both poems combined the Christian theme of the exaltation of the Cross with the Roman military imagery familiar to the *adventus* should not be surprising, since by this time, 'the ceremony and literary forms of an *adventus* often provided the ritual welcome for a bishop or holy relics'.[71]

His poem *Pange lingua gloriosi* was a processional hymn,[72] as evident by its meter, the trochaic septenarius (or *versus quadratus*), which was the rhythm of the Roman march.[73]

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[69] Gregory, *Historia Francorum*, 9.40.

[70] Gregory, *Historia Francorum*, 9.40. See Koebner, *Venantius Fortunatus*, pp. 57–9.

[71] George, *Venantius Fortunatus*, p. 38. See also MacCormack, 'Continuity and Change', p. 746, and MacCormack, *Art*, p. 303 n. 254.

[72] Messenger, 'Medieval Processional Hymns Before 1100'; idem, 'Processional Hymnody of the Later Middle Ages'.

[73] Raby, *Christian Latin Poetry*, p. 90. See Kneepkens, '"Nil in ecclesia confusius"'; and Mönnich, *Konigsvanen. Latijns-christelijke poëzie*, p. 458–60. This 'informal' meter was used for popular verse (such as the inscription on the tomb of one Titus Cissonius, 'Dum vixi, bibi libenter; bibite vos qui vivite': see Bücheler, *Carmina latina epigraphica* (1893), i: 243, cited in McDermott, '*Milites Gregarii*', 188), as well as the Late Antique hymn *Pervigilium Veneris* (probably fourth-century: see Shanzer, rev. of Herzog (ed.), *Restauration und Erneuerung*; and Rollo, 'Date and Authorship', 407). Its use was continued in the Middle

Pange, lingua, gloriosi praelium certaminis,
Et super crucis tropaeo dic triumphum nobilem,
Qualiter Redemptor orbis immolatus vicerit.

De parentis protoplasti fraude facta condolens,
Quando pomi noxialis morsu in mortem corruit,
Ipse lignum tum notavit, damna ligni ut solveret.

Hoc opus nostrae salutis ordo depoposcerat,
Multiformis proditoris arte ut artem falleret,
Et medellam ferret inde, hostis unde laeserat.

Quando venit ergo sacri plenitudo temporis,
Missus est ab arce Patris natus orbis conditor,
Atque ventre virginali carne factus prodiit.[74]

Sacrificial imagery abounds in this poem. Fortunatus signals his allegiances immediately to previous writers who had been concerned with martyrdom in the first stanza. The imperative *pange* itself, meaning 'to sing, to compose', has connections with Prudentius (who used it in *Peristephanon* 6.156). The expression *super crucis tropaeo*, 'upon the trophy of the Cross', echoes Tertullian, who had earlier referred to the Cross as a *tropaeum*.[75] Antithetical juxtapositions are skillfully used, as in 1.3, *immolatus vicerit*, 'the sacrificed one will have overcome' (compare Jn 16:33 and Apoc 5:5). As expected with the *adventus*-tone of the hymn, the images of the first stanza are both martial and sacrificial: *gloriosi proelium certaminis* (1.1) ('the battle of the glorious conflict'), 'super crucis tropaeo dic triumphum nobilem' (1.2) ('declare the noble triumph upon the trophy of the cross'), *redemptor orbis immolatus vicerit* (1.3) ('the redeemer of the world,

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Ages by poets such as Bede, Hrabanus Maurus, and Walahfrid Strabo, although Bede errs at *De re metrica*, Keil (ed.), *Grammatici Latini* vii: 258; see Norberg, *Introduction à l'étude de la versification*, pp. 73–7.

[74] 'Sing, my tongue, the glorious battle and sing a triumphal song about the trophy of the Cross, telling how man's Redeemer offered His life and thus won the day. The Creator, in grief at the harm done to the first man, when by eating of the fatal apple, he stepped into death, Himself at the moment marked a tree to undo the harm done by a tree. The plan of our salvation had demanded this work, so that He might outwit the craftiness of the betrayer and his many disguises; the remedy procuring from whence the enemy had done hurt. Therefore, when at length the fullness of the appointed time was come, He was sent, the world's creator, as a child from the stronghold of the Father, and having become flesh, was born from the womb of a virgin'; trans. Tongeren, *Exaltation of the Cross*, pp. 236–7.

[75] In *Ad. nat.*, *Adv. Marc.* 3.18; see Reijners, *Terminology*, p. 193. The history of Christian usage of this word is the subject of a study by Mohrmann, 'A propos de deux mots controversés', who points out (on 155) the essentially metaphorical importance of the term for Christian writers.

having been sacrificed, will have conquered'). At 4.2, He who is to be the world's redeemer is sent down 'from the citadel of the father' (*ab arce patris*).

The second half of the hymn proceeds with a depiction in stanza five of a humble Nativity scene (one could compare the treatment given in Sedulius' hymn *A solis ortus cardine*, on which it is probably based). There is a marked change from the exalted *orbis conditor* to the humble family scene of the cradle and swaddling clothes. Even here, however, the painful and constricting pressures of sacrifice are hinted at in the *arta* (*conditus*) *praesepia*, and the *stricta* [...] *fascia* which *pingit* ('adorn') his *pedes manusque crura*.

In stanza six, Fortunatus describes how Jesus was not only *willing* to be sacrificed, but how he was *born* for that very purpose (*se uolente, natus ad hoc*); given over to this suffering (*passioni deditus*), the 'Lamb *to be sacrificed* is raised on the beam of the cross' ('agnus in crucis leuatur *inmolandus* stipite').[76]

> Lustra sex qui jam peracta, tempus implens corporis,
> Se volente, natus ad hoc, passioni deditus,
> Agnus, in crucis levatur immolandus stipite.[77]

Szövérffy calls attention to how Christ's Passion and Crucifixion have been 'carefully weighed down' in by the use of the verbs of the poem: *levatur* [...] *perforatur* [...] *profluit* [...] *lavantur*.[78] The repeated *dulce* [...] *dulce* [...] *dulce* also produces an emphatic and ponderous effect, as does the use of asyndeton in the stanzas seven and eight:

> Hic acetum, fel, arundo, sputa, clavi, lancea,
> Mite corpus perforatur, sanguis, unda, profluit.
> Terra, pontus, astra, mundus quo lavantur flumine
>
> Crux fidelis, inter omnes arbor una nobilis,
> Nulla talem silva profert, flore, fronde, germine.

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[76] Venantius Fortunatus, 'Pange lingua', no. 66, *Analecta Hymnica* 50, p. 71, emphasis mine; see Szövérffy, *Die Lateinische Hymnen bis zum Ende des 11. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1964), i: 128–40.

[77] 'When thirty years were now accomplished, having fulfilled His life on earth, voluntarily, born for this. He gave Himself up to the passion; the Lamb was lifted up on to the trunk of the Cross to be sacrificed': trans. Tongeren, *Exaltation of the Cross*, p. 237. The passage echoes Jn 1:29, Apoc 5:12. *Crucis stipite* = Gr. *xylon*: see Szövérffy, '"Crux fidelis...", p. 14, and Reijners, *Terminology of the Holy Cross*, p. 14.

[78] Szövérffy, '"Crux fidelis...", 9.

Dulce lignum, dulces clavos, dulce pondus sustinens.[79]

Ó Carragáin comments that in this hymn, unlike in the Old English poem on the Cross, *The Dream of the Rood*, 'the Cross is no anti-hero: like Sedulius, [Fortunatus] sees no tension between the Cross and Christ.'[80] The poet calls upon the cross to bend its branches, to *tensa laxa uiscera*, 'relax its stiffened sinews', and to 'rigor lentescat ille quem dedit natiuitas, / Ut superni membra regis mite tendas stipite' (9.1–3). However, I would argue that the essential element common to both poems is that Fortunatus and the *Dream*-poet each imagine the cross behaving contrary to its natural inclination; whether 'anti-heroic' or not, the image hinges upon the need to act counter to instinct. The hymn finishes with a brief meditative stanza on another central paradox of the Crucifixion, as Christ is described as the *pretium* (echoing passages from I Cor 6:20, Pet 1:18 and I Cor 7:23 and 10:2), a word that can mean both 'reward' and 'punishment'.

Fortunatus also uses sacrificial imagery in his hymn *Vexilla regis prodeunt*. The first two stanzas offer an example of the poem's structure and thematic content.

Vexilla regis prodeunt
Fulget crucis mysterium
Quo carne carnis conditor
Suspensus est patibulo.

Quo vulneratus insuper
Mucrone diro lanceae
Ut nos lavaret crimine
Manavit unda et sanguine.[81]

In Ambrosian stanzas, the poet describes the 'king' of the title in terms of an offering, a redeemer, and also as one who suffers as a man (as 'flesh', *carnis*): 'quo carne carnis

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[79] 'Here the vinegar, gall, hyssop, spittle, nails and a lance, the tender body pierced through, blood and water flows out; earth, sea and stars: in this stream the whole world is purified. Faithful Cross, alone in your glory among all other trees—no forest ever yielded its equal flower, leaf, and fruit—sweet wood, sweet nails, bearing a sweet burden': adapted from the translation of Tongeren, *Exaltation of the Cross,* p. 238.

[80] Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, 6. The similarity of Fortunatus' hymn and *The Dream of the Rood* was noted by Patch, 'Liturgical Influences', 252.

[81] Fortunatus, *carmen* 2.6: 'The banners of the king proceed, the mystery of the cross shines, by which flesh the creator of that flesh was hanged upon the gallows'.

conditor / suspensus est patibulo' (1.3–4).[82] The irony of the creator of flesh becoming flesh and suffering as a result is emphasized further by the line *Confixa* [...] *viscera* (2.1), and the sacrificial nature of this irony is evident in the phrase 'hic *immolata est hostia*' (2.4).[83] *Pretium pependit saeculi* (6.2) once again reminds us of the paradox of the combination of Incarnation and Crucifixion, a reward and punishment combined.[84] Fortunatus repeats the trope in stanzas seven (*plaudis triumpho nobili*, 7.4), and eight ('Salve, ara, salve, victima', 8.1).[85]

As mentioned in the discussion in the previous chapter of the influence of Late Antique Christian Latin authors, the Spanish poet Aurelius Prudentius Clemens (348–*ca.* 410) remained an especially important model for early medieval poets throughout the ninth and tenth centuries.[86] Alcuin and Theodulf each claimed familiarity with Prudentius in their accounts of their own reading, with the latter famously calling Prudentius *disertissimus atque Christianissmus poeta*.[87] The popularity of Prudentius continued throughout the Carolingian and Ottonian periods in Francia, and the records for Anglo-Saxon England also show considerable evidence of readership and study, beginning with citations in Aldhelm and Bede, and continuing into the later period also, considering the evidence contained in eleventh-century booklists.[88] His opinions were considered

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[82] 'By which flesh the creator of that flesh was hanged upon the gallows'.

[83] 'The offering was sacrificed'.

[84] 'The reward/punishment of the world hanged'.

[85] 'Salve, altars, salve, victim'. On Christ's kingship (*Vexilla regis*, 1.1–2), see Leclercq, *L'Idée de la royauté du Christ au moyen âge.*

[86] Prudentius has been edited by Lavarenne (ed.), *Oeuvres*, and by Cunningham (ed.), *Aurelii Prudentii Clementis Carmina*; I will be following the Cunningham text. For a discussion of the literary form and purpose of the *Peristephanon Liber*, see Lavarenne, *Étude sur la langue du poète Prudentius*; Palmer, *Prudentius on the Martyrs*, pp. 57–97; Petrucione [sic], 'Prudentius' Use of Martyrdom *Topoi* in *Peristephanon*'; and Roberts, *Poetry*. See also Petruccione, 'The Persecutor's Envy and the Rise of the Martyr Cult: *Peristephanon* Hymns 1 and 4'; and Petruccione, 'The Martyr Death as Sacrifice: Prudentius, *Peristephanon* 4.9–72'. On the subject of sacred space and time in the *Cathemerinon*, see Charlet, 'Prière et poésie', pp. 391–7; Pietri, *Roma Christiana*; and MacCormack, 'Loca Sancta', pp. 7–40.

[87] In *De ordine baptismi* (PL 105, col. 231A). For discussion, see Dahlhaus-Berg, *Nova Antiquitas et Antiqua Novitas*.

[88] The Carolingian and Ottonian evidence is surveyed in O'Sullivan, *Early Medieval Glosses*, pp. 3–21; the evidence for the continuous use of Prudentius in the Frankish schools is presented in Contreni, 'The Tenth Century', and Gibson, 'The Continuity of Learning'. On the copying of Prudentius manuscripts, see Hoffmann, *Buchkunst und Königtum*, i: 433–7. On Anglo-Saxon England, see Wieland, 'Prudentius'; and more specifically, see Wieland, 'Aldhelm's *De Octo Vitiis Principalibus*', and Wieland, 'Anglo-Saxon

canonical enough for Theodulf to reference in his publications against heretical writings.[89] Moreover, for writers such as Theodulf Prudentius combined a reputation for staunch orthodoxy with a deep and abiding usage of Classical poets such as Vergil, and it is this blend which makes his own influence on early medieval poets extremely important. Despite his rejection of epic presence of the pagan gods in his poetry, Prudentius continually made reference to the language and topoi of heroic poetry, even in those poems, such as his sequence of hymns on the 'daily round', the *Cathemerinon*, where their presence is perhaps unexpected.[90] Out of all of Prudentius' poetry, the *Psychomachia* and the *Peristephanon Liber* have the best claim to be considered 'heroic', given their topics respectively of allegorized warfare between the Virtues and Vices, and the description and praise of Christian martyrs and the violent tortures and deaths that they heroically suffered. It is unsurprising, then, that, although one detects Vergilian language throughout the Prudentian corpus, it is these two works in particular that feature the most significant and extensive borrowings from the *Aeneid.* A recent survey of Prudentius' borrowings from the poetry of Vergil and Horace reveals extensive borrowing from all three of Vergil's works.[91] In the *Peristephanon* alone, one can detect 133 echoes of the *Aeneid.* Narrowing the focus even further, there are seventy-seven locations in the *Psychomachia* and the *Peristephanon* where Prudentius echoes language from Books 10–12 of the *Aeneid*: this occurs twenty-four times in the *Peristephanon*, and fifty-three times in the *Psychomachia*. When one considers that it is these books of the *Aeneid* which feature some of the most developed sequences of violent battle, it is not surprising that they were echoed by Prudentius in the poems which feature the highest incidence of violence in his own works.[92] Motifs of combat, of heroic action, and of

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Manuscripts of Prudentius' *Psychomachia*'. On the booklist evidence, see Lapidge, 'Surviving Booklists', pp. 107–8, 127, 135, and 140.

[89] In *De ordine baptismi* (PL 105, cols. 230d–231a), and in his *Fragmentum de vitiis capitalibus*, lines 191 ('Scinditur in partes inflata Superbia ternas'), Dümmler (ed.), MGH PLAC, 1:449.

[90] In *Cathemerinon* 10, Prudentius uses traditional epic invocations to open and close the poem; see Charlet, *La Création poétique*, pp. 128–33.

[91] See Lühken, *Christianorum Maro et Flaccus*, pp. 300–19, which offers the most substantial work to date on Prudentius' relationship to and use of Vergil.

[92] On his reworking of classical models, see Ludwig, 'Die christliche Dichtung', pp. 321–39. The connections between Vergil and Prudentius are extensively detailed by Lühken, *Christianorum Maro et Flaccus*; on connections between *Cathemerinon* 5, *Peristephanon* 3, and the *Aeneid*, see pp. 90–104. I have

sacrifice became adapted and reinterpreted in Prudentius' own poetic corpus, providing a vital bridge between the classical and early medieval heroic poetry.[93] In sum, Prudentius provided medieval poets with a model for the assimilation of 'the substance and techniques of classical poetry, [while managing] to produce a Christian poetry which is fresh and individual'.[94] Moreover, the close readings of Lühken, Palmer, and others indicates that Prudentius did not imitate classical poets slavishly, or with an eye toward formal structure merely, but with the intent of transforming the 'major values' of his pagan models.

Despite the greater variety of violence and gore offered in the *Psychomachia*, the focus in the *Peristephanon* on the sacrificial qualities of the martyrs' deaths makes it a better text for this discussion of sacrifice in heroic poetry. The fourteen lyrical hymns that comprise the *Peristephanon* were written for an educated Christian audience, one familiar both with the classical models of the schools and the motivations of Christian liturgical practice. Palmer has suggested that Prudentius may have had in mind a specifically Spanish reading-public for these poems, which might explain, at least in part, the particular content of some of the hymns.[95]

Although the poems that make up the *Peristephanon* are not epics by any stretch, the specific act of sacrifice which the martyr undergoes functions in a manner similar to the sacrifice of the epic hero; and the narratives are also linked by the shared themes of martyrs as heroes, who suffer extreme violence to their persons, ending in a willing and joyful death. The blood of martyrs, as well as their bones or bodies (as relics), also act in strong consort with the location of their passion. Both *Peristephanon* 4 and 1 offer, in brief, the two complementary perspectives on the power of the martyr cults that Prudentius offers in his hymns. Martyrs simultaneously strengthen the communities of which they are part, providing spiritual power and solace to the believers who frequent their shrine and defensive aid to those cities that shelter them (and which in turn they

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not been able to view Hanley, 'Classical Sources of Prudentius', for which see Lühken, *Christianorum Maro et Flaccus*, pp. 14–15.

[93] Orchard, 'Conspicuous Heroism'. A study of the contrasting attitudes displayed by Prudentius and Paulinus of Nola is found in Lana, *Due capitolo Prudenziani*, pp. 82–7.

[94] Palmer, *Prudentius on the Martyrs*, pp. 101–2.

[95] Fontaine, 'Romanité et hispanité', 310–18.

shelter—a symbiotic relationship). However, despite this power offered by geographic proximity to the shrine, martyrs also have the ability to abolish distinctions of time and space. Roberts, echoing a phrase of Peter Brown's, describes these two dimensions, time and space, as being 'concertinaed' at the grave of the martyr. The entire Christian community is present at that very instant and in that very location with the individual worshipper bearing devotion to the martyr at his or her shrine; as well, the entirety of Christian history, reaching back to the Jewish prophets and forward to Jesus' Passion, is present as well.

The concept that martyrs are capable of this sort of collapsing of space and time is not original to Prudentius, having been voiced earlier by Augustine. It was he who insisted that the martyrs acted as 'transmitters' of requests from earth unto Heaven.[96] *Peristephanon* 1 shows how the requests of the prostrate suppliants are delivered immediately to heaven by means of the martyrs, who can quickly and effortlessly transcend the spaces between. *Peristephanon* 2 offers further thoughts on the power of seeing given to the martyrs,[97] and makes clear the ease of travel for the martyr between the poet and heaven (lines 545–60).[98] The connection of this capacity to epic should be clear: just as in epic time, the persona of the hero connects the past to his people's present and to his own (and their) future, so do the martyrs, Christian heroes already having committed the greatest sacrifice for God, manage to embody (or inspire) the past and future of the Christian narrative.

This conception of martyrdom relies upon the trope of metonymy. An individual's devotion is contiguous with that of the larger community, and this in turn mimics the martyr's own metonymic connection with the communion of saints of which he is a part. Likewise, the poet himself becomes contiguous with the community—the act of poetic composition was, for Prudentius, itself an act of devotion. In *Peristephanon* 4, *Hymnus in Honorem Decem et Octo Martyrum Caesaraugustanorum*, Prudentius arguably offers his

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[96] Roberts, *Poetry*, pp. 19–21.

[97] Herrera, *Poeta Christianus*, pp. 148–53.

[98] Herrera, *Poeta Christianus*, p. 152: 'El poeta contempla al mártir como ciudadano de la celestial ciudadela. La *corona civica* le pertenece a Lorenzo, porque ha salvado a los romanos del paganismo'. See also Gellius, 5.6, and *Aen.* 6.772. For a commentary on these lines, see Fux, *Le Sept Passions de Prudence*, pp. 226–8.

most complete examination of the connection between martyrdom and salvation, and he makes clear that it was the martyr's self-sacrifice which converted and thus saved the city and the people of Caesaraugusta. The hymn is in the form of a Christianized *laus urbis*. Roberts has noted that lines 15–18, which echo Horace's third Roman ode, have been rewritten to provide a Christian identity, and to even expand upon Horace's vision of the 'iustum et tenacem propositi virum' who can bear the collapse of the world *impavidum*. The Roman's evocation of the thunderbolt of Jupiter has been replaced by God's own right hand (*dextera corusca*).[99] The martyrs and patron saints of the city offer nourishment to their communities—the same way that heroes do, as we shall see. The repetition in the *Peristephanon* of the verbs *foveo* and *servare* underscore the role of the martyr in connection with the urban community of which it is a guardian.[100] The blood of a martyr carries power directly unto the city with which it is associated. Moreover, the martyr's self-sacrifice 'redeems and purifies a given community constituted by ties of shared blood, soil, and historical experience'.[101]

> Omnibus portis sacer inmolatus
> sanguis exclusit genus inuidorum
> daemonum et nigras pepulit tenebras
> urbe piata.
>
> Nullus umbrarum latet intus horror;
> pulsa nam pestis populum refugit,
> Christus in totis habitat plateis,
> Christus ubique est. (65–72)[102]

The effusion of blood is celebrated for its presence, its nearly ubiquitous presence, at the gates of the city. Rather than considering the passage upward, as such sacrifice brings the Christian closer to God, Prudentius here dwells on the horrific aspects that have been shut out from the city. Such claims for civic and population cleansing and renewal are not

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[99] Roberts, *Poetry*, p. 31.

[100] See *Peri.* 3.195, 4.1–2, and 14.4.

[101] Petruccione, 'Martyr Death as Sacrifice', 245.

[102] 'At all the gates, the holy sacrifice of blood has shut out the race of hostile demons and repelled the black shadows from the propitated city. Not one terror of the shadows lies hidden within, for the plague has been beaten back and flees the people, Christ resides in every square, Christ is everywhere'. I follow Gnilka here in reading *omnibus portis* as a locative, rather than as an ablative of separation, as in Roberts, *Poetry*, p. 190.

particular to *Peristephanon* 4, as they are present also in *Peristephanon* 2, when St Lawrence commands Jupiter to flee the city of Rome, newly purified by blood (2.465–72), and in *Peristephanon* 9 (on the martyrdom of Cassian). The Passover imagery is potent: the blood of the Christian heroes is similar to that of the Paschal lamb (2.65–8); in Prudentius' *Apotheosis*, he says in his address to heads marked with the blood of the lamb that they need not fear the assault of the powers of sin and death (2.355–61). Blood marks the spot, as it were. Unsurprisingly for such an allegorical writer, the *urbs* becomes 'an external manifestation of the spiritual conditions of the soul'.[103] Prudentius conceives of the martyr's death as a sacrifice at once redemptive and purificatory.[104]

It is instructive to compare this range of sacrificial topoi in Prudentius to the *sparagmos*, or ritual dismemberment, treatment received by the doomed tyrant Rufinus in Claudian's *In Rufinum* (2.396–420); Prudentius' images from the *Psychomachia* are closer in some ways, but they have been chosen by the poet from the same sphere of sacrificial violence. Claudian makes use of the death-in-the-arena simile, to Rufinus as a doomed beast. The passage moves from the man's freedom to his seizure and unwilling sacrifice. Claudian appropriates the very images of the arena-martyrdom for the death of the tyrant; for the martyr is the athlete of God, winning victory through his death in combat or at the mauling of wild beasts. However, the tyrant's death is not beneficial violence, but revenge merely, for Rufinus' death does not result in the cleansing of the body politic, but rather sends waves of violence throughout the army and the populace. Violence is dehumanizing, for both its perpetrators and victims (*In Rufinum*, 2.351–60). The manifold crowd becomes an homogenous army, a single mob or mass. The figures are 'liminal' in their armor; they become their armor, which in turn becomes animated. Oddly, perhaps, the mob action shakes apart the group into component parts, as *hi* [...] *alii* become *ille* [...] *ille* [...] *hic* [...] *hic*.[105] Malamud's point is directly relevant to our

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[103] Petruccione, 'Martyr Death as Sacrifice', 247. Compare also *Peristephanon* 13, line 26.

[104] Petruccione (in 'Martyr Death as Sacrifice', 248–53) argues that Prudentius is unusual, even original, in this attitude, and can be compared only to Origen ('It is difficult to find true parallels, east or west, for this valuation of the martyrs' sacrificial death in the redemption of humanity', at 248; compare Origen, *in Ioh.* 6.54). He admits that both II and IV Macc offer similarities (on which see further Baumeister, *Die Anfänge der Theologie*, pp. 42–9 and p. 180 n 75), as do Chrysostom's sermons *De sanctis Martyribus* and *In sanctum Ignatium martyrem*.

[105] Malamud, *Poetics of Transformation*, pp. 48–54.

discussion of the difficulty, in sacrificial actions, of discernment: Claudian's death suggests that in the practice of violence, the violent man becomes the victim, and an enemy is defeated only when one takes his place.[106]

THE DREAM OF THE ROOD

This emphasis on the connection between Christ and the need for his sacrifice resulted in what Auerbach termed the strong medieval fascination with 'the lowliness of the sublime, the historical humiliation of the godhead'.[107] The eighth-century writer Ambrose Autpert clearly referenced Phil 2:6–8 when he remarked sternly that if 'si igitur tanta humilitate se deprimit divina majestas, superbire in aliquo debet humane fragilitas?'[108] The implied answer is no, of course, for 'exemplum imitationis in se praebebat'.[109] This attitude expresses the typically medieval Christian

> delight in the paradox of the incarnation. Christ, the Son of God, had undergone humiliation in order to save mankind, and it was only fitting that his followers should imitate his humble suffering.[110]

Such an interpretation of Christ's sacrifice became the model for any Christians seeking the role of heroic savior: humiliation, or at least humble supplication, must precede exaltation. In one sense, humanity had a debt that they needed to repay, or, rather, an obligation upon which they ought constantly to meditate; on this topic, the remarks of St Boniface are exemplary: 'Christus Filius Dei flagella et opprobria pro nobis sustinuit, et postremo ipsam mortem pro nobis suscepit; debemus ergo et nos pro ejus nomine adversa quaeque tolerare patienter, quia per multas tribulationes intrabimus in regnum Dei, si eas propter justitiam toleramus'.[111] Yet, every focus upon the sufferings of Jesus in his

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[106] See also Christiansen, *Use of Images*, pp. 84–9. A comparison of Claudian's and Prudentius' use of allegory is offered in Herzog, pp. 119–35.

[107] Auerbach, *Literary Language and its Public*, p. 43; see ch. 1 'Sermo Humilis', pp. 25–81.

[108] 'If therefore divine majesty abases himself in such great humility, ought human weakness boast of anything?': Ambrose Autpert, *De conflictu vitiorum et virtutum*, *c.* 2 (PL 40, 1093).

[109] Ambrose Autpert, *Homilia in transfiguratione Domini* 5 (PL 89, cols. 1308c–d).

[110] Pelikan, *Growth of Medieval Theology*, p. 23.

[111] 'Christ, the Son of God, sustained for us whipping and shame, and in the end he accepted death itself for us; we ought therefore to tolerate patiently any adversities for his name, because it will be through many

human state was also joined by celebration of the paradox of his containing both human *fragilitas* and divine *maiestas*, simultaneously. Alcuin of York, poet, exegete, and tutor to Charlemagne, observed that 'Accessit humanitas in unitatem personae Filii Dei. [...] In assumptione namque carnis a Deo, persona perit hominis, non natura'.[112]

This paradoxical unification is brilliantly depicted in the Old English poem known as *The Dream of the Rood*, one of the most popular poems in the corpus of Old English verse.[113] Comprising one text of the miscellany of religious prose and verse in the codex known as the Vercelli Book,[114] the poem describes a dreamer's prosopopoetic vision of the True Cross, which tells of its own role in the Crucifixion and its discovery and exaltation afterward. The poem has garnered particular interest because of the existence of parts of the poem carved upon one of the most notable archaeological remnants from Anglo-Saxon civilization, the Ruthwell Cross. Although the relationship between the Ruthwell-text and the *Dream*-text remains uncertain, the separate existence of at least a portion of the poem, and its importance to a monument to the cult of the Cross in early medieval England, testify that the special popularity and fame of the poem is not limited to modern scholars merely, but seems to have been shared by Anglo-Saxons themselves.[115]

The poet offers a vision that incorporates both triumph and suffering, a vision perhaps more appropriate to the early Middle Ages, which still possessed an unsettled interpretation of the significance of the redemptive aspects of the Crucifixion.[116] In the images of a Cross both bloody and bejeweled, and of a warrior heroic and victorious upon a 'passive enduring cross', the *Dream*-poet achieves a paradoxical 'fusion' of

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tribulations that we enter the kingdom of God, if we tolerate them on account of justice': Boniface, *Serm.* 4.8 (PL 89, col. 852).

[112] 'Humanity entered into the unity of the person of the Son of God. [...] In the assumption of the flesh by God, the persona of a man dies, but not the nature of a man': Alcuin, *Contra Felicem*, 2.12 (PL 101: 155–6). See Pelikan, *Doctrine*, p. 56–7.

[113] I follow the edition of Swanton (ed.), *The Dream of the Rood.*

[114] On this context, see Zacher, 'Style and Rhetoric'. Commentary by Scragg (ed.), *Vercelli Homilies.*

[115] See Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, and the essays collected in Cassidy (ed.), *The Ruthwell Cross*, for analysis.

[116] A combination, or fusion, of emotions that Woolf ('Doctrinal Influences', p. 30) believes 'would have been inconceivable in the [High] Middle Ages'.

triumph and suffering which is distinctive.[117] This fusion combines the bloody imagery of battle, complete with the Cross as blood-soaked, yet gloriously bejeweled, weapon, the weapon wielded by a Germanic hero of stern resolution and complete dedication to the sacrificial act he is about to undertake. In the words of John Burrow, the

> *swete tre* becomes the *syllic treow*, raised to the sky, bathed in light, adorned with gold and jewels, worshipped by *eall þeos mære gesceaft*; the instrument of torture, alternating with it, soaked in blood—*mid wætan bestemed*—is correspondingly represented in non-naturalistic terms.[118]

The *Dream*-poet offers a brilliant fusion of this dual stress on 'the Crucifixion as a scene of both triumph and suffering'.[119] The image of the Crucifixion as a conflict with Christ as a warrior is well-suited to the early medieval dualistic theory of the Redemption, one which loses some force after the writings of Anselm of Canterbury. Prior to the 'solution' offered by St Anselm, medieval thinking on the exact nature of Christ's act of Redemption was not expressed with the specificity of orthodoxy.[120] In the soteriological thinking of the early medieval period, the idea of the Crucifixion as simultaneously a 'divine victory' and a 'sacrificial offering' coexisted. The sense of victory was seen as owing to Christ's divinity, the sense of suffering to his humanity. The early medieval Church had already persevered through a period of Christological heresies, such as the Monophysite and Nestorian doctrines, which were overcome and suppressed through a sequence of councils, those of Chalcedon (in 449) and Lateran (in 649), the former of which presented the dual nature of Christ as evident through the partitioning of his acts on earth. Paulinus of Nola examines this duality in his *carmen* 31:

> factus enim serui forma est, qui summus agebat,
> forma dei regnans cum patre rege deus.
> suscepit formam serui culpamque peremit,

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[117] Woolf, 'Doctrinal Influences'.

[118] Burrow, 'An Approach', pp. 256–7.

[119] Woolf, 'Doctrinal Influences', p. 36.

[120] Anglo-Saxon England was aware of, and involved in, these Christological controversies from the beginning: Theodore of Tarsus and Hadrian were instrumental in the Synod of Hatfield (in 679), which was, in essence, a temperature-taking of the English Church by Pope Agatho prior to the Sixth General Council (summoned in 678 by Emperor Constantine Pogonatus, opened on 7 November 680). See Bede's account of Hatfield in *Historia Ecclesiastica*, iv.17, and see also Hamilton Thompson, *Bede*, pp. 152–200.

qua poenae et mortis quondam homo seruus erat.[121]

The aspect of the poem that has garnered the most attention has been the similarities observed between the figure of Christ and the paradigmatic Germanic warrior. This notion of Christ as a heroic warrior, so central to *The Dream of the Rood*, is not unique to Anglo-Saxon England, of course; evidence of this topos is visible in Late Antique representations, such as the Ravenna mosaic.[122] The Crucifixion described as a type of military conflict can be found as well in Latin hymns such as Fortunatus' *Vexilla regis prodeunt*, a hymn well-known in Anglo-Saxon England (and one that was the subject of an eleventh-century Old English gloss),[123] and perhaps most importantly in the stylized battle of virtues and vices contained in Prudentius' *Psychomachia*. Barbara Raw has examined the connection between the Carolingian and Anglo-Saxon traditions in their reading of Prudentius, and the Psalter illustrations chosen which concern martial scenes of violence and warfare, and which are inspired by the Psalter's own language.[124] Although the majority of early psalters depicted a wide variety of scenes and motifs in their illustration schemes, a few were predominated by the theme of spiritual warfare. Insular manuscripts were among the first to do so, and include two Carolingian manuscripts, the Utrecht Psalter,[125] and the Stuttgart Psalter.[126] Raw's examination of the Southampton Psalter (*ca.* 1000) provides an example of this trend. At each of the fifty (or so) major divisions of the psalter, one finds a full-page illustration: taken as a sequence,

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[121] 'He who had been the most high was made in the form of a servant, God reigning with his father the king in the form of God. He assumed the form of a servant and destroyed the guilt by means of which man was the servant of pain and death': Paulinus of Nola, *carmen* xxxi.59–62.

[122] A connection noted by Saxl, 'Ruthwell Cross', 2; see also Visser, *Die Entwicklung des Christusbildes*, p. 117.

[123] Stevenson (ed.), *Latin Hymns of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, Surtees Society 23 (London, 1851); cited in Woolf, 'Doctrinal Influences', p. 39 n. 23. The *Vexilla regis* is also contained in Durham, Cathedral Library MS. A.IV.19, the 'Durham Ritual' (Ker no. 106); see Milfull, *The Hymns of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, pp. 57–8.

[124] Raw, *Anglo-Saxon Crucifixion Iconography*.

[125] MS Utrecht, Univ. Lib. 32, Reims, 820 x 830. Facsimile in K. van der Horst and J. H. A. Engelbrecht, *Utrecht Psalter*, Codices selecti 75 (Graz, 1982). See also De Wald, *The Illustrations of the Utrecht Psalter*; Dufrenne, *Les Illustrations du psautier d'Utrecht*.

[126] MS Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Bibl. fol. 23; see De Wald, *The Stuttgart Psalter Biblia Folio 23*; and Mütherich, Fischer, *et. al.*, *Der Stuttgarter Bilderpsalter, Bibl fol. 23, Würtetembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart* (Stuttgart, 1965–1968).

these three illustrate a typological progression of combat. The first shows David the psalmist fighting the lion, and as a shepherd in a lower role. The second shows David fighting Goliath, whose overthrow is illustrated, rather literally, by his being featured upside-down. The third image is of the Crucifixion. The three images are clearly meant to be read in relation to each other, with David being the precursor of Christ in his own (albeit lesser) conquest of evil. Other manuscripts of a similar nature are the Durham Cassiodorus (*ca.* 750), the Genoels Elderen ivory diptych, the Carolingian ivory book cover in the Bodleian. The Utrecht and Stuttgart Psalters depict Christ treading the beasts, from the 820s, and are read as typological illustrations of Psalm 90(91), an image of *Christus miles*.[127].

These Psalter-illuminators were not working from their own conceptions, but within a tradition established by Augustine and underscored by the poetic traditions of Fortunatus, Prudentius, as well as the monastic texts.[128] Another very close connection between Christian obedience and the sacrifice of Christ and military service had been made in the various rules governing monastic life. John Fleming has already explored some of the connections between *The Dream of the Rood* and Anglo-Saxon monastic traditions in an article on the martyrdom imagery of the poem and the monastic life (especially *Dream of the Rood*, lines 110–14).[129] More remains to be done in regards to connecting the act of servitude to a religious or monastic community with the language of military service.[130] The prologue of the *Regula sancti Benedicti* (*RSB*) begins with making explicit such a connection:

> Ad te ergo nunc mihi sermo dirigitur, quisquis abrenuntians propriis voluntatibus, Domino Christo vero regi militaturus, oboedientiae fortissima

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[127] See Saxl, 'The Ruthwell Cross'; Schapiro, 'The Religious Meaning of the Ruthwell Cross'; and Ó Carragáin, 'Christ over the Beasts'. On the image of an angel stabbing a dragon with a cross staff, see the Carolingian Corbie Psalter, from Tegernsee, MS Amiens, Bibl. Mun. 18, folio 1^{v}: for a description, see Desobry, 'Le Manuscrit 18 de la Bibliothèque Municipale d'Amiens'.

[128] Raw, *Anglo-Saxon Crucifixion Iconography*; see also the material gathered in Deshman, 'The Galba Psalter', 111–13.

[129] Fleming, '"The Dream of the Rood" and Anglo-Saxon Monasticism', 56–9.

[130] See Manning, 'La signification de "militare-militia-miles"', and Kardong, 'The Devil in the Rule of the Master'. The Eastern origin of certain of the themes and motifs of spiritual warfare, as developed by the desert monks, can be found in Brakke, *Demons and the Making of the Monk*; Russell, *Satan: The Early Christian Tradition*; and Špidlík, *The Spirituality of the Christian East*, esp. chapter nine.

atque praeclara arma suis.[131]

Here we can note the insistence upon giving up one's own will, which will recur also in *RSB* 5.13 and 7.12–32. The term *militaturus* ('to do battle for') is reminiscent of both military and civil service, as argued persuasively by de Vogüé.[132] The first chapter of RSB abounds with military terminology and the reminder of the importance of community, stressing the union of warfare with welfare. The members of the monastery are the *fraterna acies* who do battle against Satan; each must be avoid faltering, so as to safeguard their brothers' salvation.[133] Many *RSB* military echoes are borrowings from the earlier *Regula Magistri*, and abound also in New Testament writings, such as the well-known Eph 6:10–17, I Thess 5:8, I Tim 1:18, I Tim 6:12, and II Tim 2:3–4. While it is true that the *RSB* 'generally seems to retreat from militant attitudes' compared to *Regula Magistri*, Benedict neverthless gives evidence of supporting an aggressive form of service to the Lord (*dominici* [...] *servitii*).[134] De Vogüé notes furthermore the varying senses of the word *scola*, which is a very rich concept in both *Regula Magistri* and *RSB*. Its most obvious meaning is that of a school, but it could also refer to any group where the members are set apart, either through professional fellowship or other association.[135] The term also 'designated a body of soldiers or civil functionaries, servants of the state and the prince.' The *Regula Magistri* has an equivalent expression, *dominici scola servitii*, and it is perhaps this sense that the author of the *Regula Magistri* is thinking of, for in 'passages at the end of his Rule, the idea of public service is undeniably associated with the use of the word *scola*'[136] The author of the *Regula Magistri* also writes that

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[131] *Regula sancti Benedicti*, Prol. 1. See also Jerome, *Ep.* 22.15.

[132] de Vogüé, *La Règle du Maître*, 7.53–9, esp. n. 63; see also Kardong, *Benedict's Rule: A Translation and Commentary*, p. 9; Manning, 'La signification de "militare-militia-miles"', 135–8; and Schmitz and Mohrmann (ed.), *Sancti Benedicti Regula Monachorum*, pp. 30–1.

[133] Kardong, *Benedict's Rule*, p. 44.

[134] Kardong, *Benedict's Rule*, p. 22.

[135] See Steidle, 'Dominici schola servitii', 396–406; Kardong, *Benedict's Rule*, pp. 22, 29. The language of spiritual warfare and the need to fight for one's king is echoed in the earlier *Admonitio S. Basilii ad filium spiritualem*, which Benedict may have known (cited in Bockmann, *Perspectives on the Rule*, pp. 14–15).

[136] de Vogüé, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, p. 25.

anyone 'who wishes to serve in the *scola* must bear everything for the Lord'.[137] The expression used here is *militare scolae* ('to serve/be of service to the school'). De Vogüé suggests that this indicates that the *scola* is thought of here as being a public service (from the word *militare*) like being a soldier or a civil servant (*RSB* Prol. 3 and 40, 1.4–5).[138] The Master also uses the term when he declares 'with Christianity fully at peace, we serve (*militamus*) in the *scola* of the monastery, under the command of the abbot, by means of the trials and the mortifications inflicted on our wills'.[139] Thus, de Vogüé argues that for the Master, *servitium* is equivalent to *militia*,[140] and it is this latter term evoking military or civil service is ordinarily associated with the term *scola*. Near the end of the *Regula Magistri*, the Master says that he who enters the *scola monasterii* is there called successively *discipulus* and *miles*, possibly encouraging us to read the states as both progression and transformation.[141] The expression *in scola* [...] *militare* is found in Gregory, when he refers to agents of the Church as its defenders.[142] Thus we have a connection between Church and monastic institutions.[143]. It also allows us to see the class of monks as more virile.[144] Just as the life of the public servant and the soldier is filled with struggle and danger, so is that of the monk. *Militare* suggests action, pain, and

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[137] 'Omnia debet pro Domino sustinere, qui eius cupit militare scholae', *Regula Magistri* 90.12 and 46. See also Morhmann, ii: 338, on *militia* and *militare*.

[138] de Vogüé, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, pp. 25–6.

[139] *Regula Magistri* 90.29

[140] *Regula Magistri* 87.9, where *militaturus* = *servitio*, and compare *Regula Magistri* 2.19, *servitii militiam* (genitive of identity), which becomes *servitutis militiam* in *RSB* 2.20. See also *RSB* 61.10, where Benedict makes a disctinction between *domino servitur* and *regi militatur*. See further Emonds, *Geistlicher Kriegsdienst*; and Manning, 'La signification de "militare-militia-miles"'.

[141] *Regula Magistri* 92.62–3.

[142] Gregory, *Reg.* 9.118 = *Ep.* 11.39: 'in defensum illum (Vitum) scola...militandum esse praevidimus.' Compare *Reg.* 9.97 = *Ep.* 11.38: 'ut officium defensoris accipias'. Also, in Gregory, *Reg.* 8.16 = *Ep.* 11.38, there exists a parallel between the 'schola notariorum atque subdiaconorum' and the defenders of the church. De Vogüé asks whether this reference means an abstract body/category of persons, rather than a determinate place, which would indicate a distinction with the usage of the Master's *schola monasterii*, which would have more in common with the *ecclesia*.

[143] de Vogüé, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, p. 27. Compare *La Règle du Maître*, i: 116, and de Vogüé, 'La Règle du Maître et la Lettre apocryphe de S. Jérôme', 366–7.

[144] de Vogüé, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, p. 28.

suffering. One must bear everything for the Lord to serve in his *scola,* including mortifications of the will.[145]

Keeping in mind these semantic overlaps and similarities, let us return to *The Dream of the Rood.* The three actions of Christ that readers have considered primarily heroic in the poem—approaching the Cross, his 'stripping', and ascending the Cross—can all be read within the framework of heroic sacrifice. The approach recalls the willing sacrifice made by the Christ of Fortunatus' *Pange lingua gloriosi*, save that the *Dream*-poet has made the scene more vivid, for, having assumed the narratological perspective of the tree, we see Christ hasten (*efstan*) toward us:

> Geseah ic þa frean mancynnes
> efstan elne mycle þæt he me wolde on gestigan.[146] (33–34)

From the described helplessness of line 32, 'Bæron me þær beornas on eaxlum, oððæt hie me on beorg asetton' ('Men bore me there on their shoulders, until they set me upon a hill'), we proceed to become the focalizer, and then the focal point, of the heroic action.[147] This heroism coalesces around the two further actions of Christ 'stripping' himself, and then mounting the Cross:

> Vigorous and single-minded, he strips himself for battle and a kingly victory. The action is entirely his, an eager sacrifice; there is no question at this point of his being nailed to the cross. Instead he climbs to embrace it (40–2). It is pre-eminently an act of dominant free will by a prince confident of victory.[148]

That the Dream-poet is actively engaged with shaping his material is evident from a look at the version of the text inscribed on the Ruthwell Cross, which is less concerned with

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[145] It is important to note, however, that despite the deep thematic indebtedness of the *RSB* to the *Regula Magistri*, the term *schola* only once in *RSB*, at Prol. 40: 'sanctae [...] oboedientiae militanda'; on this, see Mohrmann, 'La Latinité de Saint Benoît', *Études* i: 419. The see also De Vogüé's remarks at p. 43 n.97, where he criticizes Mohrmann's stance in *Études* ii: 339–40, in which she denies that *schola* can mean 'a corps of troops' or 'organization' in *RSB*. Compare the *Regula Magistri* at 90.12 and 90.46, and again at 90.29.

[146] 'Then I saw the lord of mankind hasten with great zeal, because he wished to climb upon me'.

[147] The emphasis on the visual and the sense of spectacle is noted by Ó Carragáin (*Ritual and the Rood*, p. 317), in such lines as *modig on manigra gesyhðe* 'courageous in the site of many'.

[148] Swanton (ed.), *The Dream of the Rood*, p. 70–1. See PL 15, cols. 1923–4; *Christ*, lines 715ff and 744–6. See also Swanton's notes to lines 34, 50 and 42 of *The Dream of the Rood.* The expression is possibly adapted from, and certainly analogous with, Fortunatus' phrase in *Vexilla regis prodeunt*, 'regnavit ligno Deus', which is in turn an adaptation of Ps 95:10, 'dominus regnavit a ligno'.

any sort of heroic action, and more concerned with theological issues such as Christ's will. The crucial occurrence after Christ's approach is the line 'ongyrede hine þa geong hæleð' (39), for here we have described the triumphant act of kenosis which is one of the apparent heroic paradoxes of *The Dream of the Rood*; in the larger perspective of sacrificial action, this act of kenosis is a central element for interpretation. The precise significance of the verb *ongyrede* has been a matter for debate. Ó Carragáin, in his lengthy study of the poem and its version on the Ruthwell Cross, has attempted to clarify the issue by contrasting the effect of the Ruthwell inscription with the Vercelli poem:

> In the first Ruthwell *titulus*, the stripping was a theophany, which revealed the nature of 'Almighty God' [...] In the *Dream*, the young man's act is still a theophany (39b): the poem states clearly that he is Almighty God, but the statement is, as it were, placed in parenthesis: while the theophany has not been eliminated, it is no longer the central issue. The Ruthwell poem opened with an unambiguous statement that 'Almighty God stripped himself ('[ond]geredæ hinæ'] which referred clearly to the theology of the Epistle for the sixth Sunday of Lent ('emptied himself', Philippians 2:7). But the Vercelli 'ongyrede' is ambiguous: it could either be interpreted as 'stripped himself' or, if we take the 'on–' particle as an intensive, as 'prepared himself [for battle]'.[149]

The range of meanings offered by the verb *ongirwan*, include 'to divest, strip' (glossing Latin *exutus*), and, as *girwan/gearwian/gerwian,* 'to prepare (a feast)', descriptive of Holofernes and his retainers in *Judith*. As a past participle, the word can indicate 'having been made ready, prepared, procured, supplied', and even 'put on' or 'clothed' (glossing the Latin words *parare, praeparare, praestare, induere, vestire*).[150] Ó Carragáin is correct, however, to call attention to the relationship between this section of the poem and Phil 2:7. The action, which originates in the humbling act of 'emptying' oneself in preparation for sacrifice, is also a form of preparation for battle. Since the sacrifice is a self-sacrifice, a sort of *devotio*, it is fitting that the one about to engage in such *devotio* be fully armed and ready for a conflict.

Swanton, the most recent editor of the poem, reads this as a final triumphant flourish, allowing Christ the glorious visage of the hero and king—'[w]ith the agony transferred to the cross, Christ can reasonably be seen to rule from the gallows'—an

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[149] Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, pp. 316–27.

[150] *Bosworth-Toller, s.v.*

expression is possibly adapted from, and certainly analogous with, Fortunatus' phrase in *Vexilla regis prodeunt*, 'regnavit ligno Deus', which is in turn an adaptation of Ps 95:10, 'dominus regnavit a ligno'. Swanton suggests that we compare this passage to one from the Old English poem *Christ III*, in which the author amplifies the pathos of the passion by stressing the visible wounds that Christ received:

> Ond eac þa ealdan wunde ond þa openan dolg
> on hyra dryhtne geseoð dreorigferðe,
> swa him mid næglum þurhdrifan niðhycgende
> þa hwitan honda ond þa halgan fet,
> ond of his sidan swa some swat forletan,
> þær blod ond wæter bu tu ætsomne
> ut bicwoman fore eagna gesyhð,
> rinnan fore rincum, þa he on rode wæs.[151] (1107–14)

Instead, in the *Dream of the Rood*, this visceral suffering is spared to Jesus, and is instead, if not completely transferred to the persona of the Cross, fused with it, so that the experienced suffering is shared:

> Þurhdrifan hi me mid deorcan næglum; on me syndon þa dolg gesiene,
> opene inwid-hlemmas. Ne dorste ic hira nænigum sceððan.
> Bysmeredon hie unc butu ætgædere. Eall ic wæs mid blode bestemed,
> begoten of þæs guman sidan, siððan he hæfde his gast onsended.[152] (46–9)

The nails are driven through the Tree, rather than through the 'hwitan honda ond þa halgan fet' (*Christ III*, line 1110). Whether or not one believes, with Swanton, that *The Dream of the Rood* concerns itself with 'an almost Byzantine insistence on the importance of ideas, to which the shallower matter of narrative and descriptive detail are totally subordinate', these lines offer a descriptive force which is crucial to an understanding of the poetic design, and to an understanding of the paradoxical flourishes

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[151] 'And also the old wounds and the open sores upon their Lord, they who are despairing in spirit will behold, just as the evil-minded men who drove nails through those white hands and those holy feet, and just as from his side set flowing the blood, whence blood and water both came running out together in front of the men and in the sight of their eyes, when he was on the Cross': *Christ III*, Krapp and Dobbie (eds.), *The Exeter Book*, pp. 33–4.

[152] 'They pierced me through with dark nails; the wounds are visible upon me, open vicious wounds. I dared not harm any of those. They mocked both of us together. I was all covered with blood, received from the side of this man, when he had send forth his spirit'.

of early medieval heroic sacrifice.[153] Such images could be emblematic of the conception of heroic sacrifice as we near the ninth and tenth centuries. Self-sacrifice was now more aggressive than martyrdom, but could adopt the guise of epic hero, too. The language of bleeding and wounding could be, and was, applied equally to the aggressor and the defender; in fact, there was little need to distinguish them under the right circumstances.

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[153] Swanton (ed.), *The Dream of the Rood*, p. 74. See Isidore, *Etym.* 7.11.4, on the bloodless or ascetic martyrdom; Gougaud, 'Les conceptions du martyre ches les Irlandais'; and his chapter on 'Le désir du martyre', in *Dévotions et pratiques ascétiques du moyen âge*, G. C. Bateman (tr.), *Devotional and Aesthetic Practices in the Middle Ages* (Maredsous, 1925; London, 1927). See also the end of the Old English *Regularis concordia*, in which a cross, crucifix, or eucharistic host becomes a surrogate for the corpse of Christ (see discussion in Corbin, *La Déposition liturgique du Christ*, p. 96).

CHAPTER THREE

Heroic Sacrifice Performed:
Paderborn to Paris to *Maldon*

Genam ða þone hæðenan mannan
fæste be feaxe sinum, teah hyne folmum wið hyre weard
bysmerlice, and þone bealofullan
listum alede, læðne mannan,
swa heo þæs unlædan eaðost mihte
wel gewealdan. Sloh ða wundenlocc
þone feondsceaðan fagum mece
heteþoncolne, þæt heo healfne forcearf
þone sweoran him, þæt he on swiman læg,
druncen and dolhwund.[1]

Heroes and kingdoms are essential components of epic poetry, even when one of them is absent or significantly diminished; in the hero's absence, peripheral characters gravitate toward the center, and play the roles normally occupied by him in an attempt, often consciously and vocally, to imitate him. The same can be said for a poem which seems to purposefully lack a hero for rhetorical reasons, such as Lucan's *Bellum civile*), and for others whose central characters are demonstrably and purposefully imitating a hero, such as versified saints' lives, whose central figures perform heroically as a direct result of his or her successful *imitatio Christi*. Epic narrative is substantially heroic narrative, relating the deeds of heroes whether those deeds be bellicose, miraculous, or both. Heroic deeds themselves often figure battles and bloodshed, but this battling and

[1] *Judith*, 98b–107a: 'She then took the heathen man firmly by his hair, drew him with her hands toward her miserably, and with skill arranged the evil one, the hated man, so that she might most easily manage the scum. Then the lady with the upswept locks struck the bitter enemy, the one of hateful intent, with shining sword-edge, with the result that she half cut through his neck, and he lay stunned, drunk and mortally-wounded.'

blood require a larger purpose: random violence and murder is not heroic. Nor is the hero a warrior without a country or a cause, whether alone or with a small band of brothers; he requires a group, a structure that will benefit, either through construction or conglomeration, from his presence within the larger purpose. And this larger purpose almost always includes sacrifice.

Sacrifice is not the hero's only defining characteristic, but it is one of the most important. The willingness to slay and be slain for a larger group, whether it be one's people or citizens, one's city or country, or one's deity, has long been considered central to the definition heroism, both in classical and in Christian contexts. The willingness of Jesus to sacrifice godliness to become human, and then to endure the crucifixion, for the sake of the faithful, is at the center of the Christian faith, and at the center of art that extols it. Nor, can it be said that every hero is a ruler, nor every ruler a hero. When the ruler and the hero are one, this union is the result of actions they have taken that relate to their prowess in battle or their willingness to defend their people, even at the cost of their own life—in other words, sacrificial actions—and not owing to their abilities as governors, as fathers, or as diplomats. While essential to the ruler's role, and not alien to a hero's makeup, such roles are not necessarily heroic. Aeneas has many roles in his poem, and his sacrificial actions are only part of his character, part of his story. Christ, too, has complicated roles, as teacher, as healer, and as sacrificial hero. The heroic story is usually not the whole story.

THE *PADERBORN EPIC*: HEROIC SACRIFICE INTERRUPTED AND CONTROLLED

The first epic of the Carolingian period is referred to by various names in the scholarly literature: *Karolus magnus et Leo papa*, the *Paderborn Epic*, and, more recently, the *Aachener Karlsepos*.[2] Schaller has argued convincingly for the poem's status as a fragment, the only surviving book from among several, of which it was the

[2] Dümmler (ed.), in PLAC, i: 366–79. Attributed doubtfully to Angilbert, and also to Einhard. Found only in a single copy, MS Tours, C 78 (St Gall prov.), saec ix/x, folios 104–14. For discussion of the poem, see Godman, *Poetry*, pp. 22–4, 196–206; Schaller, 'Aachener Epos'; Georgi, *Das lateinische und deutsche Preisgedicht*, pp. 52–4, and 94–6; Andersson, *Early Epic Scenery*, pp. 104–22; Schaller, 'Interpretationsprobleme'; and Godman, *Poets and Emperors*, pp. 82–91, 111–12, and 120–4.

third.[3] As a result, we cannot do more than speculate on the original structure overall of the poem. Schaller and Ratkowitsch have argued for the purpose of the poem being to extol the virtues of Charles and place him on a rung equal to Aeneas (and by extension, Augustus), Corippus, and Iustinian.[4] The poem details a number of historical events, including the foundation of Aachen, a hunt, and a meeting between Charlemagne and Pope Leo III at Paderborn in 799. The poet begins with fairly standard panegyric verse concerning Charles' excellent martial and moral qualities, as well as his cultural and intellectual abilities.[5] Indeed, the emperor outstrips Homer in wisdom, and the ancient orators (such as Cicero) in rhetoric. Following the initial encomium, the poet uses flashback to describe the emperor's earlier accomplishment, and the 'abstract eulogy' of the earliest section transitions into 'detailed vignette', with consistent, 'Virgilian' shifts in perspective.[6]

The poet begins by exalting the man who will be the hero of the narrative, Charlemagne. His various excellences and achievements are listed at length. Most importantly, however, he is shown as an architect or builder of the realm, the new empire—specifically, the palace at Aachen. The process is less important here than the achievement: 'Charlemagne [is] first depicted in full if static majesty (*vv.* 1–96) and then (*vv.* 97ff.) shown directing the building of Aachen which had taken place in the mid-790s':[7]

> Exsuperatque meum ingenium justissimis actis
> Rex Carolus, caput orbis, amor populique decusque,
> Europae venerandus apex, pater optimus, heros,
> Augustus, sed et urbe potens, ubi Roma secunda
> Flore novo, ingenti, magna consurgit ad alta
> Mole, tholis muro praecelsis sidera tangens.
> Stat pius arce procul Carolus loca singula signans,
> Altaque disponens venturae moenia Romae.
> Hic jubet esse forum, sanctum quoque jure senatum,

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[3] Schaller, 'Aachener Epos'.

[4] Ratkowitsch, *Karolus Magnus*; Schaller, 'Aachener Epos'; and Schaller, 'Interpretationsprobleme'.

[5] See Bittner, *Studien zum Herrscherlob*, pp. 69–74, and von Moos, Rev. of Bittner, pp. 63–7.

[6] Andersson, *Early Epic Scenery*, p. 110–11.

[7] Godman, *Poetry*, p. 23.

Jus populi et leges, ubi sacraque jussa capessant. (91–100)[8]

The model for such description of construction is, in the main, Vergilian. The vantage point of Charlemagne is similar to that of Aeneas while overlooking the buildings at Carthage, and the phrases that focus the gaze of Frankish king manifest strong verbal echoes to the *Aeneid*, as Andersson has discussed.[9] 'Stat pius arce procul Carolus loca singula signans, / Altaque disponens venturae moenia Romae' (97–8) echo *Aeneid* 1.421–9, when Aeneas climbs a hill, and is moved by the sight of the rising walls of the enlarging Carthage:

> Iamque ascendebant collem, qui plurimus urbi
> imminet, adversasque adspectat desuper arces.
> Miratur molem Aeneas, magalia quondam,
> miratur portas strepitumque et strata viarum.
> Instant ardentes Tyrii pars ducere muros,
> molirique arcem et manibus subvolvere saxa,
> pars optare locum tecto et concludere sulco. [...]
> hic portus alii effodiunt; hic alta theatris
> fundamenta locant alii, immanisque columnas
> rupibus excidunt, scaenis decora alta futuris (1.419–28)

The '*Paderborn*'-poet uses Vergilian language to give the impression of loft and height, but the contrast with Aeneas, who at this point merely wonders at the work, increases the magnitude of Charlemagne, who is described actively as 'super in summis populi procul arcibus ardens /Saxa locat, solido conjungens marmora nexu' (114–15). The poet has also learned from Vergil the techniques of describing a panoramic scene, and it is from this perspective that the king oversees the construction of Aachen, in all of its various facets. The construction details are not intended to be taken literally, as eyewitness accounts of the events on-site. Rather, the buildings and utilities discussed continue the need, already commenced by the poet, to illustrate Charlemagne's wide range of excellent qualities, extending from mastery of secular letters and rhetoric to protection of the church and its

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[8] 'My abilities are unequal to Charles, a king most just in his deeds, head of the world, love and paragon of his people, revered pinnacle of Europe, excellent father, hero, emperor, and lord too of the city where a second Rome flowers anew, its mighty mass rising up to the great heights, the lofty cupolas on its walls touching the stars. Pious Charles stands on the high palace, from afar pointing out each site, overseeing the construction of the high walls of future Rome. In one place he orders a forum to be built, in an other a holy senate. where the people receive judgements and laws and God's commands' (tr. Godman, adapted).

[9] Andersson, *Early Epic Scenery*, pp. 106–7.

servants. It is an ekphrastic and energetic extension of the 'static' panegyric with which the book began. Charlemagne constructs edifices both sacred (*templum*, 112) and profane (*arcem*, 102), civil inducements to law (*sacrum* [...] *senatum*, 99) and to leisure (*theatri*, 104). In short, this king for all seasons is truly a *caput orbis* (92), and the *Europae venerandus apex* (93); it is the universality of his command that makes him both *pater optimus* and *heros* (93).

Andersson feels that despite the strong success of the passage, the '*Paderborn*'-poet has failed to capture the true Vergilian perspective, since we fail to see the scene, and the activity of the workers, through the eyes of Charlemagne himself, as Vergil allows us to see Carthage through the eyes of Aeneas: 'Virgilian technique dictates in general that a landscape or a scene should open up before the eye of an onlooker and that the image should be focused through his eye as it registers fear, relief, admiration, or some other state of mind inspired by the view'.[10] Whereas in Vergil's poem, we share the emotional experience with Aeneas as he looks and wonders, the Carolingian poet presents the scene not through the eyes of Charlemagne, but through his own; as a result, Andersson feels we are denied the depth of experience that Vergil provides, the visual and mental revelations combined in a single scene. The achievements of Vergil with regard to viewpoint and focalization have been the subject of considerable scholarship in recent years, and are closely connected with the issue of the representation of visual experience through ekphrasis. Fowler has analyzed this exact problem in regard to a passage that occurs only slightly later than the one that so influenced the *Paderborn*-poet, *Aeneid* 1.441–93, in which Aeneas studies the depiction of certain elements from the Trojan War which have been depicted on the walls of Juno's Carthaginian temple.[11] Here, the emotional connection between the one who stands and sees (Aeneas) and the things observed (war and ruin) is made explicit in the language: *miratur videt* (456), *constitit et lacrimans* (459), *namque videbat* (466). As he gazes upon the scene of Hector's death (lines 483–7), Aeneas 'emits an immense groan from deep within his heart' ('ingentem gemitum dat pectore ab imo') while he 'studies' (*conspexit*) the

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[10] Andersson, *Early Epic Scenery*, pp. 109.

[11] Fowler, 'Narrate and Describe', 31–3. See also De Jong, 'Homer and Narratology'; and de Looze, 'Frame Narratives and Fictionalization'.

horrible scene, a series of events collapsed into a brief depiction on a wall. It is not clear, however, just to what extent there is a simple relationship between Aeneas and his emotions and the reader's own sense of emotional connection with the scene described. The opportunity for misreading the events, for Aeneas to read them according to his own agenda, has been amply discussed by several scholars.[12] For the reader of the poem to expect to experience a realization of the emotions felt by the hero is, to be succinct, a naïve hope, and one that is likely to be frustrated by the shifting focalizations in the poem. The sense of viewpoint, of seeing through Aeneas' eyes, rather than serving to empower the scene with emotion serves to undercut the certainty of the reading apparently offered.[13]

Such instability does not suit the purposes of the '*Paderborn*'-poet, whose wish is not to infuse the scene with the complexities of emotion, but rather to instill a far more stable sense of awe, and of reverence, by concentrating on the images of radiance and loftiness that Charlemagne is shown to embody. The image given of Charlemagne is not that of the flawed and troubled hero, moved to pity and to grief by the images upon a pagan temple's wall, but rather that of a great architect and creator, who calmly oversees the establishment of a magnificent empire. The image is similar to the image of Christ as the *Pantokrator*, the creator of the universe, radiant with light, overseeing the entirety of the church from a high vantage point, effortlessly assembling the landmarks of his people.[14] Godman notes that the prime consideration of this passage is authority, 'imperial and absolute [...] reflected in Charlemagne's eminence and in his distance from the scene of the labors. he disposes; others execute his will'.[15] The panegyric presented allows Charlemagne to assume a far-greater role than allotted by Vergil to Aeneas, and marks the methods of heroic poetry of the '*Paderborn*'-poet as quite different as well from those of a medieval heroic poet such as the composers of *Beowulf* or *Maldon*. He has surpassed Vergil in his accomplished and explicit illustration of the superiority of

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[12] On this subject, see also Segal, 'Art and the Hero', and Thomas, 'Virgil's Ekphrastic Centrepieces'.

[13] See especially Leach, *Rhetoric of Space*; and Bartsch, *Decoding the Ancient Novel.*

[14] The use of illuminance topoi was a continuation of its usage in Augustan imperial encomia; see Doblhofer, *Augustuspanegyrik*; and Cameron (ed.), *In laudem Iustini Minoris*, p. 135 (cited in Godman, *Poets and Emperors*, p. 84 n. 240).

[15] Godman, *Poetry*, p. 24.

Charlemagne and Aachen to Aeneas and Carthage (and, by extension, Rome), but the end result lacks the emotional instability, the sense of limit, that is essential for truly heroic verse.

The narrative's concern with heroic sacrifice begins in earnest with a lengthy and remarkably vivid sequence in which Charlemagne is shown hunting down and slaying a boar. Godman has argued that the '*Paderborn*'-poet here revitalized the hunting topos of hagiography with the secular trappings of heroic verse.[16] The lives of St Martin by Sulpicius Severus, Paulinus, and Fortunatus each depict a hunting scene similar to that which takes place in the *Paderborn Epic*. Paulinus, developing the version from Sulpicius Severus, used the scene of a hare hunt to demonstrate St Martin's immense compassion, as he rescued the fleeing creature of God, and the language of his poem rebukes the secular activity of hunting for its cruelty and un-Christian spirit.[17] The version of Fortunatus, which relies on that of Paulinus, in turn uses the scene to demonstrate the sort of heroism that Martin embodied—one full of compassion and pacifism.[18] Conversely, the scene in the *Paderborn Epic* 'effects a radical revaluation of his source, transfiguring its tender account of Martin's rescue of the hare into a triumphant description of Charlemagne killing a boar'.[19] The mixing of allusions to Fortunatus' text and to Vergil's demonstrate the development of a new form of poetry, combining elements of hagiographic and secular panegyric in a single resplendent image of the Christian hero and king. But the passage alludes to more than this, for the scene also offers us a careful depiction of Charlemagne as sacrificant. His pursuit and slaying of the boar defines him as a warrior capable of defending his people, doing battle in the thick of the soldiery, and sacrificing his enemies; and the scene prepares readers for the culmination of the narrative, which ostensibly would have come in Book Four—the emperor's bloody revenge upon the rabble who would attempt to slay Pope Leo at Rome.

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[16] Godman, *Poets and Emperors*, pp. 88–9.

[17] *Dialogi* 2.9 (PL 20, col. 208b).

[18] *Vita sancti Martini*, 2.244–56.

[19] Godman, *Poets and Emperors*, p. 89.

Plebs inclita tendit
Venandi studio, regique exercitus omnis
Jam sociatus adest; mox ferrea vincla rapacum
Cuncta cadunt resoluta canum, lustra alta ferarum
Nare sagace petunt, quaerentes rite rapinam
Et lustrant avidi condensa frutecta molosi;
Diffusi errantes in opacis saltibus, omnes
Sanguineam silvis praedam reperire laborant.
Cingit eques saltum, fugitivis obvia turbis
Turba paratur; aper fulvus fit valle repertus;
Mox nemus insiliunt equites et voce sequuntu;
Praedam agiles certant fugitivam agitare molosi,
Et sparsi currunt per opaca silentia silvae.
Iste tacendo volat celerem post rite rapinam,
Ille autem vacuas complet latratibus auras;
Errat hic umbrosis delusus odore frutectis,
Alter in alternis hinc saltibus inde rotatur;
Ille videt, hic praedam sentit odore fugacem.
Fit strepitus, silvis consurgit stridor in imis,
Et tuba magnanimos incendit ad acra molosos
Proelia: dirus aper quo se fert dente minaci,
Arboribusque excussa cadunt folia undique ab altis
Per loca vasta fugit rapidoque per invia cursu
Tendit iter, frendens teret alta cacumina montis;
Cursibus exhaustus lasso pede constat anhelus. (267–91)[20]

The language of the passage brims, as did the passage of the construction-scene at Aachen, with images of struggle and rapid movement (*certant*, *celerem*, *errat*, *fugit rapidoque*), omnipresence (*alter in alterius*, *ille vidit* [...] *hic praedam sentit*), presenting an almost claustrophobic sense of the hunters in pursuit of the prey. The dogs set off ahead of the king to surround and sniff out the desperate animal; amidst the leaping of the others' horses the king dismounts to apply the sacrificial coup-de-grâce:

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[20] 'A people famous for its hunting lust set forth, and the entire army was already by the king's side; soon all the iron chains slid loose, slipped off the savage dogs, who sought the deep dens of wild animals with nostrils keen, seeking rightful rapine, and the eager hounds traversed the dense underbrush; they scattered through the murky fens, all keen to find the bloody prey in the woodlands. The horseman ringed the upland fens, crowd readied to meet fleeing crowd.

A tawny boar was turned up in a vale; soon the horsemen leapt unto the wood, and pursued with shouts; the nimble hounds did well to harry the fleeing prey, and they spread at a run throughout the shadowy silence of the forest. One flew in silence after the speedy quarry, the other filled the still air with barking; this one wandered fooled by the scent in the dense brambles, the other wheeled otherwise in the fens. That one sees, but this one senses the fleeing prey by its smell. A clamor is raised, a cry surmounts the deepened woods, and a horn spurs on the magnificent molossians to keener battles, whereby the maddened boar defends itself with threatening tusk, and jostled leaves cascade from high treetops. Through clearings and untrodden ways the boar takes flight and swiftly holds its course, gnashing while it takes the mountain-paths; exhausted, panting, it halts its flight on tired trotters'.

Jam parat arma necis canibus turbamque sequacem
Sternit et horrendo rapidos rotat ore molossos.
Mox Carolus pater ipse volat mediumque per agmen
Ocior aligeris avibus forat ense ferinum 295
Pectus et intingens gelidum in praecordia ferrum.
Corruit ille, vomens vitam cum sanguine mixto,
In flava moriens seseque volutat harena. (292–8)[21]

The passage is a masterful blending of the Venantian with the Vergilian; images, words, and rhythms combine to create a scene of tremendous sacrificial success built upon the pathos of the heroic death. The lines 'Jam parat arma necis canibus turbamque sequacem / Sternit et horrendo rapidos rotat ore molossos' are reminiscent of the miracle from Fortunatus' *Vita s. Martini*, when the name of Martin silences the vicious dog. Here the animal to be killed is not left for the mere dogs, but neither is it to be saved; the royal father himself (*Carolus pater ipse*, 294) appears to perform the killing. The boar is not a defenseless hare, but a much worthier adversary for Charlemagne, another warrior who can prepare his *arma* (292) for the melee. The king is not only a huntsman, but one in the middle of his troops (*mediumque per agmen*), and he moves swifter than birds (*ocior aligeris avibus*, 295), the image perhaps recalling the hawk, specifically, a favorite of Carolingian nobles (and an image common to heroic verse). The killing blow echoes the death of Pallas (*Aeneid* 10.482–7),

at clipeum, tot ferri terga, tot aeris,
quem pellis totiens obeat circumdata tauri,
uibranti cuspis medium transuerberat ictu
loricaeque moras et pectus perforat ingens (10.484–7)

for here Charlemagne 'forat ense ferinum / pectus et intingens gelidum in praecordia ferrum' (295–6). It also contains echoes of the boxing match between the Sicilian Entellus and the Trojan Dares in Book Five of the *Aeneid* (5.363–484), a scene which is itself a small masterpiece of sacrificial imagery and heroic combat, richly allusive to

[21] 'Now, it prepares its weapons for the dogs of death, and scatters the pursuing crowd, and wheels upon the hounds with bristling mouth. Soon, father Charles himself flies up in the midst of the band, and swifter than loosed birds he gores the beast's chest with his sword, and plunges the icy steel into its heart. It falls, spumes its spirit up with blood and gore, and rolling over on the yellow sand it dies'.

ritual and to the epic past.[22]

The king rejoices in the slaughter, making a short speech, in which thanksgiving to God is absent, but in which Fortune instead has taken His place:

> 'Hanc fortuna diem nobis deducere laetam
> Annuit auguriis et nostra incepta secundat;
> Ergo favete omnes istum exercendo laborem,
> Venandi studio curamque adhibete benignam!'[23] (302–5)

Instead of the cruel sport unfit for Christian men that Paulinus depicted it as, hunting becomes something to be cherished (*favete*, 304), a labor deserving of thoughtful care (*curamque* [...] *benignam*, 305). The scene ends with Charlemagne beginning the hunt anew; he admires his trophies, and, as befits a king, doles out the spoils of the day to his noble retainers and his devoted friends (*proceres* [...] *sociosque sequaces*, 312–13). The day ends with a return to the paradisal groves of Aachen, and with feasting, also overseen by Charlemagne, who presents, in proper order as befits their rank, the older men, the middle-aged, and the youths of tender years, even the maidens (*castasque puellas*, 322), with food and Italian wine (*Falerna*, 323), before all sleep in peace, protected by the presence of the *pater* Charlemagne.

Returning to Aachen, the king's own sleep is troubled by a terrible vision (*portentum* [...] *monstrumque nefandum*) in which he espies a weeping Pope Leo (*mestosque effundere fletus*), but the man's eyes are *squalentes*, his face is covered in blood, his tongue has been torn out (*truncatam linguam*), and he is wounded all over. Troubled, he sends envoys to Rome to learn the meaning of the dream, while the hero himself (*ipse* [...] *heros*) returns to Saxony with an army assembled from diverse parts of his realm, for he must cross the Rhine in order that he might 'Saxonum populum domitare rebellem / Et saevam gelido gentem rescindere ferro'.[24] The envoys first see the steep hills of Rome (*culmina* [...] *ardua Romae*) and take in the horrifying spectacle in

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[22] For discussion of this scene, see Galinsky, '*Aeneid* V and the *Aeneid*', 174–6; Pavlovskis, '*Aeneid* V: The Old and the Young', 201–2; Putnam, 'Unity and Design in *Aeneid* V', 217–18; and Traill, 'Boxers and Generals at Mount Eryx'.

[23] '"Fortune has smiled on us this happy day, and has followed our inceptions with good tidings. Therefore, cherish all by practicing this labor, and apply fond care to the love of the hunt!"'

[24] '[T]o put down the rebel Saxon people and to skewer the savage race with ice-cold iron'.

the amphitheatre there:

> Tristior occurrit vulgataque fama repente
> Lumen apostolicum crudeli funere plagis
> Occubuisse feris; nam serpens saevus et atrox,
> Qui solet unanimes bello committere fratres,
> Semina pestiferi jactare nocenda veneni,
> Suasit in innocuum caecatis mentibus omnes
> Saevire, et famulos dominum trucidare potentem.
> Dira animis inlapsa lues et sensibus haesit;
> Virus pestiferum concepit pectus anhelum.
> Insidias posuere viro mortemque parabant
> Insonti tristemque necem; plebs impia telis
> Pastorem in proprium seseque armavit iniquis.[25] (326–55)

The language used underscores the sense that the pope himself was subject to an attempted martyrdom. The report takes place within a *theatrum*, reminiscent of the arena and the martyrdoms of ancient Rome. The turning of the mob against its bishop recalls the tale of Cassian in the *Peristephanon*, murdered by a throng of his own youths, a reversal of the justified (yet still failed) attack upon the tyrant Rufinus depicted in Claudian's poem.

> Dum solitum transisset iter Leo papa benignus
> Et sacra Laurenti peteret pede limina sancti,
> Plebs demens populusque vecors, male sana juventus,
> Fustibus et gladiis, nudatis ensibus omnis
> Irruit in summum pastorem turba tumultu,
> Caeca furens, subito diris commota procellis.
> Sacra sacerdotis torquebat membra flagellis,
> Unius in casum multorum saevit hiatus;
> Carnifices geminas traxerunt fronte fenestras,
> Et celerem abscidunt lacerato corpore linguam.
> Pontificem tantum sese extinxisse putabat
> Plebs pietate carens atrisque infecta venenis.[26]

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[25] 'Suddenly, a sadder report came via the common word, that a cruel murder from wild blows had befallen the apostolic light; for a serpent savage and fierce, one which is wont to spur concordant brothers on to war, to cast harmful spores of plague-bearing poison, it persuaded blind minds that all should brutalize the innocent, and that servants should slaughter their powerful master. A dire plague slinked into minds, and clung to senses; a deadly contagion took hold of panting hearts. They placed snares for the man and readied death and sorrowful murder for the guiltless one. The impious commons armed itself with wicked weapons against its own pastor'.

[26] 'When kind Pope Leo made his customary journey and sought the holy threshold of Saint Lawrence, the mindless masses and insane mob, youth insane, with clubs and swords—bare blades—the entire crowd rushed upon the highest pastor with a tumult, blind fury, troubled suddenly with wicked strife. The holy limbs of the priest were twisted with blows, and the maw of the many foamed for the fall of the one. The

The significance of this attempted sacrifice is soon made clear, however, when its effects are immediately overturned by God. The pope's eyesight is miraculously restored, his tongue replaced, his wounds are healed. Unlike the sacrificial slaughter of the boar by Charlemagne, which was smiled upon by fortune, and the (assumed) slaughter of the rebellious Saxons, this attempted sacrifice is labeled 'unacceptable' by God the Father himself. Its only purpose is to force the Church, in the figure of Pope Leo, to seek the aid of the emperor, and allow him to engage in yet another act of vindication and conquest, subduing the rebellious Romans who had attempted to sacrifice their pontiff.

> Sed manus alma patris oculis medicamina ademptis
> Obtulit atque novo reparavit lumine vultum.
> Ora peregrinos stupuerunt pallida visus,
> Explicat et celerem truncataque lingua loquelam.
> Cum sociis magnus paucis fugit inde sacerdos;
> Clam petere auxilium Spulitinam tendit ad urbem.
> A duce cum magno fit hic susceptus honore
> Winigiso et multis cumulatus in ordine donis.[27]

Indeed, the established order and hierarchy, which had come close to being overturned by the insane masses, is now at once restored, to the point that the markers of proper hospitality can be observed, and the pontiff can receive the benefits that befit his status.

Leo now speaks, and puts himself in the hands and protection of the emperor. It will be the task of Charlemagne to avenge the pope's own wounds and restore him to his proper place. The kinship and connection seen between David and the Carolingian emperor is underscored (392), and the leader of the Church places himself within the protection of the *obtutibus almis* of the king. He cannot take revenge himself; he must rely upon the protection of the state.

> atque ita fari
> Incipit—et truncata brevi infra lingua palatum 380
> Cursu erat—placidam depromens voce loquelam:

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murderers dragged his twin windows from his brow/skull, and they tore out the fluent tongue from the wounded body. The masses had a single thought, lacking as they were in piety and infected with black poison: they would murder the pontiff'.

[27] 'But the blessed hand of the Father proffered medicine to the extracted orbs, and repaired his visage with new light. Pallid faces were made dumbstruck at his wandering sight, and the tongue torn out explained the tale in brief, when the great priest fled from there with a few companions. Secretly he made his way to the city of Spoleto to seek help. He was received by the duke, Winigsus, with great honor, and was burdened with many gifts in accordance with his rank'.

'Vos ego per caram Caroli conjuro salutem
Regis, ut ejectum me defendatis in armis,
Finibus a propriis et sedis honore repulsum;
Me quoque vobiscum ad vestrum ducatis opimum
Regem, et praecipui liceat mihi principis ora
Cernere, qui justo nostros examinet actus
Judicio et vindex saevissima verbera nostra
Vindicet insignis, luctus gemitumque meumque
Allevet, addendo nostrae solatia vitae.
Ergo agite et, vestra si nunc mihi gratia certa est,
Eripite his terris, David me obtutibus almis
Praesentate, viri; iam nos mora nulla tenendo
Impediat, gelidas superemus cursibus Alpes'.[28] (379–94)

The *Paderborn*-poet has established clear boundaries for the heroic sacrifice that takes place within his epic. It is clearly controlled, with its limits strictly demarcated. Charlemagne is first portrayed as creator of secular wonders and is finally seen as defender of the Church and papacy. The vigor typical of the heroic conqueror is demonstrated in the boar hunting scene, in which the emperor manifests his power in the role of sacrificant through slaying the wild animal in a manner reminiscent both of classical ritual sacrifice, and also the slaying of a human enemy, as portrayed in the *Aeneid.* He does not show us, interestingly, Charlemagne engaged in actual combat; despite the availability of the Saxon war as a model for imperial conquest, the poet prefers to focus on the image of a bloody sacrifice overturned, in the figure of the maimed Pope Leo miraculously restored to health. The poem is incomplete, yet it seems possible that the fourth book would have concerned Charlemagne's triumphant entrance into Rome, and his quelling of the savage *plebs* within, who had, insanely, attempted to perform a sacrifice of their own, and instead must pay the price, contained in the judgment of God and revealed in the miracle of Leo's healing.

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[28] '[H]e began to speak thusly: and the tongue which had been torn from the roots not long before traced its course upon the palate, delivering a calm story with his voice: "I abjure you by the precious health of King Charles that you with arms defend me, an exile and expelled from my own lands and my honored seat; and that you take me with you to your splendid king, and that it be permitted to me to see the face of the splendid prince, who might examine our deeds with just judgment and, a noted liberator, vindicate our most savage blows, alleviate our grief and groaning, adding solace to our life. Therefore go and, if now your grace is certain for us, sweep me from these lands, present me with nourishing guards to David, men. Now, let no delay impede us in our tending, and let us surmount the chilly Alps at a run"'.

THE OLD ENGLISH *JUDITH*: A MONSTROUS SACRIFICE CONDONED

The Old English poem *Judith* comes down to us in a unique, albeit acephalous, text, contained in British Library, Cotton MS Vitellius A xv, also known as the 'Nowell' codex. The manuscript contains five texts, three prose (*The Life of St Christopher*, *The Wonders of the East*, and *Alexander's Letter to Aristotle*) and two verse (*Beowulf* and *Judith*); *Judith* is the final text in the codex as it is currently constituted.[29] The narrative of the Old English poem is based to a large extent upon chapters 12.10–16.1 of the Apocryphal Book of Judith, and shows certain elements of having been based upon the version of Judith found in Old Latin Bible rather than the Vulgate version.[30] The poem as we have it now is, as mentioned, incomplete, although it is uncertain how much of the beginning of the poem has been lost.[31] The 349 lines that remain are not a translation of the Biblical account of the slaying of Holofernes by the widow Judith and the defeat of the Assyrian army by the Israelites, but rather an 'imaginative recasting' of the story, perhaps affected by the Anglo-Saxons own experience as a people besieged by a foreign army of a foreign faith.[32] Among the possible changes and alterations to the original narrative, Griffiths has argued that the list of characters is diminished (noted also by Timmer), out of which perhaps most importantly is the elimination of the character of Achior, the 'type of the sympathetic Gentile'.[33] Both Holofernes and Judith are reduced to stark moral dichotomies—although Holofernes is furious, immoderate, lustful in the source, in the Old English version he loses his speech,[34] and becomes 'unambiguously corrupt'. Perhaps the best characterization has been made by Orchard, who refers to the

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[29] For a more complete overview of the manuscript, see Ker, *Catalogue*, pp. 279–83. See also Boyle, 'Nowell Codex'; Gerritsen, 'British Library MS Cotton Vitellius A. xv'.

[30] The use of the Old Latin Bible as well as the Vulgate in Anglo-Saxon England is well-attested. See Marsden, 'Old Latin Intervention in the Old English *Heptateuch*', and idem, *Text of the Old Testament.*

[31] Chamberlain suggests (*contra* Woolf) that 75% of the poem is missing, owing to the fitt-numbering visible in the manuscript.

[32] Donoghue, *Old English Literature*, p. 40.

[33] Griffiths (ed.), *Judith*, p. 52.

[34] Griffiths (ed.), *Judith*, p. 54.

transformation from complex and wicked man to clearly horrid monster as being 'satanised'.[35]

Its connection to my argument is strengthened, moreover, by the suggestion (made by several scholars) that the poem may have originated from a desire to memorialize the ability of a people who are loyal to God to resist the attacks of an army of pagan foreigners. In this argument, Judith and the Israelites represent the Anglo-Saxons, and the Assyrians represent the Danes. Pringle attempts to reconcile the seemingly conflicting interpretations of Ælfric (and Sisam) by examining what diabolical forces the Vikings might have symbolized to English readers.[36] Cross refers to Ælfric's 'Letter to Sigeweard' as supporting evidence, discussing the poem as an exhortation intended for 'contemporary stiffening' of resistance to the invading Danes.[37] It has even been argued that Judith is meant to represent Æthelflæd, Lady of the Mercians, who was victorious over Danes in the eastern Danelaw.[38] It is in this context that I will examine the various elements of the story that seem pertinent to the tradition of siege warfare, heroic action, and the sacrifice of one's enemy.

The reasons that the original compiler might have had for including *Judith* in a manuscript containing *Beowulf*, the *Wonders of the East*, and the *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle* have been in doubt ever since Kenneth Sisam raised his concerns over the contiguity, rather dogmatically declaring that 'Holofernes is no monster'.[39] Indeed, although many scholars have sought to explain the presence of *Judith* and the *Passion of St Christopher* in the 'Nowell' Codex by pointing out certain monstrous elements they share with Grendel and the creatures of the *Letter* and *Wonders*, it has been demonstrated that the *Beowulf* manuscript was two collections, one containing the religious material,

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[35] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, p. 23.

[36] Pringle, '*Judith*', 87–9.

[37] Cross, 'Ethic of War', p. 274

[38] Huppé, *Web of Words*, pp. 145–7, reviving Foster's 1892 suggestion which was supported by Cook in his 1904 edition (pp. xi–xii). See also Sisam's suggestion (retracted) that the poem was joined to the Vitellius collection since she, like Beowulf, was a 'saviour of her country, at a time when England needed such inspiration in the struggle with the Danish invaders' (Sisam, *Studies*, p. 67 and n.2).

[39] Sisam, *Studies*, p. 67. Here I am expressing mild disagreement with Sisam's judgment concerning the apparent unity of *Judith* with other texts of the 'Nowell' codex, as per my statement above which indicates that there is some evidence that Holofernes has been made more monstrous by the Old English poet.

and the other containing the more fabulous works.[40] However, 'the theme of Judith appears to focus on the victory of the oppressed over the oppressors, and the fatal humiliation of overweening pagan pride'.[41] Orchard notes that such an interpretation is 'invited' by the Vulgate text, and it introduces themes that are echoed elsewhere in the *Beowulf*-manuscript, specifically the 'evocation of mighty bygone empires won by force of arms', and the 'humiliation' of Holofernes at the hands of the virtuous Judith.[42] Both the Carolingian Hrabanus Maurus and the Anglo-Saxon Ælfric interpreted the Biblical Judith as demonstrating the ability of humility to overcome pride. As Doubleday noted, the Old English version has simplified the original, yet this very simplification represents something more than mere abbreviation: it arguably creates a more coherent narrative from a complicated story.[43] The resulting narrative has an 'easy parallelism'.[44] Holofernes is subservient to Nebuchadnezzar in the Vulgate text, but Nebuchadnezzar has completely disappeared from the Old English recasting.

The narrative simplification present and evident in *Judith* also represents an apparent desire to heighten the contrasts between the character of Holofernes and that of Judith. This deepening of contrasts is a standard habit in the poetic art of the Anglo-Saxons.[45] *Judith* offers a reductive reading of the Biblical book, a reading which diminishes in particular any moral ambiguities within the characters and which emphasizes the sin of pride; the story demonstrates how the proud can be humbled by the meek and pious by means of God's aid. The story as told by the Old English poet also, by means partly of the considerable abbreviation and condensation of the source, places greater symbolic investment in the beheading of Holofernes. The Old English poem highlights the gruesome beheading scene, downplays the sexuality of Judith, and elaborates significantly upon the battle sequences between the Assyrians and the Jews.

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[40] Lucas, 'The Place of *Judith*', p. 474. Lucas was preceded, as Orchard points out (*Pride and Prodigies*, p. 4 n.25), by Pickles, 'Studies in the Prose Texts', p. 5

[41] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, p. 5.

[42] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, p. 6.

[43] Doubleday, 'The Principle of Contrast', pp. 436–41, cited in Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, p. 7 n. 45.

[44] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, p. 8.

[45] See discussion in Orchard, 'Conspicuous Heroism'.

The Vulgate text offers no direct observation of warfare; the Old English poem, on the contrary, provides a vivid depiction of the conflict, complete with motifs, such as the 'Beasts of Battle', which would seem to have been borrowed from secular heroic contexts, a feature Renoir has characterized as 'cinematographic'. There is nothing comparable in the Latin; the Vulgate text only mentions that, distraught over the death of Holofernes, the Assyrians offer not an organized army but only a routed mob to the Jewish solders, who easily cut them down.

Sacrificial imagery enters the narrative from the beginning of the poem, with the description of the preparations for the feast, which will be resplendent with food and wine (lines 7–34). The preparation of celebration is also a harbinger of defeat in battle, as the poet notes that the Assyrian 'shield-wielders' (*rondwiggende*, 11a) already lay as if they were dead. Moreover, they lay about as if they were *struck* dead (31), sacrificial victims for the Jews. Holofernes himself, although bearing the attributes of a king ('dispenser of treasure'), bellows and roars (*hlynede ond dynede*, 23b), a standard beast of slaughter and sacrifice. After the banquet, Judith herself is led to the king's pavilion (lines 32–45), conducted there, wearing ceremonial trappings (her rings and bracelets, rather than the *vittae* Sinon claimed to have worn). The scene is set for the remarkable turnabout, as the intended victim instead becomes the slayer. The imagery is deepened when we realize that another Anglo-Saxon poet also characterized Judith in this way.[46] For Aldhelm, she represents an opposing figure to the woman of Prov 7:23, who leads a young man into sin like an ox lead to slaughter.[47]

The Old English poet also depicts the conflict as being between representatives of two poles of sacred status: the pure and the polluted. The *Judith*-poet emphasizes her virginity repeatedly through epithets (*mægð*, *meowle*), often accompanied by adjectives for bright, holy, triumphant, blessed, wise, and mention of the Lord; her status is contrasted with Holofernes' lechery and defilement.[48] Once again, the Old English poet has deepened the contrasts implicit, but ambiguous, in the Vulgate source, a poetic

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[46] Aldhelm, in *De virginitate*, c. 57.

[47] Chance, *Woman as Hero*, p. 37.

[48] Chance, *Woman as Hero*, p. 39.

technique that prepares us for the eventual complete reversal of the status quo, as sacrificant becomes sacrificand, and vice versa. This reversal, this sense of a world overturned, is apparent in the lesser characters as well. An anonymous Assyrian soldier is allowed the chance to speak concerning the discovery of the murdered Holofernes. He is depicted as a mourner, unsexed, perhaps, and given solely the role of a *meowle*, a mourning woman, who tears his hair and clothes in grief, falls to the ground, and announces the catastrophe to the assembled soldiers outside their leader's tent.[49]

The 'rather grotesque'[50] beheading scene in the Old English poem is a rather clear version of a sacrifice. Judith has approached and entered the tent of Holofernes, at which point, departing from his source, the Anglo-Saxon poet adds that Judith stands praying to the Holy Trinity for forgiveness for her pending deed.[51] Rather than being merely a pious touch of Christianization, the effect serves rather to further hallow the act she is about to undertake, the murder of an enemy, and an enemy whom the poet has already taken great pains to dehumanize, making him more monstrous than the Biblical source had suggested. We are meant to understand that the death that is about to occur is not the killing of a man, but of a beast.

Genam ða þone hæðenan mannan
fæste be feaxe sinum, teah hyne folmum wið hyre weard
bysmerlice, and þone bealofullan
listum alede, læðne mannan,
swa heo þæs unlædan eaðost mihte
wel gewealdan. Sloh ða wundenlocc
þone feondsceaðan fagum mece
heteþoncolne, þæt heo healfne forcearf
þone sweoran him, þæt he on swiman læg,
druncen and dolhwund. Næs he dead þa gyt,
ealles orsawle; sloh ða eornoste
ides ellenrof oþre siþe
þone hæðenen hund, þæt him þæt heafod wand
forð on ða flore.[52] (98–111)

[49] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, p. 9.

[50] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, p. 10.

[51] Invocation of the Trinity, an extreme rarity in Old English poetry, is further made problematic when one realizes that the invoker is an Old Testament heroine. See Hill, 'Invocation', pp. 260–3.

[52] 'She then took the heathen man firmly by his hair, drew him with her hands toward her shamefully, and with skill set up the evil one, the hated man, so that she might most easily manage the scum. Then the

Like an animal drawn to an antique sacrifice, Holofernes does not struggle from the sword; his drunkenness ensures that he is as pliable and meek as a sacrificial victim is meant to be. Judith prepares him for the assault, propping him up (*þone bealofullan listum alede, / læðne mannan*). The killing is described almost ritually, as her sacrifice must take two parts, connected by the poet's repetition of the word *sloh* (*Sloh ða wundenlocc þone feondsceaðan / fagum mece* [...] *sloh ða eornoste / ides ellenrof oþre siþe / þone hæðenen hund*) and the parallel descriptions of the sacrificand with her 'upswept-locks' and her 'courageous spirit'. Holofernes, too, moves further down the spectrum of humanity, from *hæðenan mannan* (98b) to *feondsceaðan* (104a) and finally reduced to *hæðenen hund* (110a). The poet, relishing the chance for putting an exclamation mark to this scene of horror, tells us contentedly or gleefully that Holofernes' soul fled into Hell, leaving but his stinking corpse, and details the grim torments that await him, and their eternal nature (lines 112–21). Contrasted with the monster immediately is Judith, now glorious and triumphant, who bears back the head of the tyrant to her people in her lunch sack. She brandishes the trophy before her people, a sort of *signum capitis*, and tells them that victory in war will now be theirs, foreordained by God:

> Syððan frymða god,
> arfæst cyning, eastan sende
> leohtne leoman, berað linde forð,
> bord for breostum ond byrnhomas,
> scire helmas in sceaðena gemong,
> fyllan folctogan fagum sweordum,
> fæge frumgaras. Fynd syndon eowere
> gedemed to deaðe, ond ge dom agon,
> tir æt tohtan, swa eow getacnod hafað
> mihtig dryhten þurh mine hand.[53] (189–98)

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lady with the upswept locks struck the bitter enemy, the one of hateful intent, with smudged sword-edge, with the result that she half cut through his neck, and he lay stunned, drunk and mortally-wounded. Nor was he dead yet, not altogether lifeless; fiercely then the spirited woman struck a second time the heathen dog, so that his head rolled forth onto the floor'.

[53] 'When the God of creation, the virtuous king, sends from the east the bright radiance, bear forth shields, the buckler before your breast and your coats of mail, your glittering helmets unto the heart of the enemy, fell their commanders, their doomed princes with gleaming swords. Your enemies are sentenced to death and you are to have judgment, glory in the struggle, just as mighty God has signaled to you through my hand'.

The Assyrians are *gedemed to deaðe*, while the Jews have been guaranteed victory. the signs, Judith says, have been written for all to read. Holofernes' sacrifice, the sacrifice of that animal, is the sign with which to read the bestowal of God's grace, and the assuredness of military victory for his chosen people, whether they be Jews or, as in the *Paderborn Epic*, the Franks. This desire for, and anxiety over, success, shaped the narrative of one of the last, and arguably the most-accomplished, epic poem of the ninth century: the *Bella Parisiacae urbis*.

HEROIC SACRIFICE IN THE *BELLA PARISIACAE URBIS*

The *Bella Parisiacae urbis* is a poem of 1,393 hexameters, written by a young Neustrian monk named Abbo, while at the abbey of St-Germain-des-Prés in the penultimate decade of the ninth century, in the waning years of the Carolingian empire.[54] The first two books, of 660 and 618 hexameters respectively, conform to certain expectations common to epic poetry, and incorporate elements from hagiography and didactic verse typical of Latin literature of the Carolingian period. Their general theme concerns the siege of the city of Paris by Viking invaders in the years 885–886, their depredations of the surrounding countryside in those and later years, the actions of Odo, count of Paris, and the churchmen Gozelin and Ebolus, bishop and abbot respectively, in the conflict. Abbo also celebrates the miraculous intercessions of St Germanus on behalf

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[54] I have used the edition of Winterfeld (ed.), *Abbonis Bella Parisiacae urbis*, MGH PLAC, iv: 72–122. The previous edition of Pertz (ed.), *Abbonis De Bello parisiaco*, contains numerous errors of transcription, in both text and glosses, and much unsuitable punctuation, and must be considered unreliable. An edition and French translation of the first two books (and prefatory material) was published by Waquet (ed.), *Abbon. Le siège de Paris par les Normands*, and contains useful historical notes, but does not contain a textual apparatus. Martin Bouquet's eighteenth-century edition of the first two books (and prefatory material) was published in vol. 8 of the *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, 24 vols. (Paris, 1869–1904), pp. 1–26, and I have consulted his notes with occasional benefit. An edition and German translation of Book One was published by Pauels (ed.), *Bella Parisiacae urbis, Buch I.* A Danish translation has been provided by Skyum-Nielsen in *his Vikingerne i Paris*, pp. 79–132. The poem was also edited by the French writer and archivist Pierre Pithou (1539–1596), the historian and antiquary Jacques Du Breul (1528–1614), and Toussaint Duplessis (1689–1767), whose work was revised by Taranne (see Winterfeld (ed.), *Abbonis Bella Parisiacae*, p. 75, and Waquet (ed.), *Abbon*, pp. xvi–xviii). The poem is Schaller–Könsgen, no. 3611, p. 168. A complete English translation of the poem has been supplied by Adams and Rigg, 'A Verse Translation'; previously only short excerpts had been published in Ogg (ed.), *A Source Book of Medieval History*, pp. 168–71, and this translation was reprinted and revised in Dutton, *Carolingian Civilization*, pp. 483–85. Godman translates lines 1.94–114, and 2.583–614 in his *Poetry*, pp. 312–15. A prose translation was proposed by Donald Bullough (see reference in McKitterick (ed.), *Carolingian Culture*, p. 217), but never appeared.

of the people of the city, and offers some description of the struggles for the hegemony of West Francia and the Frankish Empire following the death of Charles III ('the Fat') and the accession of Odo, count of Paris. The third book, which, at 115 hexameters, is the shortest of the three by far, and its style is also notably distinct from the other books (as Abbo himself acknowledges in his prefatory letter), consisting of moral precepts cloaked in a highly-difficult Latin frequently referred to as 'hermeneutic' or, less-commonly, 'glossematic'; although all three books contain obscure words and various elements of the 'hermeneutic' style of Latin writing, the first and second are not as difficult in as consistent and self-conscious a manner as the third.[55] All three books are accompanied by glosses, mostly lexical but including some syntactical glosses as well, most of which seem to be Abbo's own; naturally, the heaviest glossing occurs in Book Three.[56] The poem is preceded in the sole complete manuscript witness by a prose epistle addressed to a certain brother Gozelin and a short poem, of twenty-two dactylic tetrameters address to Aimoin, Abbo's teacher at St-Germain-des-Prés. Generically, the poem has usually been classified as an epic, and it shares certain proclivities with poems of that ilk, although in truth it resists easy classification.[57] It shares features with early medieval didactic verse, and with many of the 'sub-genres' of epic, such as allegorical epic, hagiographical epic, and historical epic, and, as I have alluded to, contains much which is extremely difficult to interpret, a quality which connects it with several forms of enigmatic poetry, such as riddles. No doubt partly as a result of his abstruseness, Abbo's accomplishment has been notoriously unpopular with, although oft-referenced by, readers of Latin literature and students of the Carolingian period.[58]

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[55] The term 'hermeneutic' was used in this regard by Lapidge, who examined Book Three as an exemplar of this style in Anglo-Saxon England in 'The Hermeneutic Style in Tenth-Century Anglo-Latin Literature', pp. 75–76, reprinted in his *Anglo-Latin Literature, 900–1066*, at pp. 113–14.

[56] The glosses of Books One and Two have been examined in several articles. See Bradley, 'The Glosses on *Bella Parisiacae urbis* I and II', and Löfstedt, 'Zu den Glossen von Abbos Bella Parisiacae urbis', 261–66.

[57] Both the most prolific commentator on the poem, as well as its earliest, refer to the poem as an epic, given the meter, length, and theme of the poem. Abbo himself does not classify it as such, referring to Vergil's *Eclogues*, not the *Aeneid*, when speaking in his prefatory letter about his inspiration for the work.

[58] As an example, see Wattenbach's remarks, saying that Abbo was 'ein gelehrter Pedant, der seine Dichtung in einem bis zur Univerständlichkeit gelehrten Latein schreib und ihr Glossen hinzufügte, um sie verständlich zu machen' (Wattenbach, Levison, and Löwe (eds.), *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen Mittelalter*, v: 581).

Forming the background to Abbo's poem are the persistent and destructive Viking incursions into France during the course of the ninth century.[59] The brief coastal raids at the turn of the century evolved into annual invasions along the coast of Frisia by 834–837, and into open warfare by 845, when Viking assaults along the Loire and the Seine became a frequent terror, Paris itself was besieged, Frankish prisoners were slaughtered, and large sums of money were exacted from Frankish nobles and churches.[60] The Annals of St.-Bertin record skirmishes and battles with groups of hundreds of Viking ships from 845–865.[61] By 879–880, the numbers of these northern invaders, most of whom were Danes (although many Frankish writers do not seem to have distinguished between the Danes and other Scandinavian peoples), had reached the thousands, perhaps drawn by rumors of internal dissension among Frankish nobility.[62] They burned and pillaged large areas of the countryside, taking captives, stealing food and valuables, and demanding tribute. Their success also brought about a change of tactics, as the Northmen began to construct fortifications for storing supplies, and for returning to between raids.[63]

Strategies for dealing with the invaders varied from leader to leader. Louis the Pious, in addition to improving defenses through the construction of ring fortresses, formed alliances with some Danish leaders, even handing over land in Frisia to one of these in hopes he would provide a buffer to future invaders.[64] Charles II ('The Bald')

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[59] For an overview of these events, I am indebted to the surveys offered by Nelson, 'The Frankish Kingdoms, 814–898: The West'; Fried, 'The Frankish Kingdoms, 817–911: The East and Middle Kingdoms'; and Coupland, 'The Vikings in Francia and Anglo-Saxon England to 911'; and Nelson, *Charles the Bald*. Older studies that remain valuable are Steenstrup, *Normannerne*; Dümmler, *Die Geschichte des ostfränkischen Reiches*, especially vol. 3; and Vogel, *Die Normannen*. An intriguing recent monograph focusing on the events of the late ninth century, and on Charles the Fat, is MacLean, *Kingship and Politics*.

[60] For Frisian events, see Waitz (ed.), *Annales Bertiniani, s.a.* 834, p. 14; Coupland, 'The Vikings in Francia', pp. 190–92. For the events of 845, see Smedt, Van Hooff, and Backer (eds.), *Translatio Sancti Germani Parisiensis*, 78–79 (*c.* 12); Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, pp. 151–54; and Nelson, 'The Frankish Kingdoms, 814–98', p. 128.

[61] Gillmor, 'War on the Rivers', 82–86; Coupland, "The Vikings in Francia," pp. 194–95.

[62] Von Simson (ed.), *Annales Vedastini, s.a.* 879, p. 44; Nelson, 'The Frankish Kingdoms, 814–898', p. 137.

[63] *Annales Bertiani*, s.a. 843, p. 29; Coupland, 'The Vikings in Francia', pp. 193–94. Similar events were happening in England at this time: see Thorpe (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, s.a.* 850–851.

[64] *Annales Bertinani*, s.a. 834, p. 39; Nelson, 'The Frankish Kingdoms, 814–898', p. 128.

formed similar alliances with several Vikings, receiving mixed results.[65] Military victories were also achieved, but never succeeded in fully repelling the foreign war bands.[66] A number of leaders arranged payments of monetary tributes, obtaining at least a temporary respite from the assaults.[67] Fortifications and defenses were also improved around certain cities and also on the water routes by a series of fortified bridges initiated by Charles the Bald.[68] But diplomacy, warfare, monetary payments, and fortifications all failed to halt the incursions, and in 885 the Vikings managed once again to sail up the Seine through Neustria to Paris itself, the centre of West Frankish power.

The ruler at the time was Charles the Fat, the youngest son of Louis the German, who, having been named king of the East Franks in 882 and king of the West Franks in 884, appeared to have unified the splintered empire.[69] However, Charles lacked strong support in the west, drawing most of his political power from Alemannia, and left much authority in the hands of Odo.[70] Charles' reputation seems to have suffered severely following several military decisions, if we may take the opinion of the annalist at Fulda as an indication of the general mood. At the battle with Vikings at Asselt[71] in 882,

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[65] For example, at the same time Charles was forming an alliance with the Viking Berno, another group of Northmen was ransoming the abbot of St-Denis at great cost (*Annales Bertiniani, s.a.* 858, p. 49; Nelson, Charles the Bald, p. 187). See also Charles' unfortunate alliance with Ragnar, documented in Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*, Waitz (ed.), ch. 21, p. 46; *Translatio Sancti Germani Parisiensis*, ch. 20, pp. 84–85, and ch. 30, pp. 91–93; Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, pp. 151–54, 158. and Coupland, 'The Frankish Tribute Payments to the Vikings and their Consequences'.

[66] Fried, 'The Frankish Kingdoms, 817–911', p. 157; and Coupland, 'The Vikings in Francia', p. 197. See also the rather pyrrhic victory won by the Franks at Angoulême, in Holder-Egger (ed.), *Annales Engolismenses, s.a.* 863, p. 486; and Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p. 202.

[67] Nelson, 'The Frankish Kingdoms, 814–898', p. 129; Coupland, 'The Vikings in Francia', pp. 197–98; and Coupland, 'The Frankish Tribute Payments', at 60–62, 65–68, and 70.

[68] See Gillmor, 'The Logistics of Fortified Bridge Building'; Gillmor, 'Charles the Bald's Fortified Bridge at Pîtres (Seine)'; Coupland, 'The Fortified Bridges of Charles the Bald'; and Coupland, 'The Vikings in Francia,' p. 198.

[69] See MacLean, *Kingship and Politics*; and Reuter, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages*, pp. 72–5 and 115–20;

[70] Odo (Fr. *Eudes*) was the oldest son of Robert the Strong, and of Rhenish, not Francian, ancestry. Upon the death of his father (while fighting Viking invaders near Angers) in 866, Charles the Bald had removed the honores he had granted Robert, and denied them to Odo and his brother Robert (later Robert I). He ascended to the throne upon the death of Charles the Fat in 888, an accession enabled partly by his heroics during the siege of Paris; he was crowned on 29 February, and he held the title until his death in 899, at which time Charles III ('the Simple') ascended to the throne. The most complete study of Odo remains that of Favre, *Eudes*, where Bavaria is discussed at pp. 88–92.

[71] Lat. *Aschloha*, a town near the river Maas, in the Netherlands.

Charles made peace with the enemy commander Godfried, who consented to be baptized. Charles proceeded to reward him with tribute and territory, much to the surprise of his own army, and even ordered capital punishment for those from his own force who tried to retaliate against the Northmen.[72] The king's inability to deal satisfactorily with the invaders, coupled with chronic health problems, contributed to his loss of support and eventual overthrow in December 887, a month before his death on 13 January 888 (mentioned at 2.441–42).[73]

The historical events of the poem stretch from November 885, with the arrival of the Danes at Paris, to the political uncertainty of 898. Many of the events that Abbo describes, although not all, can be corroborated in other historical sources; the Annals of St-Vaast are the most useful in this regard, followed by the *Chronicon* of Regino of Prüm.[74] For example, the collapse of the southern bridge (1.504) is mentioned by the St-Vaast annalist, with each version adding something to our perceptions.[75] The arrival of Heinrich, duke of Saxony, who comes to aid Paris (2.3–22), is noted by both the St-Vaast annalist and Regino, who elaborate upon what is, in Abbo's poem, a minor event.[76] Although Abbo does not give precise dates for events and the deaths of major figures such as Charles the Fat, Gozelin,[77] and Heinrich, a comparison of his poem with the historical sources shows that he presents, on the whole, an accurate chronology of events. The descriptions of those events, however, bear many marks of literary embellishment

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[72] Kurze (ed.), *Annales Fuldenses*, *s.a* 882, pp. 98–99. See Joranson, *Danegeld in France*, pp. 239–47, and Coupland's argument to the contrary, 'Frankish Tribute Payments'. See also Reuter, 'Plunder and Tribute'.

[73] Charles has often been noted for his health issues, which perhaps culminated in an episode of 'possession' (perhaps a seizure) in 873. The affair was documented by several annalists, including *Annales Fuldensis*, *s.a.* 873, pp. 77–78; *Annales Xantenses*, von Simson (ed.), *s.a.* 873, pp. 31–32; and *Annales Bertiniani*, *s.a.* 873, pp. 190–91.

[74] Von Simson (ed.), *Annales Vedastini*, *s.a.* 879, p. 44; Kurze (ed.), Regino of Prüm, *Chronicon*.

[75] Von Simson (ed.), *Annales Vedastini*, *s.a.* 886, p. 59.

[76] Von Simson (ed.), *Annales Vedastini*, *s.a.* 886, pp. 59–60, and Kurze (ed.), Regino, *Chronicon*, *s.a.* 887 [sic], pp. 125–26.

[77] Gozelin (Lat. *Gozelinus*, *Gozilinus*, *Gauzlinus*; Fr. *Gozlin*, *Gosselin*) was the bishop of Paris from 29 August 884 to his death on 16 April 886 (mentioned in the poem at 2.70–71). He was the son of Rorgon, count of Maine, and had been named abbot of St-Denis in 878. He first opposed, then supported, the reign of Louis III. His knowledge of the Danes was undoubtedly enhanced, albeit unpleasantly, when he had been captured by them in 876 after the Frankish military defeat at Andernach (*Annales Bertini s.a.* 879, pp. 216–17).

and heroic lionization.

Before the battle with the Danes has been engaged, Abbo takes a moment to tenderly acknowledge the importance and geographical location of the Seine, the river that is both protector of Paris, yet which is soon to be the vehicle of its undoing:

> Quisque cupiscit opes Francorum, te veneratur,
> Insula te gaudet, fluvius sua fert tibi giro
> Brachia, complexo muros, mulcentia circum
> Dextra tui pontes habitant tentoria limfae
> Levaque claudentes; horum hinc inde tutrices
> Cis urbem speculare falas, citra quoque flumen.[78] (14–19)

The city of Paris lies within the river (*medio Sequanae recubans*, 1.10), and the Seine embraces and protects its walls; yet, within a few lines, the protective waterway has become the conduit for the enemy to storm the city:

> Quis adeo fartus Sequanae gurges fuit altus
> Usque duas modicumque super leugas fugiendo,
> Ut mirareris, fluvius cui se daret antro,
> Nil parens.[79] (1.31–4)

Similar to what we shall see the poet of *The Battle of Maldon* attempt, Abbo tried to put a heroic stamp upon contemporary events. Abbo makes remarks at 1.25–6 and 1.593–6, to the extent that he was himself an eyewitness to the siege, which has suggested to historians that he offers accurate descriptions of fights, strategies, and war equipment (the Frankish siege engines, for example), and not stylized images of predatory Vikings.[80] I would argue, however, that he was inclined to read the events of siege of Paris with an eye to how they might fit into a narrative framework based upon heroic role models in poems such as the *Aeneid*, and by extension, the more backward-looking and perhaps more fictionalized heroic episodes contained in a poem such as the *Paderborn Epic*. Between the extremes of *Judith* or the *Paderborn Epic*, with their well-

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[78] 'Whoever desires the riches of the Franks, venerates you, rejoices in you, island, the river reaches out her arms to you in a circle, in embrace she holds your walls, around your bridges her right and left dwell, enveloping the tents of river water; here and there behold their sheltering scaffolds, on this side the city, on that the stream'.

[79] 'The Seine's deep surge was packed so full with ships like these—extending two miles distance and a little more—that you would wonder where the river had gone, unseen into a cave'.

[80] See Gillmor, 'The Introduction of the Traction Trebuchet'.

defined heroes, and Lucan's *Bellum civile*, which may have none, Abbo gives every indication during the *Bella Parisiacae urbis* of being in search of a sacrificial hero to place at his center.

The poem opens with the language of sacrifice: the poet Abbo asks the city of Paris to describe the 'gift' (*munus*) which the Danes 'poured out' (*libavit*) for it (20–1). The language is sacrificial and liturgical in nature, and carries reminiscences of the sacrifice of the Mass; yet the tone is clearly ironic here, for this sacrifice is made by the *soboles Plutonis amica* (loyal heir to Pluto). As in the 'Battle of Fontenoy', the opening scene is marked by its strong sense of the world inverted, nature topsy-turvy. In that poem, it was not the day of the Sabbath, but the day of Saturn which witnessed the Franks shed the blood of brothers in their civil conflict; in Abbo, not a priest, but a spawn of devils, have brought a gift and sacrifice for Paris. The threat must be met by an hero equal to it: a 'presul domini et dulcissimus heros' and *benignus pastor*, Gozlinus, bishop of Paris (22–3). The deeds of this thrice-named hero will be reported by an eyewitness, according to a standard topos of warfare. Gozelin, the nourishing (*alebat*) pastor, meets the Danish devils at the city gates. The task of the initial parley with Sigefrid falls to him. In case we have missed the reference to sacrifice, Abbo hearkens back to it, immediately after agreeing to tell the story of the defense of the city:

> Haec tibi nempe litaverunt libamina saevi:
> Septies aerias centum praeter juniores
> Quamplures numero naves numerante carentes,
> (Extat eas moris vulgo barcas resonare) (1.27–30)

Connected by alliteration (*litaverunt libamina*) and alliteration with polyptoton (*numero naves numerante*), Abbo underscores the dramatic entrance at this point of the invaders with their 'offerings' for the city.

The focus remains the longest upon the figure of Odo, *rex* [...] *futurus* (1.45), who was also for Paris 'tutor, regni venturus altor' (1.46).[81] Yet Abbo also dwells upon the actions of abbot Ebolus (at 1.108–10, 1.244, 1.601–17, 2.166–86, 2.204, 2.399–409, and 2.436–8), Gozelin (at 1.36–61 and 1.320–6), and numerous other secular figures who come and go throughout the poem, such as the Saxon leader Heinrich, who enters the

[81] Odo was the 'protector [of Paris], to become the nourisher of the kingdom'.

poem with the dawn at the beginning of Book Two, and accomplishes noble deeds of life and death, including a daring night raid of Danish horses (2.3–22), only to meet a rather ignoble death (at 2.217–18) in a pit-trap.[82] Charles the Fat makes several appearances as well (including a skirmish with Danes at 1.321–4), before his own death is reported rather enigmatically by Abbo at (2.442–3), who emphasizes the loss of reputation and status as well as his death.[83] His death opens the scene for Odo's coronation, which Abbo vigorously presents as politically unifying for the Franks:

> Laetus Odo regis nomen regni quoque numen,
> Francorum populo gratante faventeque multo
> Ilicet, atque manus sceptrum, diademaque vertex.
> Francia laetatur, quamvis is Nustricus esset,
> Nam nullum similem sibimet genitum reperire
> Nec quia dux illi Burgundia defuit, ejus
> Nustria ad insignis nati concurrit honorem.
> Sic uno ternum congaudet ovamine regnum.[84] (2.444–51)

That Odo represents unity, the proper role of a hero and leader against chaos, is further underscored by his first act as king: to quell the only region of Francia who seems to dissent with his election, Aquitaine, before hastily returning to Paris, where the Danes still rampage, and where Charles the Fat had left the business of war unfinished:

> Praeterea astutos petiit praeceps Aquitanos;
> Mox sibi subjectis, Francorum regna revisit,
> Moenia Meldis adhuc Danis stipantibus urbis.[85]

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[82] Heinrich was a duke of Saxony and military leader under Louis the Younger, king of the East Franks. His arrival in aid of Paris is discussed in *Annales Vedastini*, *s.a.* 886, pp. 59–60. His death occurred on 28 August 886, according to see Regino of Prüm, who provides a more detailed account of his demise in his *Chronicon*, *s.a.* 887 [sic], pp. 125–26.

[83] 'Interea Karolus, regno vita quoque nudus, / Viscera Opis divae conplectitur abdita tristis' ('And meanwhile Charles, deprived of empire and of life, / Embraced the hidden depths of Ops, divine and sad'). Charles the Fat died on 13 January 888. Ops was the Roman goddess of abundance and plenty, and the wife of Saturn.

[84] 'Then Odo gladly took the name of king, the realm's majesty; the many Franks rejoiced and gave support at once. His hand grasped sceptre and his head the crown. All France rejoices, though he came from Neustria, for they could find no human born that was his like. Burgundy was there, because he was their duke, and Neustria concurred in honour of its son'. On Odo's coronation, see Favre, *Eudes, comte de Paris*, pp. 88–92.

[85] 'He quickly sought the crafty men of Aquitaine; with these now tamed, he went back to his Frankish realms, where Danes still crowded round the city walls of Meaux'. Waquet notes the Vikings did not besiege Meaux until 14 June 888 (*Abbon*, p. 98, n. 2 and p. 101, n. 5).

One of the most memorable scenes in the poem is also arguably the climax of Book One, and features the death of twelve Franks who are defending one of the towers of Paris. The deaths of these men at Danish hands are presented definitively as a type of martyrdom ('Martyrii palmam sumunt caramque coronam', 1.564); and it is worth comparing the heroic and self-sacrificial declaration of one of them, named Herveus, captured by the Danes in hopes of a ransom, with those made in *The Battle of Maldon* by the remaining contingent of Anglo-Saxons left following the flight of the cowards (*Maldon*, lines 185–97). Abbo describes how an act of God—flooding from the swollen banks of the Seine—isolates one of the defensive towers from the rest of the city, and this now-vulnerable section is besieged by Danes:

> Proh dolor! en medius cecidit pons nocte silenti,
> Obsitus alluviis tumida bachantibus ira.
> Nam sparsim Sequana circumfudit sua regna,
> Exuviisque suis obtexerat aequora campum.
> Australis gestabat eum vertex, sed et arcem
> Quae tellure manet Sancti fundata boati.
> Urbis inherebant dextris, alter sed et altri.
> Mane quidem surgente Dani surgunt simul acres,
> Atque rates subeunt, armis onerant clipeisque,
> Transque natant Sequanam, turrim cinguntque misellam.
> Multa dabant illi densis certamina telis. [...]
> Dumque volunt, cives nequeunt succurrere turri
> Atque viris bello deferre juvamen anhelis,
> Quos valide numero bellantes sub duodeno
> Rumfea vel formido Danum non terruit umquam.[86] (1.504–14, 20–3)

The *Annales Vedastini, s.a.* 886, reports a complementary version of events, emphasizing the inability of those within the city to aid the men trapped while repairing the tower, giving the date as 6 February. Abbo lists their names (and notes their killing of the enemy) before telling the story itself, one of a war 'difficult to describe' (lines 1.524–8). Since the Franks cannot be defeated through siege tactics, the 'black-hearted' Danes

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[86] 'In deep of night, alas, the bridge's middle fell, pushed under by the floods that raged with swollen wrath: for everywhere the Seine had spread its realms around, and with its waters covered up the level plains. The southern branch held up the bridge and tower, which stands established on the land of that oft called-on saint, and on the city's right-hand side stood tower and bridge. And when the dawn arose, the eager Danes rose too, got into boats, and loaded them with arms and shields, and sailed across the Seine, surrounding that sad tower, and many salvoes did they launch with showering spears. [...] And though they want to, our citizens can not bring aid to the tower or to the men that gasp in war. These men resisted valiantly, they numbered twelve, They were not terrified by sword or fear of Danes'.

adopt the strategy of setting fire to the tower, inspiring a touching gesture that links the *Bella* to other heroic poems:

> Hi quoniam nequeunt animis curvarier atris,
> Aestibus accingunt carpentum arentibus arcis
> Ante fores gurdi miserandae gramine plenum;
> Fulmineisque velut Foebo sub rura procellis
> Nox vacua celi specie confunditur alta,
> Fas nulli arridente suum contemnere doma—
> Haud secus occuluit fumus speculam catapultis
> Inmersis aliquantisper fervore tonante.
> Quisque rogi proprios flatus ne clade perirent
> Accipitres loris permisit abire solutis [...][87] (1.529–38)

'Quisque rogi proprios flatus ne clade perirent / Accipitres loris permisit abire solutis' (1.537–8): lest their hawks die in the flames, each man allowed their own to fly free. It is worth recalling here how one of the capitularies of Charlemagne forbids the possession of hawks and falcons to 'servants of God':

> *Ut servi Dei venationes non exerceant.* Omnibus servis Dei venationes et silvaticas vagationes cum canibus et ut accipitres et falcones non habeant, interdicimus.[88]

As the possession of a hawk was a mark of someone not in monastic orders, and was rather to be a mark of aristocracy, this heroic flourish establishes the secular position and rank of the twelve men in the tower, and also signals their preparation for combat; despite the seemingly unpromising circumstances for the display of martial prowess (trapped within a burning tower), Abbo's language recalls lines 8–9 from *The Battle of Maldon*:

> he let him þa of handon leofne fleogan,
> hafoc wið þæs holtes, and to þære hilde stop.[89]

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[87] 'Since these twelve can't be bowed by evil-hearted Danes, these cowards load a wagon full of hay, aflame And dry, before the gates of our poor citadel. Just as deep country night is stirred by thunderclaps by Phoebus sent, and all the heaven's beauty gone, and none dare smile and give no thought for his own home—just so the smoke obscured the watchtower and submerged somewhat the catapults in thunder and in fire. Then each allowed his hawks to fly, its leashes loosed, lest they should die and perish in the pyre's breath.'

[88] *Capitularium* 3.125. Similar statements are made by Rather of Verona, *De contemptu canonum*, 1.10, and by Odo of Cluny, who approves of Gerald's rejection of hawing and other secular pursuits (in *De vita S. Geraldi Auriliacensis comitis*, 1.4).

[89] 'He let his beloved hawk fly from his hand to the woods, then he stepped forward to the fight'.

Advancing from the meager heroic action available to them inside the walls, the Frankish soldiers step forward to do battle with the Danes upon the bridge—a not-uncommon location for a test of strength between two opposing groups of soldiers. Yet the reality of warfare continually intrudes upon the more heroic aspects of Abbo's narrative; he indicates that the combat was aborted through the guile of the Danes, who may have promised the Franks either safe passage to a stable place on the bank, or perhaps safe return to the homes in exchange for access to the bridge.[90]

Dimittitur illa
Militibus, pontis subeunt extrema relicta.
Prelia constituunt illic nova sevaque saevis,
Donec ad alta caput flexit Phoebus vada ponti.
Pila dabat rupesque simul celeresque cateias
Plebs inimica Deo, pransura Plutonis in urna;
Sed quia conflictus talis superare nequibat
Militibus clamare: Fidem cepit, sed inanem,
Ad nostram properare, viri, nolite timere!
Pro dolor! alloquiis sese credunt male finctis,
Sperantes praecio redimi potuisse sub amplo;
Non alias vere caperentur luce sub illa,
Heu, nudi gladium subeunt gentis truculentae,
Et coelo mittunt animas livore fluente;
Martyrii palmam sumunt caramque coronam.[91] (1.550–64)

This treacherous gesture toward the Frankish soldiers would seem to present itself as an inverted version of the equivalent scene in *Maldon*, when Byrhtnoth famously concedes the causeway to the Danes:

Þa se eorl ongan for his ofermode
alyfan landes to fela laþere ðeode;
ongan ceallian þa ofer cald wæter
Byrhtelmes bearn (beornas gehlyston):
'Nu eow is gerymed: gað ricene to us
guman to guþe. God ana wat

[90] See also the episodes of guile compiled by Pulsiano, '"Danish Men's Words"'.

[91] 'The soldiers yield the tower, and climb the bridge's ends that still remain. They there renew grim battles with grim enemies, until Phoebus turns his head upon the ocean's deeps. God's foes, the Danes, hurled spears and rocks and speedy darts as well, but later they would dine in Pluto's pot! But since the conflict could not overcome such men, the Danes called out: "Men, do not hesitate to come in haste to trust in us!" (though empty was this trust). Alas, they put their trust in these feigned blandishments, in hope they could be ransomed for a handsome price—not otherwise would they be captured on that day. Unarmed, alas, they faced the sword of savage Danes and sent their souls to heaven, as their red blood flowed: they won the palm and precious crown of martyrdom.'

hwa þære wælstowe wealdan mote.'[92] (89–95)

'Martyrii palmam sumunt caramque coronam': the twelve inherit the palm of martyrdom, but one man is singled out for special glory. The warrior Herveus is given a chance to make a speech:

> Mox reliquis ut visus adest gentilibus Erveus,
> Rex, quoniam facie splendens formaque venustus,
> Creditur, atque sui donis grassante tuetur;
> Protenus intuitu fuso cernendo sodales
> Dilectos plecti, tamquam leo sanguine viso
> Ipse furit, conansque manus vitare tenentum,
> Undique vi voluit semet ceu nexus, ut arma
> Sumeret, ulcisci proprios socialeque vulnus;
> Obtentuque carens ipso, sic insuperata
> Limphantes potuit qua voce tonavit in aures:
> 'Cedite me tensa cervice, pecunia prorsus
> Nulla meam tractet vitam, morientibus istis!
> Vivere quid sinitis? Frustratur vestra cupido!'
> Quae lux haud ejus, micuit sed crastina flatu.[93]

Abbo's language clearly links the death of Herveus to the martyr tradition, as were his companions linked; more than that, he is allowed to speak as a single warrior unwilling to outlive his companions. His splendid appearance ('facie splendens formaque venustus') sets him apart from the others, but he chooses to die with them rather than be singled out to live 'for the many', which would be a perversion of heroic sacrifice.

The passage celebrating Odo's victory at Montfaucon on June 24, 888 is the most extended set-piece featuring a heroic Odo (2.491–529). The passage describes how Odo defeated 19,000 'pagans' at Montfaucon on the feast day of John the Baptist, the most significant successes of the new, post-Carolingian, age. The later, tenth-century

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[92] 'Then the earl began, because of his pride, to allow too much land to the loathsome people; then he, the son of Byrhthelm, began to call over the cold water—warriors listened: "Now a way has been made for you: men, advance in battle quickly against us. God alone knows who will control the battlefield"': *Battle of Maldon*, Scragg (ed.).

[93] 'When, by the other pagans, Herveus is seen, he is thought to be a king, resplendent and so fair, and is taken captive in the hopes of a ransom. He turns his gaze afield; his dear companions he sees sore pressed, and, like a lion seeing blood, he rages, trying to escape his captor's hands. With force he twists himself around, as if he's bound, to take up arms in vengeance for the common wound. He fails, but with undaunted voice, as best he could, he thundered in their maddened ears: "My neck is stretched—strike on! No money will henceforth make bargains for my life while my dear friends lie dead. Why do you allow me life? Your greed is thwarted now!" Not this day but the next gleamed at his final breath.'

chronicler Richer of Rheims does not relate to us any information concerning Montfaucon, but he does paint somewhat a picture of Odo exhorting his men, as Byrhtnoth did, only at the later battle of Montpensier, in 892.[94] 'Decus pro patria mori', Odo declares, 'egregiumque pro christianorum defensione corpora morti dare, multis sermonibus'.[95] Now, at the earlier battle, trouble finds Odo unexpectedly: while out hunting hares with dogs, he learns from the mouth of a young man that the enemy was near:

> Expediamus abhinc dignos Odone triumphos.
> Falconem vocitant equitum quo millia vicit
> Dena novemque dehinc Montem peditumque profana.
> Hoc illi vicibus peperit natale tropheum
> Lux praecursoris Domini catecasta Johannis.
> Quippe latus utrimque viris comptus clipeatis
> Mille, legebat iter, quando tyronis ab ore
> Venantis canibus lepores nemorosa per arva
> Panditur adventare aequites per millia sevos.
> Id scutumque simul recipit, colloque pependit;
> Armaque cum sociis stringit, penetrans inopina
> Praelia. Solamen celeste petit, rapit atque
> Viscera, deponunt alii clipeos, animasque;
> Terga parant reliqui regalibus in quibus armis
> Ex pueris libuit ternis requiescere Odonis.[96] (2.491–505)

Abbo depicts King Odo as both musterer and leader of men ('Armaque cum sociis stringit, penetrans inopina / Praelia', 2.501–2), as both God-fearing Christian and bloodthirsty warrior to be feared ('Solamen celeste petit, rapit atque / Viscera, deponunt alii clipeos, animasque', 2.502–3); the colorful *viscera* evoking Sedulius ('per alternos totiens disperserat aegros /Viros in unius progressus viscera fudit', *Carmen Paschale*, 3.192–3), and especially Fortunatus (see *Vita sancti Martini*, 1.107 and 1.262). His

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[94] Pertz (ed.), *Annales chronica et historiae aevi Saxonici*, MGH SS, pp. 571–2; newly-edited by Hoffman (ed.), *Historia*.

[95] Pertz (ed.), *Annales chronica et historiae aevi Saxonici*, *c.* 8, p. 571.

[96] 'And now let's tell the triumphs worthy of the king. He overcame ten thousand pagan knights and then nine thousand, at what they name as Falcon's Mount. That unique day of John, precursor of our Lord, produced in turn that birthday triumph for the king. Adorned on every side—a thousand shielded men at hand—he made his way, when from a tiro's mouth (he was pursuing hares with dogs in woody fields) came news: in thousands, cruel horsemen now drew near. He got the news and took his shield, which he slung round his neck; he gathered arms and men, and fell into an unexpected melee. He sought God's help and spilled their guts; the others rendered up both shields and lives. The rest turned tail at regal arms, in which it pleased three of the boys of Odo's troop to clothe themselves.'

bravery is highlighted by his eagerness to serve as lookout for his own men; unlike Beowulf's commands to the retainers, Odo advises his followers to come at once if they should hear a noise:

> Tunc dixit propriis: 'Istos fortasse secuntur
> Ast alii, idcirco pariter statum glomerate;
> Si fuerit verbum super hoc, ne differat ullus!'
> Adjecit: 'Subeam tumulum specularier ipse;
> Si vos perculerit clangor, nullum mora vincat!'[97] (2.506–10)

Yet it is this next part of the poem that will strike many readers as familiar; Odo, having climbed the hill, immediately sights the enemy approaching. He brandishes his *cornu*, or *tuba*, his 'horn', and lets sound a terrifying blast befitting a king. Abbo notes that

> Cornu suum poscens, scopulum scandens, videt ecce
> Armisonos lento pedites incedere gressu;
> Tunc tuba cujus ab ore boans, mox omnia late
> Excitat, anfractusque per astra per arva volabant,
> Omnibus atque modis solido fractoque ciebat.
> Omne nemus responsa dabat voci famulando,
> It tuba cum celeri bombo per cuncta elementa.
> Nil mirum, quoniam regale caput tonat, inquam.[98] (2.511–18)

> Ergo sui infrenant currus, saltu quoque scandunt,
> Allofilum in medium migrant, unusque securis
> Vibratu pepulit, conum de vertice regis
> In humeros lapsum; Domini verum quia christum
> Tundere praesumpsit, ventum de pectore jecit
> Hospite continuo jaculator principis ense.
> Pugna adolet, ponunt animas cum sanguine gurdi;
> Infames traxere fugam, primasque tropheum
> Milia tot Foebo stravit spectante sub uno
> Perpete tum gladio, donec a finibus illos
> Francorum sequitur, prohibet.[99]

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[97] 'He then said to his men: "Perhaps some more will come behind, so gather yourselves and let us make a stand. If any word comes after this, let none delay." And then: "I'll climb the mount myself to spy the land: if you hear any noise, delay should hinder noone!"'

[98] 'He called for his horn and climbed the hill and, lo, he saw some footmen come, who jangled in their slow approach. Then from his mouth the trumpet blared and far and wide roused everything. Its blasts flew through the fields and stars; with every note, both long and short, it called for war. Then all the woods replied, obeying Odo's voice; the trumpet's speedy boom goes through all elements—no wonder, since, I say, it was a regal blast!'

The martial influence and intrusion of holy men and saints adds a further dimension to Abbo's depiction of heroic sacrifice. Ebolus, Gozelin, and most importantly St Germain himself all play significant roles in the defense of the city, and some notably violent, even grotesque acts are ascribed to them. Ebolus' martial activity in defense of Paris and in attacking the Danes places him squarely in the category of warrior-cleric occupied notably by figures such as the Anglo-Saxon abbot Turketil, and Archbishop Turpin from the Middle English *Sege of Melayne*. His activities as a warrior cleric are first described at 1.108–10, in an intentional comparison with the secular hero Odo ('Fortis Odo innumeros tutudit. Sed quis fuit alter?', 1.107):

> Alter Ebolus huic socius fuit aequiperansque;
> Septenos una potuit terebrare sagitta,
> Quos ludens alios jussit praebere quoquinae.[100]

Not only is Ebolus culpable of death-by-archery, but he arguably deepens his guilt through his jest, making an irreverent remark belonging to the category of 'kitchen humor'.[101] Ebolus is responsible for a daring and violent act of subterfuge: with Odo away on business for King Charles the Fat, the abbot orders six men to disguise themselves in Danish clothing, enter the enemy camp by night, and slay six Danes before stealing a ship:

> Rex igitur venturus Odo transmittitur inde
> Francorum Karolo supra-fato basileo,
> Quatinus auxilio celeri succurreret urbi.
> Post nullus procerum remanet nisi Martius abba,
> Sepe supra cujus memoratio scripta relucet.
> Ipse aequites ex more Danum vestire coegit

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[99] 'And so they bridle steeds and mount them with a leap and charge into the strangers' midst; a Dane, with one slash of his axe, cut off the crest right from the royal head; it fell upon his arms. Because he dared to strike the Lord's annointed, Odo's spearsman, with his sword, straightway expelled his life from out its host, his breast. The battle grows; those fools lay down their lives and blood; the scoundrels took to flight; our leader took the prize. He slew so many thousands in just one day's light with constant sword, pursuing them from France's bounds, and kept them out.'

[100] 'The other was his comrade Ebolus, who matched his deeds. With just one arrow he could skewer seven; the rest, in jest, he delegated kitchenward'.

[101] Curtius, *European Literature*, pp. 431–5; Abbo is mentioned at 432. See also the essays collected in Guidot (ed.), *Burlesque et dérision*; Halsall (ed.), *Humour, History and Politics*; and finally Mora, 'Des parodies de Sedulius Scottus'.

> Sex solos, redeunte die quadam, super arva
> Transque volant illi Sequanam camposque peragrant.
> Ex variis plenos armis sevoque sopore
> Normannosque necant totidem fuerant quot et ipsi.
> Nascitur hinc strepitus castris; horum resonante
> Voce, truces carpunt clipeos nostrique carinam.[102] (2.163–74)

The act of disguise in enemy clothes is repeated later on during the battle at Montfaucon (2.504–5); there, the choice of boys as the disguisers plays up the shame of the defeat. This strategem (a type of *dolus*) may owe something to *Aeneid* 2.389–90, when Aeneas and other Trojans put on Greek dress following the advice of Coroebus (*Dolus an virtus, quis in hoste requirat?*).[103] Reliance upon such deception, a typically Greek approach, would seem to be the opposite of heroic action. In the *Aeneas*, the almost-immediate assault upon Aeneas by his own people underlines the problems as well as the shame in disguise. Yet, this episode with Ebolus and the Franks also is reminiscent of two others from classical epic, ones featuring personages more exemplary in their heroic stature, and also one more descriptive of sacrifice: the episode of Nisus and Euryalus (*Aeneid* 9.176–449), and the Homeric model upon which Vergil based his story, Book 10 of the *Iliad*, the so-called *Doloneia*. In Homer's version, Odysseus and Diomedes successfully complete a night raid upon the Trojan camp, killing a number of Trojans while they sleep, and stealing horses.[104] Vergil supplants the Homeric text through inverting the heroic outcome, and by leaning heavily upon tragedy instead.[105] In the *Aeneid*, Nisus and Euryalus successfully enter the Rutulian camp and slaughter eleven men while drunk and sleeping; perhaps because they stop to plunder some of the choicest objects of the dead, they end up caught and slain by their Rutulian captors. Abbo's version avoids the tragic

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[102] 'And therefore Odo, future king, was sent from there to Charles, the emperor of France, who is named above, that he might bring the city swift and ready aid. No noble save the warlike abbot then remained— his name shines often in my writings up above. When dawn returned across the fields, he made just six knights disguise themselves in Danish dress. They fly across the Seine and ride across the fields that were filled full of various arms and fatal sleep, and killed as many Norsemen as they were themselves. A roar arises in the camp, and shouts resound; the cruel Danes grab their shields and our men seize the ship'.

[103] See Knox, 'Serpent and the Flame', 392.

[104] *Iliad* 10, sometimes known as the *Doloneia*.

[105] See the general discussions by Hardie, *Virgil: Book IX*, pp. 23–34; and Horsfall, *Companion*, pp. 170–8. See also Casali, 'Nisus and Euryalus'; Fitzgerald, 'Nisus and Euryalus'; and Pavlock, 'Epic and Tragedy'.

outcome Vergil chose, and remains a triumphant success, a tribute to the resourcefulness of the Franks, and glorying in the slaughter of the Danish enemy.

Not content with directing forays across enemy lines, Ebolus resumes an active role in the fighting, in a peculiarly pastoral role: he is stirred into action by the theft of cattle by the Danes.

> Nostra Dionisii tondebant littora sancti
> Pecora, quae duxere sibi crebro speculata;
> Verum illis Ebolus iugiter fuit obvius abba,
> Qui quorum comitem quadam stravit vice telo;
> Unde Dani linquunt ripam, referuntque cadaver.
> Mox Ebolus senos equites dimisit ab arce, 180
> Quattuor hi ternosque necant certamine diro.
> Nocte quidem cives crebrius pecorum sub opaca
> Custodes adeunt, quosdamque fugant, aliosque
> Attribuunt jugulis, hoc egeruntque frequenter;
> Indicioque tulere Danos urbi sine flatu
> Atque simul vivos, ut sic credi potuissent.[106] (2.175–86)

The grisly trophies brought back by the Franks, perhaps at the direction or at least implicit approval of the abbot, strike another dissonant chord in the inventory of warlike action undertaken by religious figures in the *Bella Parisiacae urbis.*

THE ANXIETY OF SACRIFICE IN *THE BATTLE OF MALDON*

The generic similarities between the Old English *Battle of Maldon* and Abbo's *Bella Parisiacae urbis* have recently been examined by Paul Szarmach, who argues for a '(sub-) genre' of early medieval poetry, comprising at least these two poems and the Old High German *Ludwigslied,* and which he terms the 'literature of Christian-Viking conflict'.[107] Characteristics of this genre would include 'a moral framework within which

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[106] 'Our cattle grazed along the shores of Saint-Denis; once spotted, [the Norsemen] often took them for themselves. But Abbot Ebolus stood ever in their way, and with his spear [*telum*] he once laid low their leading earl, and so the Danes gave up the shore and took the corpse. Then Ebolus dispatched six horsemen from out of the tower, and in a fierce fight they slew twelve. In dark of night the citizens would very often reach the cattle's guards, and some they put to flight; the rest of them they put to sword—they did this frequently. Then, as a sign, they brought the lifeless Danes to town, and living ones as well, so that they would be believed'.

[107] Szarmach, 'The (Sub-)Genre', p. 61. He also proposes that, from an Anglo-Saxon perspective, one would be inclined to include Wulfstan's *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*; presumably, *The Battle of Brunanburh*

the supernatural operates, the positive depiction of *aristeia*, the memorialization of Christian heroes, the circumscribed role of the Vikings, a flexible formal structure that supports the thematic content of the poem and its general elements'.[108] Only the first two characteristics Szarmach mentions will concern me here: the notion that early medieval war poetry requires a moral framework to make sense of violence (whether in defeat or in victory), and the claim that the purpose of the *aristeia* in these works is important not just for the characterization of the hero, but also for the characterization of violence itself. Szarmach suggests that the 'Christian-Viking encounter is, if anything, a moral event requiring a moral explanation'.[109] I would counter that instead such encounters required a *poetic* explanation, one that was rooted in the heroic acts of the poem's central characters. With this accepted, readers could therefore view *The Battle of Maldon* as a poetic text that 'presents an opportunity to examine the points of intersection between the Old English literary conventions of the heroic ethos and the events of "real life" in an occasional poem which is both a polished work of literature and a memorial of an historical event'.[110] It is through such a lens that I wish to examine scenes of sacrifice in *The Battle of Maldon.*[111]

Although the date of the poem's composition remains a vexing issue, the majority view today is that it was composed soon after the battle, but at the distance of enough time to allow for interpretations and judgments concerning the actions of Byrhtnoth to have formed.[112] The poem should not be looked to for history, precisely, concerning specific events narrated in an unbiased manner by an eyewitness observer of them, but rather for its narrative attitude, its attempt to interpret the violence and, specifically, the defeat, but also to offer a reading of the actions of the men involved. The historical

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would fall into this category (being quite similar in some ways to *Ludwigslied*), and perhaps also the Latin and Old English versions of the death of St Edmund.

[108] Szarmach, 'The (Sub-)Genre', p. 58.

[109] Szarmach, 'The (Sub-)Genre', p. 59.

[110] O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'Heroic Values', p. 117.

[111] The latest edition is Scragg (ed.), *Battle of Maldon*, with accompanying essays on the poem and its background.

[112] Proponents of dating the poem as 'roughly contemporary' with the events it describes are numerous, including all of its editors. McKinnell's claim of 'about 1020 at the earliest' ('On the Date') has not met with wide approval. Clark, '*The Battle of Maldon*', and Blake, 'Genesis', similarly suggest a late date.

significance of the English military loss to the Vikings is unclear,[113] but, whether the battle was of great or small import tactically, it is important to note that the poet of *Maldon* seems to have interpreted the defeat of Christians by Vikings on 10 or 11 August 991[114] as having a broader moral significance, representing, perhaps, the anger of God against a sinful people. However one viewed the broader context, the 'dramatic problem which the *Maldon*-poet had to treat was the simple and well-known fact that the English lost [...]. Virtue was found in the necessity when the *Maldon*-poet chose for his commemoration a heroic idiom pressed to its extreme. Its austerity and remoteness from the realities of tenth-century English military obligation provided a model of nobility in defeat, though there may be some irony for us in the poet's choice of idiom—the suicidal military virtues ascribed to the English may more nearly have been those of their opponents'.[115]

Any sense of opprobrium for Byrhtnoth must return to the interpretation of the word *ofermod* (89b), a word or concept that has proven notoriously difficult to interpret. Helmut Gneuss has sifted the many prior attempts to offer a definition of *ofermod*, and has concluded that 'pernicious pride' is the meaning best suggested by the word's appearance as a noun twice in Old English poetry (*Genesis B*, line 272, referring to Satan, and in *Institutes of Polity* 130), and numerous times as an adjective meaning 'proud', and used as a synonym for Latin *superbus* ('proud').[116] That the word is likely to be therefore pejorative, rather than positive, encourages readers to detect disapproval of Byrhtnoth on the poet's part. This 'disparagement of Byrhtnoth's actions'[117] comes following the Byrhtnoth's decision to allow the Vikings to cross over a narrow causeway, which had been ably defended by a small handful of English warriors. Seeing that single-combat with the English across the causeway would be difficult, the 'hateful visitors' (*lathe*

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[113] Scragg suggests (contra scholars such as Dobbie, *Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, p. xxix) that the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* entry for 991 CDEF (993 in the A-version) implies that Maldon was a 'turning-point' in Æthelred's defense of England. Eric John has concurred with this general belief: see his comments on the poem in Campbell (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxons*, p. 198 (the battle was felt to be 'a national, not a local, affair').

[114] Dating implied via Byrhtnoth's obit recorded in the Ely and Winchester monastic calendars.

[115] O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'Heroic Values', p. 123.

[116] Gneuss, '*Battle of Maldon* 89'.

[117] Scragg (ed.), *Battle of Maldon*, p. 74 n. 89.

gystas) begin to 'use guile' (*lytegian*), and ask for passage across the causeway in order to do battle in greater numbers (84–8).

> Þa se eorl ongan for his ofermode
> alyfan landes to fela laþere ðeode;
> ongan ceallian þa ofer cald wæter
> Byrhtelmes bearn (beornas gehlyston):
> 'Nu eow is gerymed: gað ricene to us
> guman to guþe. God ana wat
> hwa þære wælstowe wealdan mote.'[118] (89–95)

The poet had previously indicated that the warriors of both sides found the waiting tedious: 'too long it seemed to them until they might wield spears together' ('To lang hit him þuhte / hwænne hi togædere garas beron', 66–7). Now, Byrhtnoth decides to allow the enemy passage in order that the battle might be joined, and this is done following the crossing of the causeway. We have seen Byrhtnoth organize the shield-wall of defense, the beasts of battle circle; Wulfmær has fallen, *mid billum wearð* [...] *swiðe forheawen.* Edward has slain one of the Vikings. Byrhtnoth encourages the 'steadfast' ones who have not fallen, the valiant ones (*stiðhicgende*) who have stood firm, their minds focused on the battle (a concept the poet repeats in lines 123 and 128, once framed as an observation, the other as Byrhtnoth's exhortation). Lines 130–84 encompass the central *aristeia* of the poem, nearly the center of the 325-line poem as we now possess it: now Byrhtnoth is himself confronted with combat for the first time in the poem.

Readers of *Maldon* have been largely in agreement that the poem seems to be making a statement about social order and cohesion in a time of the greatest duress, although the interpretations of what precisely that statement is have been thankfully and refreshingly diverse. The purpose of *Maldon*, and the reason for its composition, has remained continuously thorny. Both Scragg and Irving have suggested that the poem's origins owe something to the close relationship between Byrhtnoth and the monastic house of Ely, for it was these brothers who kept alive the memory of the Ealdorman of Essex.[119] According to this reading, the climax of the poem lies in the flight of the

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[118] 'Then the earl began, because of his pride, to allow too much land to the loathsome people; then he, the son of Byrhthelm, began to call over the cold water—warriors listened: "Now a way has been made for you: men, advance in battle quickly against us. God alone knows who will control the battlefield"'.

[119] Scragg (ed.), *Battle of Maldon*, and Irving, 'Heroic Style', pp. 351–2.

cowards from the front, and the purpose of the poet is to show how disloyalty on the level of the individual leads in a direct line to the failure of the group, and, in wartime, the loss of the battle. The failure of the single man to offer up himself, the one sacrificed for the greater good of the many, results in large-scale destruction and dishonor. Anderson, too, reads *Maldon* as an evocation of the glories adherent to self-sacrifice, for *The Battle of Maldon* is 'a heroic poem about loyalty which finds its expression in suicidal fighting in contrast to defection from battle'.[120]

Fred Robinson proposes that the sacrificial nexus of words and deeds so central to *The Battle of Maldon* represents an Anglo-Saxon commitment to the concept of loyalty in the face of 'cosmic anxiety'. Here, he concurs with the assessment of Dorothy Whitelock, that '[i]nterlocking bonds of loyalty were the principle on which Anglo-Saxon civilization rested, the only bulwark against primitive chaos and anarchy'.[121] The declamations found in Wulfstan of York's *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* are an attempt to give voice and warning to the horrors that befall a people disloyal to their leaders and their traditions. Further historical resonances can be found in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* entry for 1010, and earlier these beliefs are echoed poetically by *The Dream of the Rood* and *Christ III*. What was required of the properly civilized yet secular Christian was 'not merely love, but rather that unique combination of loyalty and affection which Anglo-Saxons felt for their chosen leaders that seems to bind the Christian to his Lord'.[122] *Maldon* dramatizes this connection between the misery of a chaotic society and the happiness of one that has maintained its loyalties. This is the specific quality of obedience that Irving classifies as 'stoutheartedness', wherein the poem's most crucial quality lies in the ready obedience of the men of substance to their commands.[123] The centerpiece remains Byrhtnoth, who is portrayed consistently as a model for the others. This occurs through his position as counselor, the experienced leader advising and

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[120] Anderson, '*The Battle of Maldon*', 265.

[121] Robinson, 'God, Death, and Loyalty', p. 436. See Whitelock, *Beginnings of English Society*, pp. 29–47; and Gatch, *Loyalties and Traditions*, pp. 129–41, esp. 129–35.

[122] Robinson, 'God, Death, and Loyalty', p. 436; also visible in *Beowulf*, lines 2886–90.

[123] Irving, 'Heroic Style', 352.

exhorting his troops. This image is the one we meet near the beginning of the poem as we have it now:

> Het þa hyssa hwæne hors forlætan,
> feor afysan, and forð gangan,
> hicgan to handum and to hige godum.[124] (2–4)

Byrhtnoth is leading by word and example, reminding his soldiers of the heroic code, of complementing courageous thoughts with bold deeds, compelling them to come forward with him into battle.

> ða þær Byrhtnoð ongan beornas trymian,
> rad and rædde, rincum tæhte
> hu hi sceoldon standan and þone stede healdan,
> and bæd þæt hyra randas rihte heoldon
> fæste mid folman, and ne forhtedon na.[125] (17–21)

The principal verbs in this passage that describe Byrhtnoth's actions (*ongan* [...] *trymian* [...] *rad and rædde* [...] *tæhte* [...] *bæd*) more fully unpack the connection between his own verbal leadership and the hoped-for actions that will follow, undertaken by his warriors on the battlefield. The final verb, the only negative (*ne forhtedon*) coming after a string of positive exhortations and commands, underscore the cause-and-effect relation between Byrhtnoth's leadership and his warrior's success on the field. The emphasis on his place as the single most important hero among the army, as the one among the many, is not limited to the preparatory matters, before conflict begins. As the Danes (*wælwulfas*, literally 'slaughter-wolves') come rushing across the ford, the poet reminds us simultaneously of Byrhtnoth's position as the 'one' among the many, and also of their mutual connection:

> þær ongean gramum gearowe stodon
> Byrhtnoð mid beornum; he mid bordum het
> wyrcan þone wihagan, and þæt werod healdan
> fæste wið feondum.[126] (100–3a)

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[124] 'Then he commanded each of his young men to forgo his horse, to drive it far off, and walk forward, recollecting deeds of arms and good courage'.

[125] 'Then Byrhtnoth began to array men there, he rode and counselled, directed warriors how they must stand and hold that position, and exhorted them to hold rightly their round-shields firmly in their grips, and be not afraid'.

'There, against the fierce ones *they stood* prepared, Byrhtnoth with his warriors': the Danes rush forward to fight an army knit-tight in unity, but distinguished also by a single man's leadership, his heroic positioning. The image is reminiscent of the scene in *Beowulf* when the Geats are greeted by the 'coast guard' as they land: *Næfre ic maran geseah* / eorla *ofer eorþan ðonne is eower sum, / secg on searwum* (247–9). Here Beowulf is easily distinguished from the multitude by his size and by the hint of his prowess, yet the watchman sees them as a united group, as evidenced by his first question, *Hwæt syndon ge searohæbbendra*: Who are you, you men of arms? The distinction is also made clear through comparison with the descriptions in *Maldon* of the Vikings, who are distinguished and represented not by a single hero who speaks and acts on behalf of, and in gesture for, his group, but rather as the sort of men who speak through a mouthpiece (*wicinga ar*, 26, 'messenger of the Vikings'), and who are denoted merely by the catchall phrase *sæmen snelle* ('keen sailors', 29). These foreigners are not Anglo-Saxon warriors, the brave and loyal many led by the heroic one; rather, they are undistinguished 'wolves', crude and undisciplined. The irregularity of the alliteration in line 29 heightens this contrast between the English and the Danes, perhaps suggesting that one is correct, the other barbaric.[127]

In contrast, we see Byrhtnoth acting as a hero by leading through both words and deeds, not only in the moments preparatory to the battle, but bravely once begun also. He serves as the personal spokesman for the English (lines 42–61), the one speaking for the many: 'Gehyrst þu, sælida, hwæt þis folc segeð?' (line 45). Tell them, he shouts,

> [...] þæt her stynt unforcuð eorl mid his werode,
> þe wile gealgean eþel þysne,
> Æþelreædes eard, ealdres mines,
> folc and foldan.[128] (51–4a)

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[126] 'There against the fierce ones they stood prepared, Byrhtnoth with his warriors. He directed them to form the "battle-hedge" with their shields, to hold that band fast against the enemy'.

[127] See also Robinson, 'Some Aspects', 25–40.

[128] '[...] that here stands *undaunted* an earl with his people, who would defend this native land, Æthelred's kingdom, my lord's, his people and his country'.

The battle, once joined, shows Byrhtnoth once more in the thick of the fighting. The Maldon-poet tells us, in words that are clearly reminiscent of Byrhtnoth's actions while at rest that

> Stodon stædefæste; stihte hi Byrhtnoð,
> bæd þæt hyssa gehwylc hogode to wige
> þe on Denon wolde dom gefeohtan.[129] (127–9)

The repetition of the poetic word *hyse* for 'young man, warrior' emphasizes that he is repeating his earlier actions, that he has not faltered now that the battle has commenced, and that he has not changes his role. He leads in word and deed, at rest and in melee.

In this war, the single hero must have a united front of retainers. And here is where *Maldon* becomes tragic. What destroys the English lines is not Byrhtnoth's lack of courage, but the disloyalty of others under his command. The disastrous importance of this disunity, and disloyalty is encapsulated in the image of the 'shield-wall'. Offa reports that the 'shield-wall was shattered' by Godric's disloyalty. Twice we see the shield-wall formed, at 19–21 and 101–2, and twice we see it broken, at 193–5 and 241–2. With this tactical advantage lost, and with Byrhtnoth dead, the battle turns against the English. But it is at this stage in the poem that we see a new sense of heroic action, and heroic sacrifice, in the speeches and actions of the individual warriors who choose to stay and fight by the body of the dead hero rather than flee. In the face of traumatic loss, the warriors in *Maldon* offer up a self-sacrificial response. Scholars have remained uncertain as to whether this motif was historical or fictional, whether it was native or a foreign borrowing, and whether it was old or new.[130] Each interpretation brings with it outside sources, as I have done, in order to understand the impetus, and I would rather focus on the sacrificial narrative structure indicated by the poet.

The men die for a principle, although their vows are individual and particular. Robinson argues that it is partly the presence of anxiety, the supernatural struggle for the soul, which makes Maldon a heroic poem. The world within *Maldon* is 'devoid of the certainties which orthodox Christianity is usually thought to bring and one in which

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[129] 'Unyielding they stood; Byrhtnoth exhorted them, bade each young man concentrate on the battle, who would win glory in battle against Danes'.

[130] See Woolf, 'Ideal of Men Dying'; and Frank, 'Ideal of Men Dying with their Lord'.

heroism is achieved at a dear price and is rich with meaning'.[131] The terrifying and unsettled accounting over the soul of Byrhtnoth—an arguably unusual scene in the context of Old English poetry—underscores the especial level of doubt being raised in the poem. It is true that certainties are hard to come by. It is *ofer cald wæter* that the journey must be made, to unknown territories. It is this anxiety, this sense of life in the balance, that makes heroic narrative worth constructing; and it is the hope of heroic sacrifice that gives meaning to death in an age of death. The *Maldon*-poet

> portrayed the actions of his heroes against a background of divine remoteness and indifference which many Englishmen were at that time beginning to sense, and which gave deep meaning to heroic sacrifice.[132]

The suggestive phrase *ofer cald wæter* has not received a great deal of attention in *Maldon*-criticism. Gordon, in his edition of the poem, noted that 'the traditional association of *cald* in the sense "ill-omened" or "baleful" with verbs of calling suggests that in this passage the waters of the Pante are not only "cold in the literal sense, but also "fateful"'.[133] Riedinger uses the phrase (which she translates with Gordon as 'across the fateful waters') as an example of an Old English formula that 'reveals ominous connotations'.[134] The exact collocation is found in other Anglo-Saxon poetic texts, including the second part of *Christ* and *Andreas*. The idea of *cald wæter* as representative of the unknown, which must be crossed over by faith, appears in Cynewulf's *Christ* and three times in *Andreas*. In *Christ II*, the cold water represents the Christian anxiety over Doomsday:

> Is us þearf micel
> þæt we gastes wlite ær þam gryre-brogan
> on þas gæsnan tid georne biþencen.
> Nu is þon gelicost swa we on lagu-flode
> ofer cald wæter ceolum liðan.[135] (847b–51)

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[131] Robinson, 'God, Death, and Loyalty', p. 431.

[132] Robinson, 'God, Death, and Loyalty', p. 432.

[133] Gordon (ed.), *The Battle of Maldon*, p. 49.

[134] Riedinger, 'Old English Formula', 296.

[135] 'There is a great need for us to consider eagerly the beauty of our spririt before that terror in this barren time. It is now very like to sailing the sea in ships over *cald wæter*'.

And in *Andreas*, the hero gives voice to his own anxiety over journeying to Mermedonia at God's behest, with a series of things he does not know:

> 'Ne synt me winas cuðe,
> eorlas el-þeodige, ne þær æniges wat
> hæleða gehygdo, ne me here-stræta
> ofer cald wæter cuðe sindon'.[136] (198b–201)

The end result remains uncertain—life remains in the balance. It is this anxiety that is similar to that depicted by the *Maldon*-poet in the moments prior to the crossing of the causeway.

Another possible echo of the anxiety of *ofer cald wæter* appears in *Beowulf*, line 1261a, although the text of the manuscript is rather corrupt in parts:[137]

> Grendles modor,
> ides aglæcwif, yrmþe gemunde,
> se þe wæteregesan wunian scolde,
> cealde streamas, siþðan Cain wearð
> to ecgbanan angan breþer,
> fæderenmæge; he þa fag gewat,
> morþre gemearcod mandream fleon,
> westen warode.[138] (1258b–65)

The translation of *cealde streamas* offers similarities to that of *cald wæter*; the phrase's close apposition to *wæteregesan* ('horrible waters') in 1260a suggests that the ideas are parallel. One possible interpretation of the significance of the inhabitation in *cealde streamas* for Grendel and his mother lies in the mythology of the Flood. Despite the intent of the Flood to destroy the monstrous races living on the earth at the time of the deluge, some must have survived, being native to the watery realms; the *Beowulf*-poet might be classifying Grendel and his mother in that category.[139]

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[136] 'I do not consider these foreign nobles friends of mine, nor do I know a thing about the thoughts of men there, nor are the army-roads over *cald wæter* familiar to me'.

[137] The majority of editors of *Beowulf* have chosen to emend the manuscript reading at 1261a, *camp*, to *Cain*, for which see Pulsiano, '"Cames cynne".

[138] 'Grendel's mother, maiden and terrible marvel, recalled her wretchedness, she who must dwell in the watery terror, the cold streams, since Cain became slayer to his only brother, his father's kin; he then journeyed about tainted, marked for murder, fleeing the joys of mankind, dwelling in the wastelands': *Beowulf*, 1258b–65.

[139] Suggested by Orchard, *Critical Companion*, p. 139; see also idem, *Pride and Prodigies*, pp. 78–84.

The pinnacle of watery terror found in *Beowulf* remains these *cealde streamas*, the 'haunted mere' where Grendel and his mother make their home, elaborately described by Hrothgar (1357b–76a). Interpretations of this monster-realm have been lengthy and fruitful.[140] There seems ample evidence that its description is meant to evoke thoughts of similar descriptions of Hell and the Otherworld found in more overtly Biblical texts, such as the description of a similarly dismal land contained in Blickling Homily XVI and based upon the *Visio sancti Pauli*.[141]

Hie dygel lond
warigeað, wulfhleoþu, windige næssas,
frecne fengelad, ðær fyrgenstream
under næssa genipu niþer gewiteð,
flod under foldan. Nis þæt feor heonon
milgemearces þæt se mere standeð;
ofer þæm hongiað hrinde bearwas,
wudu wyrtum fæst wæter oferhelmað.
þær mæg nihta gehwæm niðwundor seon,
fyr on flode. No þæs frod leofað
gumena bearna, þæt þone grund wite. (1357b–67)[142]

What I wish to emphasize here is the underlying dread, or anxiety, that such images were meant to evoke in their hearers. Yet, their nature is often two-headed: those same waterways can have a morbid or nurturing embrace, as is made clear by the beginning of the *Bella Parisiacae urbis.*

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[140] See Orchard, *Critical Companion*, pp. 156–8 for an overview of this passage's language and analogues. Scowcroft locates numerous mere-analogues in 'Irish Analogues to *Beowulf*'. Natalia Breizmann sees the mere as analogous to the *terra dissimilitudinis* motif in medieval romance ('*Beowulf* as Romance', 1026).

[141] Morris (ed.), *Blickling Homilies*, pp. vi–vii. Homily XVI is numbered as XVII in Morris' edition, but his sequence has been renumbered; see Willard (ed.), *Blickling Homilies*, pp. 38–40 (cited in Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, p. 39 n. 55).

[142] 'They live in a mysterious land, barren slopes, windy cliffs, greedy fenlands, where the mountain brook descends under the headlands' mists, the flood under the ground. It is not far from here in the tally of miles, where that mere stands, over which hang frosty groves, a wood firm-rooted overshadows the water. There one can see each night a dreadful marvel, fire on the flood. No one lives so wise of the sons of men that knows the bottom'.

LIFE IMITATING ART? THE *DEVOTIO* OF OTTO I

I close this analysis of scenes of heroic sacrifice with a illustrative literary anecdote concerning the eponymous ruler of the Ottonian line, drawn from the early eleventh-century chronicle of Thietmar of Merseburg.[143] In this prose narrative, the language of heroic poetry and the topoi of sacrifice are brought into service for the historical depiction of a military hero prior to what would come to be seen as a momentous Saxon victory, a precursor to Otto's imperial coronation in 962. The description of the actions of Otto I prior to the Battle of Lech offers an especially intriguing case of the language of heroic sacrifice being used by an early medieval chronicler in order to depict the worthiness and valor of the central actor. Valid questions concerning the historical veracity of the anecdote, called into question by several scholars, including Thietmar's most recent English translator, will not interest me here.[144] For the purpose of gauging the exceptional nature of Thietmar's story, one might compare the differing version offered by Widukind of Corvey, considered by many scholars to be perhaps the best, and most dispassionate historian of his age.[145] Each chronicler relates an account of the battle, both the preparation for combat and the combat itself, but from a heroic viewpoint, the more interesting account belongs to Thietmar. The language and actions that came to be associated with the actions of Otto surrounding the Battle of Lech are clearly redolent with the images of sacrifice; whether these were associated to Otto by chroniclers and observers such as Thietmar, or were based to some degree in factual accounts, is not a matter that can be decided here. nor is it my concern; rather, I find it a compelling test case of the importance of sacrificial language and action in several different forms for those who would seek to gain power through military and political means. Otto's 'sacrificial moment' came at the precise time that he was seeking to consolidate and advance his own power, to become emperor; in doing so, he was not only calling for power in the present, he was connecting himself

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[143] Holtzmann (ed.), *Thietmari Merseburgensis episcopi chronicon*. Thietmar informs us that he was born 25 July 975. On his education at Magdeburg, see Lippelt, *Thietmar von Merseburg*, pp. 71–6.

[144] A brief account is provided in an entry in a St Gall annal, MGH SS i: 79 (cited in Leyser, 'Battle at the Lech', p. 63 n 87).

[145] For Widukind see Hirsch (ed.), *Widukindi monachi Corbeiensis*. Other accounts can be found in Herhad's *Vita*, and in the *Annales*.

retrospectively to the great emperors of the Carolingian (and Roman) past. He was also looking forward to the future, when his heirs would reign over land made peaceful through his own blood and sweat. He was willing to sacrifice his own life for his people, as being 'more culpable' than they were; and he was certainly prepared to sacrifice the invading monsters, in this case the Magyars, to the greater good. Otto's account has had the claim of history for itself. In the remainder of this chapter, I will analyze more directly literary representations of heroic sacrifice, in order to illuminate the sorts of models that Otto and other men of his ilk and ambition had access to during the trying times of the ninth and tenth centuries.

Raids on Western Europe by the Magyars (or Hungarians) had, by 955, approximately a sixty-year history.[146] Begun out of what was probably economic necessity, a response to having eastern trade routes closed following their expulsion from Atelkuzu region by the Pechenegs, the raids proved beneficial and amenable to the nomadic Magyars.[147] Over time, attempts to drive off the invaders, and attempts to form alliances with them, followed a pattern of relations similar to those seen with the Vikings in the previous century. Some kings, such as Berengar II and Arnulf of Bavaria, formed alliance and paid tribute to the foreign armies because it served their own political purposes.[148] Yet, the majority of secular rulers attempted some form of resistance, as noted by chroniclers such as Widukind.[149] By the 950s, one can detect a political purpose behind the Magyar raiding as well. One source mentions a high-ranking Magyar leader, Bulksu, and it is possible that the 954 raid was timed to match the rebellion of Liudolf, Conrad, and Archbishop Frederick of Mainz. In 955, Magyar forces again invaded, and began a siege of the fortified city of Augsburg, where Odalrich was bishop; they broke

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[146] For a brief overview of Hungarian history in this time, see Kornél Bakay, 'Hungary', in McKitterick (ed.), pp. 536–52. Bakay notes that the earliest reference to Hungarians seems to be 862 in the *Annales Bertiniani*, *s.a.*, p. 93.

[147] The Pechenegs were a Central Asian nomadic people, who were earlier driven out of their own land by Khazars and Oghuz. See Macartney, 'Petchenegs', 342–55; Pritsak, 'The Pečenegs', 211–35; and Wozniak, 'Byzantium, the Pechenegs, and the Khazars', 299–316. Stories of the expulsion were reported by Regino of Prüm, *Chronicon, s.a.* 889, p. 131.

[148] On Berengar, see the evidence of Liutprand, *Antapodosis*, 5.33, p. 151. For Arnulf, see Reindel, 'Herzog Arnulf', pp. 219–21.

[149] Widukind, *Res Gestae Saxonicae*, 2.14, p. 79.

off the siege as Otto arrived with his troops, but, instead of fleeing in order to avoid a pitched battle with the Franks, the Magyar troops joined together and prepared to fight Otto—perhaps, as Gerhard, provost of the Augsburg cathedral church, suggests, with the intention of winning both the city and the kingdom.[150] On 10 August 955, Otto prepared himself and his small contingent of Frankish, Suabian, Bavarian, and Bohemian troops to fight near the river Lech.[151] At this point, Thietmar offers a rather detailed account of Otto's exhortations to his men, and of his actions prior to the battle.

> Et ecce iterum Avares, quasi iam perpetrati sceleris obliti, adversum nos arma commoverant; quos adventare dux Heinricus regi nuncians, inceptis eum itineribus revocavit. Rex autem ad Augustanam universos suimet familiares ad se convocat civitatem, affirmans se mori malle quam tanta plus perpeti mala, hortaturque suos, premia promittens cum gratia cunctis se faventibus poenamque fugientibus. Collegit undiquessecus octo tantum legiones, quas adversum hostes dispositas consolatur, morientes ibi remuneracionibus demulcens aeternis, vincentes autem presentibus delectamentis. Quarum extremitates hostis acer iuxta Lech fluvium celerem latenter circumeundo incautas opprimit, cesis tunc pluribus ac despoliatis. Hoc rex ut comperit, Conradum ducem cum suis pone misit, qui captivos cum omni preda ex lupi raptoris faucibus eripuit victoriaque potitus castra revisit.[152]

Thietmar stresses that, although he was outnumbered, the king has managed to gather together his soldiers from every corner of his kingdom (*undiquessecus*);[153] despite differences of regional concern and culture, all of the peoples are united against a common threat from without. A very similar theme, representing national unity despite

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[150] Gerhard claims this in his *Vita s. Oudalrici*, MGH SS iv: 402; cited in Leyser, 'Battle at the Lech', p. 54 n 40.

[151] For discussion of the background to the incursion, see Leyser, 'Battle at the Lech, 955'; Lüttich, *Ungarnzüge in Europa*, pp. 110–13, 157–65; and Reindel, 'Bayern unter den Liutpoldingern'.

[152] Holtzmann (ed.), *Thietmari Merseburgensis episcopi chronicon*, 2.9: 'And once more the Avars, as if they had forgotten the crime already committed, took up arms against us; Duke Heinrich announced to the king that they were coming, and he recalled him from the journey he had commenced. Now the king called together all his retinue to the city of Augsburg, affirming that he preferred to die rather than endure such evils any more, and he encouraged his men, promising them rewards with gratitude to all who backed him, and pain to those who turned their backs and fled. He gathered together from all parts only eight legions, which, once they were arrayed, he consoled against the enemy, assuaging the one to die there with rewards eternal, and the ones who would prevail with earthly delights. At the swift river Lech the fierce enemy attacked the rearguard of these forces by circling around them secretly, and many were slaughtered and despoiled. When the king learned this, he sent back Duke Conrad with his men, who snatched the captives with all the treasure out of the jaws of the plundering wolf and, having achieved victory, he returned to the camps'.

[153] The significance of this adverb might be somewhat undercut by the term being a popular one for Thietmar; Hrotsvitha, also, uses it twice in battle scenes in *Gallicanus* (1.9, 1.12).

regional differences, reflected in the leader (*unum*) and the people (*omnes*), is seen in poetry from this period as well (*Battle of Maldon, Bella Parisiacae urbis, Battle of Brunanburh*), all possibly echoing the image of II Sam 5:1, 'et venerunt universae tribus Israhel ad David in Hebron' ('and all the tribes of Israel came to David in Hebron'). There are potential echoes here of the Books of Maccabees (and also of the legends of the Battle with Xerxes) with the phrase *mori malle*, for 'se mori malle quam tanta plus perpeti *mala*' can be read as equivalent to '*melius est nos mori* in bello *quam* respicere *mala* gentis nostrae et sanctorum' (I Macc 3:59).[154] Thietmar has Otto end his speech with language which is inverted from similar language in Vergil: compare 'qui captivos cum omni preda ex *lupi raptoris faucibus* eripuit', to *Aeneid* 2.355–8, '*lupi* ceu / *raptores* atra in nebula [...] catulique relicti / *faucibus* exspectant siccis'.[155] But his language is also thoroughly Christian, and alludes to the theme of pastoral care as developed in passages from a monastic text such as the *Regula Magistri*, including chapters one and seven, but especially chapter ninety-three ('et esto jam sollicitus, et noli esse securus *de lupi voracibus faucibus* diabolicas insidias gregi tuo futuras').[156]

The initial confrontation won, the battle-lines prepared, Otto next prepares himself, by offering a tearful *votum* on the day of the battle:

> Postera die, id est in festivitate Christi martyris Laurentii, rex, solum se pre caeteris culpabilem Deo professus atque prostratus, hoc fecit lacrimis votum profusis: si Christus dignaretur sibi eo die tanti intercessione preconis dare victoriam et vitam, ut in civitate Merseburgensi episcopatum in honore victoris ignium construere domumque suimet magnam noviter inceptam sibi ad aecclesiam vellet edificare. Nec mora, erectus a terra, post missae celebrationem sacramque communionem ab egregio porrectam Othelrico confessore suo, sumpsit rex clipeum lancea cum sacra, milites in hostem precedendo, resistentemque primus inrupit, ac mox terga vertentem usque ad

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[154] Compare *Praef. Regula Sancti Benedicti.* The language is used again in the close of the so-called first letter of pseudo-Clement, 'Quapropter praeparanda sunt corda nostra ac corpora, et sanctae mandatorum ejus suorumque episcoporum ac praedictorum obedientiae militatura, ut suae gratiae jubeat nobis auxilium ministrare, et fugientibus gehennae poenam ad vitam valeant omnes pervenire aeternam'. Simson (ed.). Compare Terence, *Eunuchoe* I.1.3: 'Non perpeti..contumelias [...] ubi pati non poteris [...] mori me malim'.

[155] 'As plundering wolves into black clouds [...] and remaining whelps wait with dry jaws'.

[156] See the use of similar imagery by the ninth-century Carolingian monastic reformer Benedict of Aniane (d. 821), at 1.3.2, 1.4.4, and 1.8.7; and Thietmar's repetition of the phrase at 8.8: 'sed assiduo oraminis ac elemosinarum medicamine mihi diu fetenti succurrens, *de faucibus voracis lupi* me dilaniatum eripias'.

vesperam prostravit ac effugavit.[157]

Leyser regrets that this particular passage has not been analyzed by students of the Crusade impetus. To his mind, it offers a remarkably early depiction of the union of sacral kingship and the warrior.[158] The action of anointing developed into a very important ritual for Carolingian rulers.[159] The bishops were imagined to be the irreplaceable conduit through which secular rulers were endowed with divine unction and God's grace. As a result, the bishops by whose authority such power had been vested in the rulers felt entitled to correct their secular brethren when they strayed from the path. The word which referred to the role of the secular leaders found most often in the texts is *ministerium* ('ministry'): it captured the sense that misdeeds done by the men whom he has appointed in positions of power and authority rebound upon himself.[160] Indeed, Smaragdus (d. 843) states that the ruler is filling the place of Christ by virtue of his name.[161] Louis the Pious has left clear indications, in an *admonitio* of his own (dated to 823 x 825) addressed *ad omnes regni ordines*, that he saw himself as the *admonitor* of the people, while they in turn were to be his *adiutores*.[162] The right of the Carolingian rulers

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[157] Holtzmann (ed.), *Thietmari Merseburgensis episcopi chronicon*, 2.10: 'The next day, which was the feast-day of Lawrence the martyr of Christ, the king, prostrate, having professed that he alone was culpable to God for the others (*pre ceteris*), made this vow with flowing tears: if Christ deigned to grant him victory and life on this day by such intercession of his herald, he would establish, in the city of Merseburg, a bishopric in honor of the Victor of the Flames [...]. Without delay he rose from the earth and, after the celebration of the mass and the reception of holy communion from his splendid confessor Udalrich, the king took up his armor with his holy lance, and went before his soldiers against the enemy, and he first assailed the ones who resisted, and soon laid low the routed, chasing them till nightfall'.

[158] Leyser, *Rule and Conflict*, pp. 77–8. The origins of the concept of courtliness have been traced to court of Otto I by Aldo Scaglione, *Knights at Court*, pp. 21–2, and Stephen Jaeger, *Origins*, pp. 67–81. Dennis Green credits the greater role Otto allowed to the bishops of his realm with the Ottonian educational advances (*Medieval Listening*, pp. 280–1).

[159] On the concept *nomen imperatoris* from the perspective of Charlemagne, see Beumann, '*Nomen imperatoris*'; and on the relationship of ninth- and tenth-century chroniclers to history itself, see Beumann, 'Die Historiographie des Mittelalters', esp. pp. 47–63.

[160] As in the remark of Jonas of Orléans (d. *ca.* 843), that 'Ad peccatum regis pertinet, quando judicibus ministrisque iniquis ministerium suum implendum committit, neque enim ministerium suum per alios tantum administrare, et se ab eo debet alienare' (*De institutione regia*, *c.* 5, PL 106, cols. 292c–d). Reference cited in Noble, 'Louis the Pious', p. 112. See also Borst, 'Kaisertum und Namentheorie', i: 50–1; Noble, 'Louis the Pious', pp. 110–15.

[161] Smaragdus, *Via regia*, PL 102, col. 958b. Cited in Noble, 'Louis the Pious', p. 113.

[162] MGH *Cap.* I, no 150, p. 303: 'ego omnium vestrum admonitor esse debeo, et omnes vos nostri adiutores esse debetis.'

to govern was not considered to be innate, solely a product of their natural lineage, but one granted to them by God; and the spokesmen for God, the powerful ecclesiastics of the day, were to function as the correctors of the behavior of secular rulers. The right of ecclesiastics to correct rulers was exemplified, in the minds of many, by the Bible passage in which Nathan upbraids King David (II Sam 12). Moreover, the rulers of Carolingian Francia had not yet reached the stage reached by the Ottonian and Salian rulers of the late tenth and eleventh centuries, who might be greeted as the author of the earlier *Vita Mathildis reginae (posterioris)* greeted Henry II, or as Bruno of Querfurt[163] (*ca.* 970–1009) asked Henry II to be 'sanctae ecclesiae districtus auriga', *auriga* meaning literally, as Leyser notes, 'charioteer'.[164] The force and intent of the image is not diminished by the fact that it is not original to the Carolingian and Ottonian writers, having been used earlier by Tertullian, Lactantius, Ambrose, Gregory, and Jerome, and one later picked up by Bede, Paul the Deacon, and (even later) used by Siegfried of Mainz (in 1071) at the Council of Mainz, in praise meant for Henry IV, whom he described as *aurigante currum Dei.*

By Thietmar's time, the picture of the military hero as a sacrificial figure had taken shape. In Thietmar's *Chronicon*, Otto I, the man whom Hrotsvitha describes in the 960s as 'warlike and strong, most skilled in the art of war' ('belliger et fortis, belli doctissimus artis'), and as a 'very mighty wall standing in the way of the enemy's missiles' ('ceu murus iaculis obstans fortissimus hostis'),[165] is depicted in literature carrying out the duties of a hero, endangering himself for the people and the city, offering himself as the potential sacrifice on behalf of his soldiers and his people, a sacrifice which God might choose to accept or decline. Otto achieved the emperorship only after having been rejected once, in 951, and after a decade of his pursuit of the office, a period marked by politicking and military conflicts, and culminating in the Battle of Lech, Otto developed new claims about 'both his status as emperor and the character of the imperial

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[163] St Bruno of Querfurt, (*ca.* 974–1009), who was martyred by East Prussians.

[164] Leyser, p. 169 n. 18. Compare II Reg 2:12 and 13:14

[165] *Gesta Oddonis*, lines 50–2, Winterfeld (ed.), *Hrotsvithae Opera*, p. 206. On her lament that she lacks written sources, see Dronke, *Women Writers*, pp. 75–7.

office' through the careful use of language in legal documents.[166] He used the Synod of Augsberg on 7 August 952 to portray himself as proclaiming and acting on behalf of all Christendom ('tam sancti cleri quam populi, aeclesiae stabilitatis profectus et totius christianitatis utilitates tractarentur') and thus as standing watch over 'the status of the Christian empire' ('de statu christiani imperii'). His ambitions seem to have been solidified by his becoming the Christian *triumphator* by his victory over the Magyars, and in 962 he was at last crowned emperor by the pope.[167] As commemoration of his deeds, Gerberga asked a young nun of literary talents who was familiar to the Ottonian court to compose a celebratory poem on the emperor in hexameters.[168] Despite her claims that she, in addition to the usual pretenses of modesty, was unfit as a woman and as a cloistered nun to celebrate the deeds of a famous warrior, Hrotsvitha did as was requested. Her *Gesta Ottonis* was written about 962 x 965, and was dedicated to the emperor himself. Hrotsvitha's composition came during a period of increased literary activity and historical writing. Moreover, these were written, in many cases, with the purpose of constructing the cultural basis of the Ottonian *regnum*. In the words of Mayr-Harting, by the end of Otto's reign one sees

> an efflorescence of historical writing with besides Liudprand's *Relatio* such works as Widukind's *Res Gestae Saxonicae*, Ruotger's *Vita Brunonis*, Gumpold of Mantua's *Vita Wenceslavi*, and not much later the *Vita Antiquior Mathildis*, to name some obvious examples. Until the mid 950s, Otto struggled to survive; thereafter his rule could gradually be laid on broader cultural foundations.[169]

Yet ostensibly-historical accounts are not the only record from the period: we also have poetry. It is indeed unfortunate that our text of the *Gesta Oddonis* is defective for

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[166] Bernhardt, *Itinerant Kingship*, p. 142; Karpf, *Herrscherlegitimation*, 108–15; Keller, 'Entscheidungssituationen und Lernprozesse', 20–48; and idem, 'Das Kaisertum Ottos des Großen', 334–45.

[167] Keller, 'Entscheidungssituationen und Lernprozesse', 38–9. Text of the council document in Hehl (ed.), *Die Konzilien Deutschlands*, no 18, pp. 185–94. Keller stresses that the Archbishop of Mainz amd Salzburg with eleven bishops 'berieten in Ottos Gegenwart über den rechten Zustand des christlichen Imperiums sowie über das Wachstum der festen Ordnung der Kirche und den Nutzen der ganzen Christenheit; auf ausdrücklichen Wunsch der Synode nahm Otto an der Schlußsitzung teil' ('Entscheidungssituationen und Lernprozesse', 39).

[168] On Hrotsvitha's status as a writer of epic, see Kirsch, 'Hrotsvit von Gandersheim'.

[169] Mayr-Harting, 'Liudprand of Cremona', 540. See also Hoffmann, *Buchkunst und Königtum*, pp. 8–10, 103–16, for the literary culture of Otto's earlier reign.

the year 955, so we lack Hrotsvitha's take on the events of that year. It is true that she offers a disclaimer, to the effect that she, who is both cloistered and a woman, cannot justly speak of military matters,[170] but while she does not offer observations on tactics, nor descriptions of blood and gore, she does offer one scene, at least, with particular relevance to the description in Thietmar's much later account. During an earlier conflict, this one involving a civil feud during the battles of Birten and Andernach in 939,[171] Otto pleads with God to spare his people, since he is the one who has sinned:

> At si forte suos, pugna crescente sinistra,
> Audivit socios laetali vulnere laesos,
> Praedicti regis lacrimans mox utitur orsis,
> Quae moerens dixit, tristi cum pectore sensit
> ictibus angelici populum gladii periturum:
> 'En, qui peccavi', dixit, 'facinusque peregi,
> Hinc ego vindictae dignus sum denique tantae!
> Hi quid fecerunt damnum qui tale tulerunt?
> Jam nunc, Christe, tuis parcens miserere redemptis,
> Ne premat insontes justo plus vis inimica!'[172]

'Qui peccavi [...] facinusque peregi': 'It is *I* who have sinned, and *I* have committed the deed' (emphasis mine). Hrotsvitha has adapted her text for the emperor from II Sam 24:17, the speech of King David; David here pleads for God to spare Jerusalem just as an angel of God reaches out to destroy it: 'Dixitque David ad Dominum, cum vidisset angelum caedentem populum: "Ego sum *qui peccavi*, *ego* inique *egi*; isti, qui oves sunt, *quid fecerunt*? Vertatur, obsecro, manus tua contra me et contra domum patris mei"' (emphasis mine). Otto, king and hero, offers himself in place of his people, just as King David had, whom God then forgives, allowing him, instead, to offer a sacrifice, one which inaugurates the act of sacrificing on the threshing-floor of Araunah, the future site of the Temple.[173] The story of Otto's victory at the Battle of Lech also ends with a

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[170] At *Gesta*, lines 243–7. The verbal give-and-take between the leaders and their troops depicted in *Gallicanus* IX, which Bullough mentions as being possibly at variance with her claims ('Games People Played', p. 114), are interesting, but are not particularly descriptive of fighting.

[171] A conflict concerning which Thietmar is practically silent (*Chronicon*, 2.34). See Reuter, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages*, pp. 148–54, for background to the feud between Otto and Eberhard of Franconia and Giselbert of Lotharingia (Lorraine). Both were killed as a result of the dispute.

[172] *Gesta*, lines 266–75

[173] II Sam 24:18–25. See also the thesis of Gray, *Sacrifice in the Old Testament*, on the connection between the threshing-floor and Solomon's temple.

sacrifice, in addition to the military victory, although Thietmar does not include this aspect of the tale: the hanging of the captured Magyars and their leaders.[174] The Magyar King Sur and duke Lele were brought to Regensburg, and executed by hanging. Widukind approves, saying that they were punished with a 'mala morte, ut digni erant'.[175] Leyser suggests that the execution was intended to 'paralyze and disrupt [the Magyars] for many years to come'.[176] Another source for the battle details another grisly end to the conflict, a mass execution with strong sacrificial connotations as well. A tenth-century chronicler in the *Chronicon Eberspergense* writes that 'Exercitu vero Hunorum ipso itinere [...] reliquos Ungros iaculatos ingenti fosse inmiserunt'.[177]

In sum, although we have a piecemeal narrative, collected from a variety of historical sources, and not a singular epic tale, the description of the actions of Otto I before and after the Battle of Lech illustrate the manner and use to which the topoi of sacrifice can be put. The offered *devotio* or self-sacrifice of a leader, the voluntary offer of himself as *unus* for many, the ceremonial slaughter of the enemy, the closure of violent conflict and the initiation of a new *regnum*: all these can be considered sacrificial topoi, and all will feature to some degree in the heroic narratives we have considered. Moreover, the power of such images is so great that they have become attached to historical accounts of Otto's own life and history. The desire to portray historical figures acting out the parts of heroes is terribly strong.

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[174] Widukind, 2.48; *Annales Sangallenses Maiores*, *s.a.* 955, p. 79; *Chronicon Eberspergense*, MGH SS xx: 12.

[175] An 'evil death, as they deserved'. Leyser observes that it is one of the 'earliest executions, if not trials, of war-criminals in Europe', 'Battle of Lech', p. 63.

[176] Leyser, 'Battle of Lech', p. 64. The *Gesta Episcoporum Cameracensium*, MGH SS vii: 428, mentions the decapitation, in 954, of a Magyar prince, possibly a kinsman of the Magyar leader Bulksu, outside Cambrai during a siege of the city; following the execution, his head was displayed upon the city walls, leading the besiegers to offer a great ransom in exchange for the return of the head. Cited in Leyser, 'Battle of Lech', p. 64.

[177] *Chronicon Eberspergense*, MGH SS xx: 12. I am tempted to propose an emendation of *iaculatos* to *iugulatos*, so that the remaining Magyars are 'cast into a deep trench with their throats cut', rather than 'cast into a deep trench having been struck', although I admit I have no manuscript evidence for this suggestion. Both participles, however, could carry a tone of sacrificial language. It is also the language of Abbo's *Vita s. Edmundi*, in describing the slaughter of the English by the Dane Ubba during his marauding in Northumbria.

CHAPTER FOUR

Discors machina: Gruesome Violence, Grotesquerie, and Chaos in Anglo-Carolingian Poetry of War

> So when the world's compounded union breaks,
> Time ends and to old Chaos all things turn;
> Confused stars shall meet, celestial fire
> Fleet in the floods, the earth shall shoulder sea,
> Affording it no shore, and Phoebe's wain
> Chase Phoebus and enrag'd affect his place,
> And strive to shine by day and full of strife
> Dissolve the engines of the broken world.
> All great things crush themselves, such end the gods
> Allot the height of honor.[1]

The essential insight of trauma theory as applied to literary texts details how the crucial work of story-telling, whether the form is clearly literary or instead a sort of psychological self-fashioning, is done within the context of narrative structure and episodes. Peter Brooks calls this simply 'plot'; but his chosen definition of plot, he notes, is different than that generally relied upon in discussions of narrative. 'We may want to conceive of plot less as a structure than as a *structuring operation*, used, or made necessary, by those meanings that develop only through sequence and succession. [...] Plots have not only design, but intentionality as well'.[2] This summary of plot reminds us of the distinction made earlier between the treatment of heroic action within 'epic time' and 'tragic time': the epic pushes toward social cohesion, and expansion of boundaries while maintaining social (and spiritual) harmony, while a tragedy isolates its hero,

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[1] Such is Christopher Marlowe's rendering of Lucan, *Bellum Civile*, 1.72–82. In making use of this admitted admirer of Lucan, I have followed Johnson, *Momentary Monsters*, pp. 15–16, who notes that, despite its verve, Marlowe's version demands caution from the literal-minded reader of the Latin. All other translations, unless otherwise stated, are my own.

[2] Brooks, 'Repetition, Repression, and Return', 503. Emphasis mine.

ruptures the narrative, and fragments his world.[3] The epic hero does not eventually meet up with a sense of his limitations; in fact, tragic elements are frequently visible at precisely those moments in epic wherein one of the heroes learns painfully of his own limited capacity to affect the world. This teleological sense of the epic allows the audience the sense of knowing what is to happen and what is to come. When that sense is lost, the ability to see any narrative as a 'significant interconnection of events' is also lost.[4]

In his study of the purpose of repetition and event in epic poetry, David Quint suggests how the insights of trauma theory might be applied to scenes of sacrificial violence:

> The two ways of repeating the past in the two halves of the *Aeneid* and the alternative romance and epic narratives they respectively produce—the regressive repetition of the Odyssean wanderings, the successful repetition-as-reversal of the Iliadic war—conform to the two modes of psychic behavior that, for Freud in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, comprise the *repetition compulsion*. The victim of an earlier trauma may neurotically reenact his victimization over and over again. Alternatively, he may replay the original traumatic situation in order to create a new version of it, a situation of which he is now master, rather than victim, thereby 'undoing' the past and gaining some control over his psychic history. The latter instance creates a teleologically structured narrative, a repetition that links the two events but demonstrates their difference and the overcoming of the first by the second.[5]

In this model, a successful sacrifice, one that is *heroic*, is one that allows this sense of control to occur. Aeneas' slaying of Turnus becomes, among all the battlefield killings in the second half of the *Aeneid*, the one that can be properly considered a 'heroic sacrifice', since it inaugurates the new, controlled, history of Rome and the Augustan lineage. Previous efforts to impose a teleological structure upon the events had failed; despite their similarity to this final sacrifice, they had remained merely killings, often gruesome, caught in the chaos that a lack of teleology will give.

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[3] According to this model, epic 'harmony' occurs when a character such as Aeneas, 'cooperates with and acts in harmony with destiny (Duckworth, 'Fate and Free Will', 357). This is further illustrated by a comparison with the episode of Nisus and Euryalus (*Aen.* 9.184–445), a clear instance of individuals making their own decisions and doing the wrong thing through misguided motives' (Duckworth, 'Fate and Free Will', 360); the result is both dramatic and tragic, but it is an interlude in, not the primary focus of, epic poetry.

[4] Brooks, 'Freud's Masterplot', 288.

[5] Quint, *Epic and Empire*, pp. 50–1.

repetition is a useful way of reading Virgilian epic—narrative is a repetition of events already happened, and must make use of specific repetition in order to create plot, or to uncover the significance of events—Quint argues that the Aeneid is structured around series of repetitions—plot must have a beginning, middle, and end, in order for the events to have an order—some slippage between end as ''stopping point' and end as goal (telos) is inevitable—Quint claims that Aeneid subsumes the circular repetitious events of romance into the linear, teleological narrative of epic—Ricoeur argues that history repeats action in the figure of the memorable—epic appeals to Hannah Arendt's sense of the capacity for remembrance, a lasting significance of events is affirmed, and the past is made available and comprehensible in terms of good or bad wualities which become attached to human achievement or suffering—this is cathartic remembrance—past is an inheritance—Bakhtin claimed that epic presents a valorised 'absolute past'.[6]

The shock, or trauma, incurred by observers and participants in such scenes of death and destruction when they realize that what had just been witnessed and enacted had not led to closure and meaning can take different forms. For some, their language expresses despair, and they return obsessively to the memories of the chaos or grotesque violence, as if in an effort to find some form of structure they had missed previously, some glimmer of hope that the sacrifices had not been in vain, and therefore not really sacrifices at all. For others, the desire for revenge becomes foremost, and the earlier violence becomes a template for further acts of violence in the hope that by repeating the experience, some final closure will be reached that will not only act as a true and heroic sacrifice for the future, but one that will also give meaning and even comfort to the past as well. These are the dual responses to 'traumatic sacrifice' that I will be considering in this chapter. I have termed 'traumatic sacrifice' the original narrative scene or episode of failed sacrificial violence that fails to deliver a sense of meaning to the participants or observers. It is this scene that will either be despairingly and repetitively recollected, in what Quint (following Freud) calls the *repetition compulsion*, and that also will at times spur on a cycle of vengeful violence.

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[6] Kennedy, 'Virgilian Epic'.

My earlier consideration of the *parodos* from the *Agamemnon* offers another useful point of demarcation between two forms of sacrificial violence. The attack of the eagles upon the hare, witnessed by the Greeks, is 'uncontained violence', antithetical to true sacrifice, in which 'killing is contained in ritual order and the domestic victim is in a sense a member of the sacrificing group and consents to its own death.'[7] The former, when removed from its stricter and original religious milieu, is heroic. A sacrifice that is not confined by ritual and, I would add, framed by narrative consent, becomes grotesque, and the uncontrolled violence of the hunt (or of revenge) overtakes specified ritual killing:

> If the eagles' feast is a sacrifice it is a grotesque one, in which the norms of civilised, sacrificial killing have been overthrown by absolute violence. Whereas the violence of the epic portent is contained and sanctioned by its sacrificial context, the eagles' feast, because it is a grotesque sacrifice, a sacrifice which has turned into its opposite, reverses this containment. The 'sacrifice' of the hare is itself uncontained savagery. So too the violence at Troy is both a sacrifice and a hunt; and the Greek army is in its capture of Troy like a lion 'that eats raw meat'.[8]

An *epic* portent that Seaford contrasts with this specifically *tragic* portent occurs at *Iliad* 2.303–30, and takes place during a traditional Greek act of sacrifice: a snake emerges from underneath the altar and, before it is turned to stone by Zeus, devours a nest of young sparrows along with the mother bird.[9] Kalchas interprets the nine birds as representing nine years of fighting, after which the Greeks will be victorious. Solidarity is exhibited inside the kinship circle, brutality outside it, for in the case of epic, the portent enters the sacrifice, marking it as acceptable.[10]

It comes as no surprise that this concern with attempting to make amends for the past either by recasting its sacrificial violence or by amending the present has been particularly crucial for contemporary thinkers. Walter Benjamin and Max Horkheimer

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[7] Seaford, 'Homeric and Tragic Sacrifice', 89.

[8] Seaford, 'Homeric and Tragic Sacrifice', 89; see also *Agam.* 65, 357–60, 694–5, 735, and Vidal-Naquet, 'Hunting and Sacrifice', 150–74. Also, see *Agam.* 827–88, and the sacrifice at line 735.

[9] Traditional in the sense that an altar is present.

[10] Compare this to *Agam.* 105–59.

participated in a lengthy dialogue precisely over whether there can ever be a justice that makes peace with the past. For Horkheimer, there continued to exist

> an illusion which can be exposed but not entirely banished. It is the image of a perfect justice. It is impossible that such justice should ever become a reality *within history*. For, even if a better society develops and eliminates the present disorder, there will be no compensation for the wretchedness of past ages and no end to the distress in nature.[11]

Horkheimer even compared such desires to eschatological beliefs, a naïve hope in a teleological resolution:

> What has happened to past generations, no future can mend. They will never be called up to be rewarded in eternity. Nature and society have left their evil imprint on them and the idea of a Last Judgment, reflective though it may be of the infinite longing of the repressed and the dying, is but a residue of primitive thought which fails to understand the insignificant role man has been playing in natural history and which falsely humanizes the universe.[12]

Benjamin disagreed, and in 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', he strove 'after a conception of history that will not renounce a basic solidarity with the past generations of the oppressed and slain, but will preserve that solidarity and thus grasp history as the history of suffering (*Leidensgeschichte*)'.[13] In contrast to the pessimism of his friend, he continued to believe that whatever sacrifices past generations have made, there could be a self-sacrifice made by present generations which would overcome pain and suffering, and which would ensure the future happiness of generations to come in a world in which sacrifice had been rendered inconsequential.[14]

The trauma theorist and literary scholar Shoshana Felman claims that the metaphor borrowed from cosmology of the 'black hole' is especially relevant in discussions of the difficulty of rational discourse to articulate remembered traumatic events.[15] According to Felman, the nature of the process of historical recollecting she calls 'testimony' is essentially fragmentary; similar to tragedy, such witnessing is marked

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[11] Horkheimer, 'Thoughts on Religion', *Critical Theory*, p. 130. Emphasis mine.

[12] Horkheimer, *Kritische Theorie*, i: 198. Cited in Davis, *Theology and Political Society*, p. 142.

[13] Cited in Davis, *Theology and Political Society*, p. 142.

[14] Such was also the hope of Georges Bataille; see his 'Sacrifice', and 'Hegel, Death and Sacrifice'.

[15] A concept expressed most clearly in Felman and Laub, *Testimony*.

by its inability to be put into a cognitive framework of understanding.[16] This sense of fragmentation, which is articulated by trauma theorists as a sort of wound, acts like the black hole in that it tends to cause all other forms of narrative to gravitate toward it. 'The black hole is the ever-open wound of traumatic memory that cannot be articulated within the structure of rational discourse. Such memory demands transformation into testimony that, paradoxically, becomes testimony to its own impossibility.'[17] Moreover, this has specific and destructive effects on storytelling:

> 'Traumatic memory is the nemesis of narration. If it is articulated at all, it is only through a discourse of rupture and fragmentation that mutely gestures at what cannot be encompassed by the discredited structures of causality, continuity, and closure.'[18]

Nevertheless, those who suffer trauma retain a strong desire to read continuity and causality into their own life and their own stories, a desire to 'tame the sublime'. Gomel gives the example of Primo Levi, who relates in *Survival in Auschwitz* his decision to recite Dante's *Divine Comedy* to another prisoner, Jean, to whom he had been teaching Italian in exchange for French. since it 'is vitally necessary and urgent that he listen that he understand [...] before it is too late'.[19] 'Levi's only hope is to rejoin humanity through the bridge of storytelling [...] what sustains him is not silence but words'.[20] Todorov has noted that this story also differentiates two sorts of horror: the intelligible hell of Dante's *Inferno*, and the senseless hell of Auschwitz.[21] His choice to recite Canto XXVI (*Godi, Fiorenza, poi che se' sì grande*), where Ulysses speaks to Vergil of his *folle volo* ('insane flight'),[22] suggests something of the bittersweet nature of traumatic recollection.[23]

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[16] Cited from 'Education and Crisis, or the Vicissitudes of Teaching', Caruth (ed), *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, p. 16.

[17] Gomel, *Bloodscripts*, p. 163

[18] Gomel, *Bloodscripts*, p. 164. She adds that the 'writing of "traumatized history" produces a discourse that undercuts its own tendency to generate meaning'.

[19] Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, p. 104.

[20] Gomel, *Bloodscripts*, p. 177

[21] Todorov, *Facing the Extreme*, p. 93; discussed in Gomel, *Bloodscripts*, p. 177

[22] *Inferno*, trans Pinsky, p. 223.

[23] Todorov contrasts this (*Facing the Extreme*, p. 94) with the self-mockery evidenced by Jean Améry in his own Holocaust memoir *At the Mind's Limits*.

Up to a point, generations of medieval thinkers seem to have been engaged in a similar dialogue concerning narrative, violence and oblivion. Patrick Geary has argued that the very processes of veneration and preservation of tradition through which early medieval European communities managed to make sense of their past substantially transformed them in the process. In the constant decisions over what was useful and what was not, over what to keep and what to discard, lurked the anxiety of oblivion, the need of those in the present to bury certain aspects of the discarded past for good.[24] If true, it is not difficult to perceive what place sacrificial violence might have within such a culture. We have already seen how heroic sacrifice has as its primary purpose the simultaneous acts of initiation and cessation, new beginnings and closure, within a model of epic conflict and consummation. Depictions of heroic sacrifice in literary texts function, therefore, both as one lens by which we might read the culture, and also as an active interpretative model within the culture itself. Charlemagne's sacrifice of the boar at the conclusion of the hunt demonstrates the king's power and strength on a small scale, in preparation for what would we assume will be a far greater show of power in defense of church, Rome, and Pope Leo. The tale of the swimming match with Breca in *Beowulf*, during which Beowulf claims to have slain numerous small fish, is in capsule form an example of his prowess prior to the fight with Grendel. And, although the heroic scale is different in significance, Judith's sacrifice of Holofernes, a far greater deed than these, gains its meaning through its function as a foreshadowing of the relatively easy, yet triumphant, victory the Jews will have over the Assyrians by the end of the Old English *Judith*. In these poems, I have read them as offering a comforting, inspiring, vision of triumph to the audience of the world of their composition, whether that be the early ninth century in Francia, or in Dane-ravaged England. Such were the models Abbo and the *Maldon*-poet had in mind when they composed their own heroic narratives, and each stressed the attraction and purpose of heroic sacrifice.

In the year 793, the community of monks on the tiny Northumbrian island of Lindisfarne was attacked, and the resultant bloodshed and destruction quickly became known on the continent, where the English expatriate Alcuin would be engaged in the

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[24] Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, p. 8.

education of Charlemagne and his court. We know of the raid only indirectly, through letters of those who were not there but who had heard the reports brought to their ears perhaps not even by eyewitnesses, but its effects are fairly clear. The issue which troubled Alcuin, and apparently the members of the communities at Lindisfarne and at the neighboring monasteries of Monkwearmouth and Jarrow, was how to make sense of the destruction. Struck by the bloodshed, the loss of both valuable objects and security, and the resultant terror, religious men of letters questioned how and why such a catastrophe could have occurred. Had they been abandoned by their saints? Had a grievous sin or insult against God been committed?[25]

Alcuin had come to the Carolingian court from York shortly beforehand, and he was grievously affected by the attack, to judge from his extant texts that touch upon the raid. We have several letters of his that offer advice to ecclesiastic figures in Northumbria, and also a lengthy poem that attempts to make sense of the raid in Biblical and literary terms.[26] Alcuin's poem seems to have been intended as a form of consolation to those brothers remaining behind at Lindisfarne, and who were shaken by the irruption of this violence and chaos into their previously whole and hallowed existence.[27] Rather than a lament for a lost way of life, or a poem of despair, Alcuin offers up a *consolatio* of praise and perseverance, continually emphasizing the theme of endurance through times of suffering and worldly misfortune. The poem begins, appropriately enough, with the expulsion of Adam from the Garden ('Postquam primus homo paradisi liquerat hortos'), for Alcuin takes the themes of exile and misery as his starting place. Success is ephemeral, happiness unpredictable, and nothing remains eternal under heaven.

> Nunc micat alma dies, veniet nox atra tenebris,
> Ver floret gemmis, hiems ferit hocque decus.
> Sidereum stellis culmen depingitur almis
> Quas nubes rapiunt imbriferae subito.

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[25] For an overview, see Coupland, 'The Rod of God's Wrath'. See also Garrison, 'The Bible and Alcuin's Interpretation'.

[26] *Epp.* xix–xxii, xxiv, Dümmler (ed.), MGH *Epp.*, 2: 53–60, 65.

[27] Dümmler (ed.), MGH PLAC i: 229–35. The traditional title, 'De clade lindisfarnensis monasterii', originated neither with its author nor its sole manuscript witness (MS London, British Library Harley 3685), but from its seventeenth-century editor André Duchesne (*Andreas Quercetanus*). The poem has no title in the manuscript, and recent scholarship has begun to refer to it more obliquely as *carmen ix*, and I shall follow their example. See Garrison, 'Alcuin, *Carmen IX*', p. 67 n. 20.

Et sol ipse die media subducitur ardens,
Cum tonat undosus auster ab axe poli.
Saepius excelsos feriunt et fulgura montes,
Summaque silvarum flamma ferire solet;
Sic maior magnis subito saepissime rebus
Eveniet casu forte ruina malo.[28] (*carmen* ix.17–26)

'Thus even more often will tremendous ruin unforeseen befall great affairs with an evil end' ('Sic maior magnis subito saepissime rebus / Eveniet casu forte ruina malo'): words which might represent a Christian version of the sentiment expressed in Lucan's own celebrated verses, 'in se magna ruunt: laetis hunc numina rebus / crescendi posuere modum' ('Great things rush in upon themselves: hence do the gods place limits to the joys of the one on the rise.').[29] He continues with reminders of the vanity of worldly treasures, entreaties not to allow the trials of this world to defeat the brothers' true purpose (Heaven), and a reminder that the shepherds must safeguard their sheep.

Non est quippe deus poenis culpandus in istis,
Sed nostra in melius vita ferenda cito
Et pia flectenda est precibus clementia nostris.[30] (231–3)

Alcuin's apparent equanimity in this poem stands in sharp contrast to an earlier letter he had written to Bishop Higbald, one that had sounded, perhaps, a quiet tone of slight despair:

> Quid nobis dicendum est, nisi plangendum animo vobiscum ante altare Christi, et dicere: 'Parce, Domine, parce populo tuo, et ne des hereditatem tuam gentibus, ne dicant pagani, ubi est Deus christianorum?' Quae est fiducia ecclesiis Brittaniae, si sanctus Cuthbertus cum tanto sanctorum numero suam non defendit? Aut hoc maioris initium est doloris aut peccata habitantium hoc exigerunt. Non equidem casu contingit, sed magni cuiuslibet

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[28] 'The glorious day now shines, the black night will come with shadows; spring blossoms with its jewels, winter strikes this splendor. The starry sky is painted with gleaming stars, which the rainbearing clouds snatch suddenly away. Even the burning sun itself is subdued at noon when the billowy South wind thunders from its polar axis. Quite often lightning strikes even high mountains, and fire is wont to strike the crowns of the forest: thus even more often will tremendous ruin unforeseen befall great affairs with an evil end.'

[29] A theme given a most eloquent representation, but not its genesis, by the Roman poet. For an overview of this *topos* in Classical literature, see Dutoit, 'Le thème de la force', 365–73.

[30] 'Surely God should not be blamed for these punishments, but rather our own life ought to be better borne, and quickly, and his pious mercy ought to be influenced by our prayers.'

meriti indicium est.[31]

By the time of his writing *carmen ix*, such despair had been carefully replaced by a tone, if not of celebration, perhaps, than at least of pious acceptance. This calamity, although a shocking *nefas* beyond the memories of the Lindisfarne monks, was not truly unforeseen. Cities had been sacked before, civilizations had crumbled, heathen invaders had come to lay waste to towns and villages with sword and fire; such things, Alcuin notes, the Lord permits to happen, for reasons which must remain unknown, *iudicio occulto*, and the Christian must look to the world to come, in which 'blessed peace thrives, and no battles occur' ('pax alma viget, praelia nulla fiunt'). Gold is tested in fire, and, as Alcuin reminded Higbald in his earlier letter to the bishop, 'God chastises every son whom he accepts, so perhaps he has chastised you more because he loves you more.'[32] In addition to such consolation, Alcuin offers practical advice in a series of letters, in which he reminds the brothers to avoid sinful interests and frivolous activities, such as the wearing of extravagant clothing and fox hunting. In that same letter to Higbald, Alcuin reminds the bishop of the example of Judas Maccabeus, the 'hammer' of God who led the rebellion against the Syrian Antiochus, recaptured Jerusalem, and purified the altar of the Temple at Jerusalem; Alcuin warned them to 'stand like men, fight bravely and defend the camp of God' ('state viriliter, pugnate fortiter, defendite castra Dei'). As we shall see, advice of this sort, to modify and improve one's habits and mores, combined with a concern for pollution and defense from pagan elements, remained popular at century's end as well; Abbo ends his second book with a caustic apostrophe to Francia itself, whose 'threefold' vice has brought shame and destruction upon her. His third book could be read as a series of maxims aimed at improving the conduct of the ecclesiastics, and in the process delivering the nation from the scourge of the Northmen.[33]

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[31] 'What can I say save weep from my heart before the altar of Christ, and say: "O Lord, spare, spare thy people, and do not give the Gentiles thine inheritance, lest the pagans say, Where is the God of the Christians?" What assurance can the churches of Britain have, if St Cuthbert and so great a company of saints do not defend their own? Or is this the beginning of greater sorrow, or the result of the sins of the inhabitants? It has not happened by chance, but is the mark of some great fault': Alcuin, *Ep.* 20, dated to 793, Dümmler (ed.), MGH *Epp.*, ii: 57–8.

[32] *Ep.* 20, tr. Allott, *Alcuin of York*, p. 37.

[33] Alcuin is of course not the only model for such strings of maxims. Theodulf composed a lengthy, and famous, collection of precepts for priests.

Alcuin was therefore not the only writer of his time to suggest that the Christian victims of Scandinavian aggression were being punished by God for their sins.[34] A large number of authors found the warning in Jer 1:14–16 especially appropriate under the circumstances:

> Et dixit Dominus ad me: Ab aquilone pandetur malum super omnes habitatores terrae; Quia ecce ego convocabo omnia regna aquilonis, ait Dominus, et venient et ponent unusquisque solium suum in introitu portarum Ierusalem et contra omnes muros eius in circuitu et contra universas urbes Iudae; et loquar iudicia mea cum eis super omnem malitiam eorum, qui dereliquerunt me et incensum obtulerunt diis alienis et adoraverunt opus manuum suarum.[35]

The temptation to draw direct links between Biblical warnings and contemporary events was great: witness the decision by Paschasius Radbertus to include a reference to the mid-ninth century assault on Paris by the Viking raider Ragnar in his commentary on Lam 4:12: 'Non crediderunt reges terrae et universi habitatores orbis, quoniam ingrederetur hostis et inimicus per portas Ierusalem'.[36] Paschasius poses a series of questions for the reader, drawing connections between the Biblical event and current affairs:

> Unde et adhuc hodie non minus pertimescimus, ut piratae diversis admodum collecti ex familiis, Parisiorum attingerent fines, ecclesiasque Christi hinc inde igne cremarent circa littus. Quis unquam, quaeso, crederet quod latrones promiscuae gentis unquam talia auderent? vel quis aestimare potuisset quod tam gloriosum regnum, tamque munitum et latissimum, tam populosum et firmissimum, talium hominum humiliari vel foedari sordibus deberet?[37]

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[34] For a survey of the issues and relevant scholarship, see Coupland, 'The Rod of God's Wrath'.

[35] 'And the Lord said to me: from the north shall an evil break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land. for behold I will call together all the families of the kingdoms of the north: saith the Lord: and they shall come, and shall set every one his throne in the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, and upon all the walls thereof round about, and upon all the cities of Juda'. Quotations from the Latin Vulgate text are taken from Weber (ed.), *Biblia sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem*; English trans. from the Douai-Rheims version (1582–1609), rev. by Richard Challoner (1749–50).

[36] 'The kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world would not have believed, that the adversary and the enemy should enter in by the gates of Jerusalem'.

[37] *Expositio in Lamentationes Ierimiae*, I, letter Lamed, PL 120, col. 1220: ('Thus we fear no less even today, since pirates, collected from altogether diverse tribes, have struck the bounds of Paris, and have burned with fire the churches of Christ here and there along the shore. Who would ever have believed, I ask, that robbers of an undistinguished race would have dared to do such things? or who could have thought that so glorious a kingdom, so fortified and very wide, so populous and steadfast, ought to be abased and befouled by the filth of such men?').

The St-Bertin annalist commented more soberly on the events of 845, but still noted that the devastation wrought by the Scandinavian raiders was brought about because 'peccatis nostris divinae bonitatis aequitas nimium offensa taliter christianorum terras et regna attriverit'.[38] The concerns of barbarian invasion, of civil war and fratricide, of the dissolution of an empire: all such calamaties seemed to the Franks to mirror similar occurrences from Biblical history as well as the history of Rome herself. The lessons were plentiful, should the diligent reader but seek them.

The corollary to the pain of transgression, however, is that attonement for it could be made, thus restoring the order of the world. Alcuin's suggestions for the English monks are practical and straightforward in nature. The sense remains that God is angry, but has not deserted his people; if the thought occurs to a writer, it is eventually replaced by the idea that the situation could be reversed. The St-Bertin annalist concludes his entry with a story of how God accomplished the vengeance that mortal *duces* had failed to carry out:

> Ne tamen etiam pagani improvidentiae aut certe impotentiae Dominum omnipotentissimum ac providentissimum inpune diutius insimularent, cum a quodam monasterio direpto incensoque oneratis navibus repedarent, ita divino iudicio vel tenebris caecati vel insania sunt perculsi, ut vix perpauci evaderent, qui Dei omnipotentis iram ceteris nunciarent.[39]

Such a remark indicates the poles between which observers of the strife of the ninth and tenth centuries were constantly driven: the sense that the violence, chaos, and destruction wrought upon the Christian empire was a deserved punishment, and the delight in seeing their enemies smote by a God who had not forsaken them. Civil war and invasion had revealed not only the precariousness of earthly happpiness, but also the weaknesses innate to those men that many had hoped would continue the journey toward the peace and prosperity that Charlemagne had initiated. In the words of Agobard of Lyons' student

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[38] '[...]God [=*aequitas*] in his goodness and justice, so much offended by our sins, had thus worn down the lands and kingdoms of the Christians', Waitz (ed.), *Annales Bertiniani*, *s.a.* 845, p. 33. At this point the writer was probably Prudentius, bishop of Troyes from 843 or 844: see Nelson, *The Annals of St-Bertin*, pp. 7–9.

[39] Waitz (ed.), *Annales Bertiniani*, *s.a.* 845, p. 33: 'so that the pagans should no longer go unpunished in falsely accusing the most improvident Lord of improvidence and even powerlessness, when they were going away in ships loaded with booty from a certain monastery which they had sacked and burned, they were struck down by divine judgement either with blindness or insanity, so severely that only a very few escaped to tell the rest about the might of God'; tr. Nelson, *The Annals of St-Bertin*, pp. 61–2.

Florus, the gradual deterioration of Carolingian power represented a 'trampled garland', the metaphor symbolizing a crown of flowers, 'once splendid with the different scents of sweet-smelling herbs', but now 'cast down from the head', the 'pinnacle of power, fallen from its great heights.'[40] As Alcuin had decried the loss of Lindisfarne in 793, so did Florus, looking upon a glory this time destroyed, not by an external terror, but by internal forces of discord, lament the Carolingian crown reduced to *Brüderkrieg* and bloody conflict, an 'endurance of suffering' which represented for him, as it had for Alcuin, 'a trial imposed by divine justice'.[41]

An interpretation of these events from the viewpoint of Charles the Bald has come down to us in the form of Nithard's *Histories*. Long approached as a trustworthy history of a troubled time, albeit one biased in favor of Charles against his elder brother Lothar, recent interpretations have offered a more skeptical, yet even-more revealing, reading of this text.[42] Nelson has stressed the likelihood that its intended audience was a small set of Charles' followers, laymen who were able to understand Nithard's straightforward Latin style and who had an inherent and developed interest in the furthering of 'public utility'.[43] This phrase, which Nithard uses in his first book, when he stated that Charlemagne had so tamed the hearts of the Franks that they dared do nothing that was not in concordance with this public utility, is echoed continually throughout his text. As one who shares this sense of utility, Nithard took great pains to show how Charles the Bald takes every step to avoid bloodshed through the means that negotiation and political ritual had made available, and that the decisions were made 'unanimously with common consent' of 'noble, wise, and well-intentioned men including bishops and some laymen'.[44] These pains were necessary, since interpretation of the events according to an 'epic' model was at stake. The outcome of the battle—Charles as victor, Lothar

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[40] The translations are from Godman, *Poets and Emperors*, p. 149; original in Florus of Lyons, *Querela de divisione imperii*, lines 69–72. Discussions of Florus and his various works (which played a role in the controversies surrounding Amalarius of Metz) have been scant: see Godman, *Poetry*, pp. 50–1.

[41] Godman, *Poets and Emperors*, p. 149.

[42] See, for example, Nelson, 'Public *Histories*'.

[43] Nelson, 'Public *Histories*', 257–9, contrary to Fried, 'Der karolingische Herrschaftsverband', 11–14, who maintained that Carolingian political obligations were of an essentially personal nature.

[44] Nithard, *Histoire*, 2.9, p. 68; as per Nelson and Pacht.

vanquished, his supporter Archbishop Ebbo fled—was seen as a sign from God, but only by the victors.

The concern for controlling the narrative is present in the preface to Nithard's Book Three, in which he voices concern that a false version of the events at Fontenoy might be told by anyone deceived in any manner ('ne forte quilibet quocumque modo deceptus res nostro in tempore gestas, praeterquam exactae sunt, narrare praesumat'). He frames this decision to enlarge upon his account as a matter of necessity, his own sense (and, if we believe he is writing at his lord's behest, likely Charles' as well) that he must take up the pen again, albeit reluctantly, and add another book in order to yield to his sense of public good ('tertium libellum ut adderem acquievi').[45] It is this book that contains the Strasbourg Oaths, and which ends with Lothar fleeing with only a handful of followers. Yet by Book Four, Nithard seems to have grown despondent over the deeds of princes and lords, and claims to have turned to writing the book in order that he might, if nothing else, wipe away the 'little cloud of error' for posterity.[46]

'FURY HAD DESTROYED HIS FACE': GRUESOME VIOLENCE AS DISORDER

As I hope to have shown in the previous chapter, the concept of heroic sacrifice is of central importance to the mechanism of epic poetry and to the sense of Christian history; yet not all sacrifices are successful, and certainly not all are heroic. As noted by numerous readers of the *Aeneid*, Vergil's poem begins and ends with sacrifice, although in each case their precise nature is enigmatic. The first sacrifice of the poem is contained in the story told by the deceiver Sinon concerning the Wooden Horse (intended, the Trojans come to believe, as an 'offering' (*donum*) for Minerva, *Aeneid* 2.31) followed by Laocoon's own interrupted offering to Neptune (*Aeneid* 2.199–227); the last book closes with Aeneas' slaying/sacrifice of Turnus (*Aeneid* 12.948–9).[47] Sinon claims to have

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[45] Nithard, *Histoire*, p. 80.

[46] Nithard writes 'saltem in his erroris nubeculam proprio labore posteris detergam': Müller (ed.), *Nithardi historiarum*, p. 39. Compare Boethius, *Consolatio*, III, metrum 1: 'Suis retrusum possidere thesauris: / Dudum quod atra *texit erroris nubes*, / Lucebit ipso perspicacius Phoebo'. The text bears a similarity as well to I Reg 18:44, and Is 6:2, cited by Jerome in his letter to Damasus *ca.* 378/80.

[47] See Hardie, *Epic Successors*, pp. 19–26, and Burkert, *Structure and History*, pp. 61–2. Also see the commentary of Austin, *Aeneidos: Liber secundus*, pp. 41–2.

escaped becoming a sacrificial victim himself at the hands of Odysseus and the Greeks (a *dolum*). This story of an interrupted sacrifice foreshadows Laocoon's own interrupted sacrifice and his grisly substitution, where he becomes, through his gruesome death at the coils of the serpents, akin to the bull he had intended to sacrifice, his *clamores* substituting for the *mugitus* of the wounded animal (*Aeneid* 2.223–4). Such interruptions and confusions of ritual patterns of sacrifice initiate, in the *Aeneid*, the events which lead first to the destruction of Troy, and eventually to the violent series of conflicts and interruptions to the social order which the poem's later books are concerned with, a series which culminates in the death of Turnus.[48] The attempt to harmonize the social discord that threatens war, exemplified in Book Twelve through the attempted *foedus* between the Latin and Trojan camps (12.161–215), fails, the pact 'is broken by fresh violence, and the torches of war are burned from the sacred altar fires.'[49] Whether we are convinced by the analysis of this chain of events as an almost-textbook case of Girard's 'sacrifical crisis', which occurs when a near-total breakdown in societal order must be resolved through violence directed upon a surrogate victim, the *Aeneid* pushes forward in an apparent attempt to reach a resolution to this bloody series of blunted or unfinished sacrifices and violent discord.[50]

The other end of the spectrum from heroic sacrifice is random and unanticipated violence, and this comes in two separate guises, which I have termed 'traumatic sacrifice' and 'horrific sacrifice'. Traumatic sacrifice is sacrificial violence which cannot be placed within a narrative context, which cannot be given explanation; horrific sacrifice is sacrificial action which fails to act as truly initiatory or cessatory in its action, but rather serves only to further the cycle of violence, often taking the recurrent and nightmarish guise of vengeance. The preeminent poet of this form of horror was Lucan, who has long been seen as offering a critical response to Vergil's own narrative 'project', in turns reassessing the value of epic machinery and images, and of heroic sacrifice, in his

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[48] Nicoll, 'The Death of Turnus'.

[49] Hardie, *Epic Successors*, p. 20.

[50] Hardie, *Epic Successors*, and Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, p. 49. Compare the view of Bandera, 'Sacrificial Levels', which Hardie has depended on, and the somewhat contrary view of Smith, 'Deception and Sacrifice', each discussed above, **00–00**.

unfinished poem on the Roman civil war. For some critics, the *Bellum civile* is the anti-*Aeneid*, offering a withering critique of political ambition while celebrating the substance of defeat.[51]

If it is Lucan who 'explores most insistently the topic of the sacrifice of the one for the many', it is also to Lucan we must turn to see the topic questioned most insistently, and who details the horrific nature of traumatic sacrifice most clearly.[52] In Lucan's *Bellum civile*, the chaos of sacrificial violence breaks through the tissue of civilization, and limits are consistently transgressed. Although epic in its form, readers have long noted that such a poem cannot have a conventional hero, since civil war features violence against one's own people, and is a serious crime, not a moment for glory. Lucan repeatedly reminds his readers that the essential Roman trait of *virtus* has been rejected by the actors of his poem in favor of ambition, and that conflicts are merely ironic self-destruction.[53] Any sacrifices are thus not heroic, but will be grotesque, horrific, and reflective of the greater civil trauma being experienced by the society of the poem.[54] The *aristeia* of the centurion Scaeva (*Bellum civile* 6.140–262) is perhaps the most graphic depiction of the inherently grotesque nature of self-sacrifice in the midst of a civil war, a conflict which Lucan cooly shades by his remark (at 1.667–8) that *scelerique nefando / nomen erit virtus* ('Virtue will be the name for unspeakable crime').[55]

Scaeva single-handedly prevents a breakthrough at the fort of Dyrrachium by Pompey's army. The incident is mentioned by Caesar (at *Civile bellum* 3.53.4), who notes that Scaeva's shield was brought to him with 120 perforated holes made by the

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[51] See Martindale, *Redeeming the Text*, pp. 48–53; and Quint, *Epic and Empire*.

[52] Hardie, *Epic Successors*, p. 30. I have used the edition of Shackleton Bailey (ed.).

[53] See Ahl, *Lucan*; Gorman, 'Lucan's Epic *Aristeia*', and Saylor, '*Belli spes inproba*'.

[54] I am using the term grotesque as most elaborately defined by Harpham, in his excursus *On the Grotesque*, pp. 3–22, although in an admittedly more constricted sense, of that which repulses, yet remains seemingly unfinished, and which retains its sense of a ruptured narrative.

[55] The *aristeia* of Scaeva is sensitively analyzed by Johnson, *Momentary Monsters*, pp. 57–60. As noted by Leigh, *Lucan: Spectacle and Engagement* (p. 159 n. 1), the majority of commentators on this scene have stressed the importance of the concept of *virtus* to its understanding. Hardie's analysis (*Epic Successors*, pp. 68–9) is one to which I am indebted, also. Among the numerous commentators, see Conte, *Saggio di commento*, pp. 257–62; Marti, 'Cassius Scaeva'; and Rutz, '*Amor mortis*'.

weapons of Pompey's men, presumedly from some of the 30,000 arrows discharged in the melee. Caesar goes on to remark that for 'services to himself and to the Republic' Scaeva was rewarded with 200,000 sesterces as well as a promotion (*primipilus*).[56] Scaeva is also discussed by Valerius Maximus (3.2.23), in whose account the centurion is compared to C. Acilius, who was at Marseilles, and who adds the information that Scaeva was the commander at Dyrrachium, and that he was wounded specifically in the head, shoulder, and thigh, and lost an eye. That he survived is made clear through his presence at a later battle of Britain, a feature noted also by Plutarch (*Caesar* 16), Suetonius (*Caesar* 68), and Appian (*Bellum civile* 2.60).[57]

The description of Scaeva's *aristeia* in Lucan, although lacking some of these specifics, is rich in sacrificial metaphor and violent narrative detail. If Scaeva begins, as Johnson remarks, as a mere face in the crowd, by the time he concludes he has become an ironic adaptation of the sacrificial law, one man massed against an entire army (*parque nouum Fortuna uidet concurrere, bellum / atque uirum*, 6.191–2).[58] His rebuke to the cowards who flee places him firmly in the tradition of the single warrior, alone in the fight. Yet this solitude makes him no less powerful.[59] The poet compares, quite appropriately, Scaeva to a city wall, one immune to ordinary weapons of the warrior, and can be surmounted only with siege engines (*Bellum civile*, 6.247–8).[60] The comparison is made more emphatic by Lucan's aside that the enemy weapons stick in his body as if it was a wall. First sighted standing upon the wall of the fort, the warrior becomes a wall himself.[61] For Lucan, walls themselves seem to represent a limit which he fears will be transgressed by Caesar in his insanity, and this single battle in turn represents the greater violation to come, as Rome itself becomes violated by the aggression of Caesar: 'the pressure for civil war, the confusion of purposes with the wall, the violation of limits both

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[56] See discussion in Marti, 'Cassius Scaeva and Lucan's *Inventio*'.

[57] Marti, 'Cassius Scaeva', pp. 244–5.

[58] Johnson, *Momentary Monsters*, p. 57.

[59] Indeed, Leigh offers a convincing discussion of Scaeva as the heroic exemplar of Lucan's poem; see Leigh, *Lucan: Spectacle and Engagement*, pp. 158–90.

[60] Compare *Aeneid* 9.704 (reference cited by Marti, 'Cassius Scaeva and Lucan's *Inventio*', pp. 248).

[61] See also 6.198, and compare Ovid, *Met.* 11.509. Numerous grisly touches seem to recall Ovid, including *Met.* 5.1–235, and *Met.* 12.209–523 (cited by Johnson, *Momentary Monsters*, p. 58 n.25).

natural and human, and the turning of destruction on [the warrior] self[...]. Caesar brings to bear not against Dyrrachium but against Rome itself'.[62]

> ille ruenti
> aggere consistit, primumque cadauera plenis
> turribus euoluit subeuntisque obruit hostis
> corporibus, totaeque uiro dant tela ruinae,
> roboraque et moles hosti seque ipse minatur.
> nunc sude nunc duro contraria pectora conto
> detrudit muris, et ualli summa tenentis
> amputat ense manus; caput obterit ossaque saxo
> ac male defensum fragili conpage cerebrum
> dissipat; alterius flamma crinesque genasque
> succendit, strident oculis ardentibus ignes.[63] (6.169–79)

Compared to a leopard (*pardum*, 6.183), Scaeva has hacked so many enemies that he has blunted his sword, which now causes injury without the drawing of blood. His helmet and armor, too, have been reduced to splintered fragments offering no protection, and Scaeva's unprotected body receives the brunt of the blows:

> [...] fortis crebris sonat ictibus umbo,
> et galeae fragmenta cauae conpressa perurunt
> tempora, nec quicquam nudis uitalibus obstat
> iam praeter stantis in summis ossibus hastas.[64] (6.192–5)

Yet, as Lucan, notes, it is not he, but Pompey's men, whose sanity must be called into question when facing such a terrible force of Nature:

> quid nunc, uaesani, iaculis leuibusue sagittis
> perditis haesuros numquam uitalibus ictus?
> hunc aut tortilibus uibrata falarica neruis
> obruat aut uasti muralia pondera saxi,
> hunc aries ferro ballistaque limine portae
> promoueat. stat non fragilis pro Caesare murus
> Pompeiumque tenet. iam pectora non tegit armis,

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[62] Saylor, '*Belli spes inproba*', 255.

[63] 'On the tumbling ramp he takes his stand and first rolled out the corpses from the towers full of them and, as the enemy approached, he buried them with bodies; and all the ruined mass provides the warrior with weapons; with timbers, boulders, with himself, he menaces the enemy. Now with stakes and now with hardened poles he thrusts back from the walls opposing breasts; with his sword he chops off hands which grab the ramparts top; with a rock he crushes head and bones and scatters brains protected ill by flimsy skull; another's hair and cheeks he sets aflame; the fires hiss as the eyes burn': trans. Braund, *Lucan*, p. 111.

[64] 'His stout shield-boss resounds with frequent blows and crumpled fragments of his hollow helmet chafe his temples and nothing now protects his naked vitals except the spears sticking fast in the surface of his bones': trans. Braund, *Lucan*, p. 112.

> ac ueritus credi clipeo laeuaque uacasse
> aut culpa uixisse sua tot uolnera belli
> solus obit densamque ferens in pectore siluam
> iam gradibus fessis, in quem cadat, eligit hostem.[65] (6.196–206)

Scaeva's transformation into impersonal object is near completion, as he emulates the besieged ramparts by tumbling bodily onto his enemy. Just as the walls themselves of a besiged city, Scaeva is neither truly defensible nor humanly vulnerable. Yet, in case we have become accustomed to thinking of the centurion as somehow beyond the human, Lucan jolts us back to a reminder of his humanity—and therefore the scene's true horror—with one of his more memorable and grisly touches:

> Dictaea procul, ecce, manu Gortynis harundo
> tenditur in Scaeuam, quae uoto certior omni
> in caput atque oculi laeuom descendit in orbem.
> ille moras ferri neruorum et uincula rumpit
> adfixam uellens oculo pendente sagittam
> intrepidus, telumque suo cum lumine calcat. [...]
> perdiderat uoltum rabies, stetit imbre cruento
> informis facies.[66] (6.214–9, 224–5)

Perdiderat uoltum rabies: 'fury had destroyed his face'. This typical Lucanian moment of 'gore' (at which more than one commentator has blanched)[67] has several purposes in the scene beyond revulsion and the underlying message for Roman society. The brutality freely embraced by Scaeva marks, for Lucan, the brutality enacted by Caesar upon nature itself; the mutiliations accepted by Scaeva further mark his own loss of heroic identity in the battle, replaced by the *vestigium* of Caesar's command for unspeakable violence against his people. Jamie Masters' sensitive reading of the depiction of the sacred groves

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[65] 'Madmen, why now with your javelins and light arrows do you waste blows doomed never to fasten in his vitals? He must be crushed by the falarica propelled by twisted cords or by wall-breaching weight of a mighty stone; he must be pushed back by iron ram and by ballista whirled on the threshold. Firm he stands, no frail wall in front of Caesar, and keeps Pompey back. He no longer protects his breast with weapons, in fear that men will think his shield and left hand idle or blame him for surviving, and all the many wounds of war he meets alone and, bearing in his breast a dense forest, with steps now weary, he selects an enemy on whom to fall': trans. Braund, *Lucan*, p. 112.

[66] 'From far away—look!—a Gortynian shaft is aimed by Dictaean hand at Scaeva: sent more surely than any prayer could hope, it falls upon his head and enters his left eyeball. He breaks the weapon's obstacle and muscles' ligaments, boldly tearing out the arrow clinging with the eyeball dangling, and tramples on the weapon together with his own eye. [...] His frenzy had destroyed his features, his disfigured face was stiff with a bloody stream': trans. Braund, *Lucan*, p. 112.

[67] See Hadas, 'Later Latin Epic and Lucan'.

before the naval battle at Massilia similarly demonstrates how willing Caesar is to deface and brutalize nature itself for the sake of his ambition.[68] This willing and grotesque brutalization extends to the bodies of the soldiers, who, described repeatedly by means of the word *robur*, are, transformed into trees, easily and cruelly felled by battle, becoming no more than anonymous *trunci*, shorn of their humanity and split into fragments.[69]

Reading Medieval Trauma

Acts of violence are by no means foreign to readers of early medieval literature, but when they appear, they are usually found within a recognizeable context, allegorized or interpreted within the strictures of a comprehensible design. A medieval reader, well-versed in the Bible, would not be unfamiliar with scenes of warfare or depictions of cruelty; nor would they have been troubled by their existence (for such is the condition of fallen man in a transient world), as long as the overall design remained sensible. Often, acts of literary violence are depicted as a continuous conflict between opposites (good and evil, light and dark), or as unavoidable within the context of a feud, within which there would be found both ascendant and descendant forces. More importantly, acts of violence could be perceived in literary contexts as adhering to, or fulfilling, certain designs, and revealing certain patterns. These patterns, familiar as the Boethian and Augustinian conceptions of history, were useful whether authors treated of historical or legendary matters, or contemporary events. Most often, the Boethian model could offer some comfort to victims of the horror of contemporary violence, for this was nothing if not a reminder of the fickle qualities of human endeavour and vanity, and *consolatio* could be had by turning one's attention instead to the eternal realms of God. Yet, there were times when the resultant violence and discord seemed to stagger even the Boethian mind, resisting comprehension and evading such an interpretation. If the violence came not from man but God, then it might be possible that the destruction of a city were part of

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[68] Masters, *Poetry and Civil War*, pp. 11–42.

[69] Masters, *Poetry and Civil War*, p. 41. The thought is also reminiscent of Aeneas' lasting image of Priam's corpse on the shore (2.557–8), 'iacet ingens litore truncus, / avulsumque umeris caput et sine nomine horror'. There the stress is placed upon the grotesque horror of the fallen king, nearly shorn of his humanity by the violence, as well as on the meaninglessness of the king's death.

God's ordained plan. As Malcolm Hebron has noted in his study of certain narratives of siege warfare, both the Boethian and Augustinian versions of history were well-represented by a specific legendary siege. The siege of Troy was a reminder of the unstable nature of earthly fortune, and would be repeated again and again throughout human history. The Siege of Jerusalem, on the contrary, enacted on earth the heavenly fury of God, and happened only once.[70] The latter siege, one that was part of the divine plan according to the Augustinian model, results in razing and total destruction. Escape, as Aeneas managed from the ruins of Troy, is impossible. Between these two poles, therefore, swung opinion in the early Middle Ages when the Scandinavians, Magyars, and others threatened the borders of Christendom. The comfort to be afforded man by repentance and renunciation of earthly delights is to where Alcuin's mind would turn when first confronted by the destruction of Lindisfarne in 793, and the need for repentance is the theme Abbo would stress at the close of his *Bella Parisiacae urbis*. But the greater fear, not of earthly rulers and monsters but of the anger of God, lurked behind many of the literary treatments and reactions to violent upheaval. As the ninth century progresses, one finds additional literary expressions of a heroically secular, albeit more despairing, nature. Even by the time of the 845 entry, Frankish problems become internal as well as external, and the *Brüderkrieg* of the early 840s marked a spectacular implosion of the Carolingian ideal of a unified *regnum*. On 25 June 841, the struggle for prominence among the three sons of Louis the Pious came to a bloody climax, when the combined armies of Charles the Bald and Louis the German met and defeated those allied to their brother Lothar at Fontenoy.[71] Warfare had brought kinsman against kinsman, caused Christian to kill and betray Christian, and this was a greater crime than any devastation brought upon them by pagan pirates *diversis admodum collecti ex familiis*.[72]

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[70] Hebron, *The Medieval Siege*.

[71] See Nelson, 'The Frankish Kingdoms', pp. 119–21, for a brief overview of the political machinations surrounding this momentous (in the eyes of contemporaries) event. As Nelson notes (p. 119), Prudentius of Troyes blames an '*elatus*' Lothar for breaking the *iura naturae*: see Waitz (ed.), *Annales Bertiniani*, *s.a.* 840, p. 24.

[72] As Paschasius Radbertus had termed them in his commentary on Jeremiah: *Expositio in Lamentationes Jeremiae* (PL 120, col. 1220).

One piece of ninth-century evidence for the despair at encountering traumatic sacrifice has come down to us in the form of the rhythmical poem on this internecine chaos, which culminated with the battle of Fontenoy, a poem expressive of the despair of a certain Angelbert at the death of so many Franks at the hands not of a foreign enemy, but at the hands of their own people.[73] There are numerous accounts of the events of that day, but none are as moving as this brief rhythm.[74] Estimates of the number of dead have ranged as high as 40,000, offered by one contemporary.[75] Angelbert, as a follower of Lothar, was on the losing side; yet his poem is not merely a poem of defeat, nor is it a lament for his own fortunes.[76] He accuses some of Lothar's own men of treachery and cowardice, but does not curse the victors. Rather, his themes are those of the dislocation of the moral and civil order, of the disruption of the law and social ties, and of despair over the dead from both sides. War, especially civil war, is the more significant cause of his mourning:

Aurora cum primo mane tetram noctem dividet,
Sabbatum non illud fuit, sed Saturni dolium,
De fraterna rupta pace gaudet demon impius. (1.1–3)

'At daybreak dawn split the hideous night, / but it was the wine-cask of Saturn, not the Sabbath, / and an impious demon delights over the brothers' broken peace.'[77] The phrase *Saturni dolium* evokes the unpleasant images of Saturn and his connotations in the Middle Ages. The devourer of his own children,[78] Saturn presides over 'old age, and dotage, the worried, the low-born, the heavy, the dead, magicians, demons, devils, and people of ill-fame—all this when his condition is good. But when he is evil, he presides

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[73] Dümmler (ed.), MGH PLAC ii: 138–9. The poem exists in three manuscripts, designated **L**, **F**, and **P** in Dümmler's edition. Only **P** contains the entire poem, as the final two strophes (14 and 15) are missing in **L**, and strophes 11–15 are absent in **F**. **L** is also probably slightly later than the other two manuscripts (dated by Dümmler to saec x, ix^{ex}, and ix, respectively).

[74] Agnellus, in his *Liber pontificalis*, *c.* 173–4, also provides a rather stirring account of the battle. See Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, pp. 117–21, for an historical overview

[75] Agnellus, *Liber Pontificalis*, *c.* 174, p. 390.

[76] See Winterfeld, 'Hrotsvit literarische Stellung'.

[77] *Dolium* in **L** alone; **FP** have *doleo*.

[78] A legend well-known in the Middle Ages: see, among others, Isidore, *Or.* viii.31.

over hatred, obstinacy, care, grief, lamenting, evil opinion, suspicion.'[79] Once the fighting breaks out, the ties of loyalty and family are disrupted: 'frater fratri mortem parat, nepoti avunculus; / filius nec patri suo exhibet quod meruit' (2.2–3), 'brother readies death for brother, uncle for his nephew; the son does not show to the father what he deserves.'[80] 'Fracta est lex christianorum sanguinis proluvio', (3.2) Christian law was ruptured by bloodshed, leaders were betrayed by their men as Christ was by Judas (5.1–2) and, as a result, there can be nothing but grief and horror:

> O luctum atque lamentum! nudati sunt mortui,
> horum carnes vultur, corvus, lupus vorant acriter:
> orrent, carent sepulturis, vanum iacet cadaver. (14.1–3)[81]

In Angilbert's poem, nature itself registers 'sympathy and shock'[82] in what Ruskin considered the image of the pathetic fallacy, reinterpreted by Frye as nature's 'solemn sympathy' with a dying god, or a dying faith:

> Fontaneto fontem dicunt, villam quoque rustice,
> Ubi strages et ruina Francorum de sanguine.
> Orrent campi, orrent silve, orrent ipsi paludes. (6.1–3)[83]

The threefold anaphora of *orrent* in line 6.3 is developed in the next strophe, in which Angelbert implores that weeping take the place of rain on the fields of the fallen Frankish men:

> Gramen illud ros et ymber nec humectet pluvia,
> In quo fortes ceciderunt, prelio doctissimi,
> Pater, mater, soror, frater, quos amici fleverant.[84]

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[79] Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy*, pp. 131–2.

[80] Not unlike the Old Norse poem *Völuspá*, strophe 44: 'Brœðr munu beriask / ok at bönum verðask' ('Brothers will strike each other, and each will be death to the other'). For a discussion see Hermann Pálsson, '*Völuspá* and the Heroic Tradition'.

[81] 'O what grief and groaning! Despoiled are the dead, / their bodies gnawed by vulture, raven, and the fearsome wolf: / they shudder, unburied; the empty corpses sprawl.'

[82] The expression is Godman's, *Poets and Emperors*, p. 152.

[83] 'The peasants call it Fontenoy, the spring and village too, / where slaughter and ruin [sprang] from the blood of Frankish men. / The fields shudder, the woods shudder, the marshes shudder.' Angelbert here means for the *fons* of 6.1 to serve the purpose of the missing verb in 6.2. The use of elision perhaps recalls *Aeneid* 3.658, 'monstrum horrendum informe ingens cui lumen ademptum', which Vergil later uses again in *Aeneid* 4.181, 'monstrum horrendum ingens cui quot sunt corpore plumae'. I thank Andy Orchard for this reference.

The grieving poet asks for the weather to imitate the death upon the battlefield: as the senseless sacrifice of so many Franks seems to have arrested the machine of the world, and to have destroyed the sense of the kingdom, so too should the rain cease from falling upon their graves. The cycle of weather and even the seasons should reflect the growing sense of despair Angilbert has felt upon the close of the battle, and after gazing on the visceral hell unleashed upon the Carolingian world.

THE QUESTION OF BEOWULF'S SACRIFICE

Eric Stanley has lauded the essential transformation given in *Beowulf* to the traditional 'beasts of battle' topos, found many times in Germanic and Latin literature.[85] If the topos can occasionally function exultantly as in *The Battle of Brunanburh* (60–65a), and triumphantly as in *Judith* (205b–12a, and 294–6), in *Beowulf* the motif turns nightmarishly against type, and swoops upon the dead hero himself (and, by extension, the future of all the Geats). The Geatish messenger, telling of the death of Beowulf in the dragon-fight, concludes his speech with dire words:

> Forðon sceall gar wesan
> monig morgenceald mundum bewunden,
> hæfen on handa, nalles hearpan sweg
> wigend weccean, ac se wonna hrefn
> fus ofer fægum fela reordian,
> earne secgan, hu him æt æte speow,
> þenden he wið wulf wæl reafode.[86] (3021b–7)

That the Beowulf-poet might be offering a pun here in the mouth of the raven over the homonyms *reordian* ('speak, talk') and *gereordian* ('to prepare a feast) seems plausible. the same pun may have already been used in 1787–9a,

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[84] 'Let not rain nor dew nor showers dampen the grass / on which the brave men fell, they most skilled in battle, / for whom father, mother, sister, brother, and friends weep'. Godman notes (*Poets and Emperors*, p. 152) that this strophe echoes the lament of Paulinus of Aquileia for Heiric, duke of Friuli, Norberg (ed.), *L'Oeuvre poétique de Paulin d'Aquilée*, 101.8.3.

[85] Stanley, 'Beowulf', pp. 108–10. On the topos in Old English, see Fry, 'Type-Scene Composition in *Judith*', and especially Griffith, 'Convention and Originality'.

[86] 'Therefore many a morning-cold spear must be closed in the fist, raised by the hand; the sound of harp shall not awaken the warriors, rather the dark raven hastening over the doomed shall speak of many things, tell the eagle how he succeeded him at the feast, when he scrabbled with the wolf over the slain'.

> Þa wæs eft swa ær ellenrofum
> fletsittendum fægere gereorded niowan
> stefne.[87]

Andy Orchard has pointed out how a pun on these two words in this scene seem to deepen the parallels between this scene of feasting and the one immediately prior to Grendel's arrival at Heorot; here, the sombre tones of Hrothgar's sermon are replaced with a feast prepared 'eft swa ær' ('again as before'), only this time the dawn will bring better tidings, for Beowulf sleeps through the night

> oþ þæt hrefn blaca heofones wynne
> bliðheort bodode.[88] (1801–2a)

In the scene with the raven and the eagle, the word used to describe the raven speaking is similar to, arguably overcome by, the sense of its homonym to describe the struggle at the feast; the finely-prepared banquet (*fægere gereorded*) has been replaced in turn by *fægum* [...] *reordian*. The appearance of the blithe raven in lines 1801–2a allowed the *Beowulf*-poet to subvert the expectations of his audience for a grim outcome to the earlier scene.[89] In this later scene, however, the raven and his speaking and feasting reinforces the pessimism of the poem's conclusion. Friedrich Klaeber, commenting on line 3027, disapproves of the notion that here in lines 3021b–7, as opposed to all other examples in Old English poetry, the wolf and eagle contend with one another, in what Stanley calls a 'cadaverous eating match'.[90] Yet, this alteration to the type-scene further emphasizes the singularity of the moment, and the true chaos and horror of the scene for the Geats.

The question of the dislocating and disruptive effects of traumatic sacrifice is broached by Beowulf himself as he prepares to battle the dragon. Before his battle-vow (lines 2510–15), which connects the past to the present as made emblematic by his own person, he pauses for a lengthy speech in which he tells the retainers who have followed him the story of the grief of King Hrethel, the man who had taken him from his own kin, and who had treated him 'no worse' than any of his own sons related by flesh and blood

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[87] 'Then again as before a feast was readied finely for the men sitting in the hall, on a new occasion'. The wordplay was noted by Orchard, *Critical Companion*, p. 77.

[88] '[U]ntil a dark blithe-hearted raven announced heaven's joy'.

[89] Orchard, *Critical Companion*, p. 78.

[90] Klaeber (ed.), *Beowulf*, p. 225; Stanley, 'Beowulf', p. 110.

(2430–1). The episode, which seems to interrupt unexpectedly the narrative leading up to the fight with the dragon, tells of how Hrethel's son and heir, Herebald, was slain by an arrow in an event whose details remain shadowy, but which was probably an accident. The grief caused by the death, the grief of losing his son, is compounded for Hrethel because the identity of the killer is none other than another of his sons, Hæthcyn. Such a slaying cannot be avenged, nor compensated; in the Beowulf-poet's words, it is *feohleas* ('inexpiable'). Unable to act, unable to find comfort or to take vengeance for his son, Hrethel ends his days in unheroic grief.[91]

This section of the poem has long been considered troublesome by readers, perhaps most famously by Friedrich Klaeber, who read this digression as one of the examples of the 'lack of steady advance' he expressed dissastisfaction with in the poem, most significantly in the poem's second half.[92] This section of *Beowulf* has been the subject of a recent and compelling analysis by Linda Georgianna, who separates the apparent effect (or expressed motive) on the hero, who seems to have his resolve steeled by the act of recollection, and the effect upon the reader of the poem, who conversely becomes distanced from both the upcoming battle with the dragon, and from the appeal and value of heroic action at a time 'when the hero is most relying on it'.[93] I concur with Georgianna, and would add, further, that the fact that Beowulf steels his resolve for the fight does not deny the disruptive effect the digression has upon the poem's narrative; in fact, the ending of the poem gives further evidence to the disruption of the immediate narrative, and the broader, epic narrative meant to be driven toward by Beowulf in his own poem. Instead, the immediate disruption signals to the reader, although we may not be immediately aware of the interpretation of the signal, that the projected epic success will not be forthcoming, and that instead the poem's ending will result in grief, almost as if it spills out from the covers of King Hrethel's own tale. Georgianna makes the

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[91] The most thorough recent analysis of this episode is Georgianna, 'King Hrethel's Sorrow'. See also Harris, 'Beowulf's Last Words'; Pope, 'Beowulf's Old Age'; Bonjour, *Digressions in Beowulf*, pp. 33–4; Irving, *A Reading of Beowulf*, pp. 223–9; and Ó Carragáin, 'Structure and Thematic Development in *Beowulf*'.

[92] Klaeber (ed.), *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, p. lvii. See also Stanley, 'The Narrative Art of *Beowulf*' (cited in Georgianna, 'King Hrethel's Sorrow', 834 n. 19).

[93] Georgianna, 'King Hrethel's Sorrow', 831.

significant point that despite the best efforts of commentators to resolve the inconsistencies and confusing aspects of various aspects of this digression, accepting the incoherence, and reading it as an intentional part of the deign of the poet, attempting to express the trauma and disruption of the event, also results in a compelling reading.[94] It is this lack of coherent resolution that I wish to stress in my own discussion of the passage, as it seems to point toward the confusing and even horrifying effects of traumatic sacrifice on the actors of the poem as well as on the poem within the poem; it also points to the complex and often dual nature of epic and heroic vectors, for the tragic and traumatic loss suffered by Hrethel was precisely what allowed Hygelac himself to come by the crown.

Gesæt ða on næsse niðheard cyning,
þenden hælo abead heorðgeneatum,
goldwine Geata. Him wæs geomor sefa,
wæfre ond wælfus, wyrd ungemete neah,
se ðone gomelan gretan sceolde,
secean sawle hord, sundur gedælan
lif wið lice, no þon lange wæs
feorh æþelinges flæsce bewunden.
Biowulf maþelade, bearn Ecgðeowes:[95] (2417–25)

The Geatish kings have an important point in common, for as Hrethel will be later in the tale, at the moment, sitting on the headlands, Beowulf is *wælfus*; the word is interpreted as 'eager for slaughter', or 'ready to be slain', and perhaps the uncertain and dual meaning of the word reflects the split within the man, a hero prepared for combat, and a tired king willing to die.[96] Earl notes the importance of motion inherent in *fus*-compounds (such as *utfus*, *Beowulf* line 33b), or *hinfus* (755b), although I would note that this last context is clearly descriptive of Grendel's *hyge*.[97] Harris calls attention to the likely contrast intended between Beowulf's earlier state of mind at 1475b, *nu ic eom siðes fus*

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[94] See, for example, her discussion and her notes on pages 832–4, and 836–8.

[95] 'Then the battle-brave king sat upon the cliff, spoke words of prosperity to his hearth-companions, the gold-friend of the Geats. His spirit was sorrowful, restless and eager for death, his fate approached, which would greet the old man, seek his soul-hoard, separate his life and his body, not long would his *feorh* be bound with flesh. Beowulf, the son of Ecgtheow, spoke': Klaeber (ed.), *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, lines 2415b–25.

[96] The more aggressive meaning of the word is argued for by Garmonsway, 'Anglo-Saxon Heroic Attitudes', 144.

[97] Earl, 'The Necessity of Evil', 96 n. 15. He suggests the meaning 'bound for death'.

('now I am ready for adventure') with his spirit currently.[98] If the word can maintain this uncertainty as to exactly how Beowulf is preparing for death, it might indeed indicate a reluctance to commit for both the poet and the poem. The lines 2419b–20

> Him wæs geomor sefa,
> wæfre ond wælfus [...]

were for Arthur Brodeur and Stanley Greenfield a striking progression indicating the *Beowulf*-poet's artistry and originality in combining well-worn epithets with new and powerful images, in order to reveal the hero's state of mind and foreshadow the poem's bleak end. Brodeur reads the sequence *geomor sefa*, *wæfre*, *wælfus* as one growing in potency toward a climax of action.[99] Brodeur's sense of progression toward a climax, from the formulaic and mournful *geomor sefa* to the more assertive, even if grim, sense of *wælfus*, is not elided by this uncertainty. The split is that dual nature of sacrifice itself, which can be the eagerness to kill another as a sacrifice offered to God or the gods, and also the desire to serve as an offering for one's people or cause.

And perhaps it is this progressive motion toward a decision that spurs Beowulf into his recollection of King Hrethel, another king poised between two difficult choices.

> 'Fela ic on giogoðe guðræsa genæs,
> orleghwila; ic þæt eall gemon.
> Ic wæs syfanwintre, þa mec sinca baldor,
> freawine folca, æt minum fæder genam;
> heold mec ond hæfde Hreðel cyning, 2430
> geaf me sinc ond symbel, sibbe gemunde.
> Næs ic him to life laðra owihte,
> beorn in burgum, þonne his bearna hwylc,
> Herebeald ond Hæðcyn oððe Hygelac min.
> Wæs þam yldestan ungedefelice
> mæges dædum morþorbed stred,
> syððan hyne Hæðcyn of hornbogan,
> his freawine, flane geswencte,
> miste mercelses ond his mæg ofscet,
> broðor oðerne blodigan gare. 2440
> þæt wæs feohleas gefeoht, fyrenum gesyngad,
> hreðre hygemeðe; sceolde hwæðre swa þeah

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[98] Harris, 'Beowulf's Last Words', 24.

[99] Brodeur, *The Art of Beowulf*, p. 27; Brodeur touches upon this element of the poem throughout chapter two of his book. Greenfield, 'Formulaic Expression', notes the use of *geomor sefa* in formulations of exile in Old English poetry.

æðeling unwrecen ealdres linnan.[100] (2426–2443)

The precise scenario by which a brother might accidentally shoot another with an arrow have been the subject of lengthy excavations by Anglo-Saxonists, who have concluded that while the precise nature of the event is unlikely to be resolved, the death did not occur in battle, since arrows were not a commonly-occurring weapon in combat.[101] It is thus, as Georgianna remarks, a completely arbitrary crime, one not marked itself by malice aforethought or treachery. And yet the poet describes the death scene with the lexicon of crime, and murder (*Wæs þam yldestan ungedefelice /mæges dædum morþorbed stred*, lines 2435–6). This interpretation given to the story of Hrethel's son, and to King Hrethel's own narrative, is deeply affecting, and is arguably presented to the reader of *Beowulf* as something shocking in its arbitrariness and suddenness. Despite the suggestive arguments that have been advanced on behalf of reading a parallel between Herebeald's death and the slaying of Baldr by Höðr in Old Norse mythology,[102] it seems to me that the *Beowulf*-poet chooses instead to leave such resolutions purposefully (albeit tantalizingly) out of our grasp.[103] Instead, the stress is, as Beowulf notes, on the 'inexpiable' (*feohleas*) nature of the crime/accident (*þæt wæs feohleas gefeoht, fyrenum gesyngad, /hreðre hygemeðe*, lines 2441–2); the emphasis here, as Dorothy Whitelock argued, might be upon the fact that a *feohleas gefeoht* is one for which 'no compensation can be paid';[104] yet, the phrase could also be seen to highlight the dangerous draw of

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[100] 'In my youth I tackled many war-charges, spans of strife; I recollect them all. I was seven years old when the giver of rings, friend of his people, took me from my father, Hrethel the king held me and possessed me, gave me feast and treasure, clutched in bonds of kinship. I, a child in the stronghold was not to him more loathsome in any way in my life than each of his sons, Herebeald and Hæthcyn and my Hygelac. For the eldest of these was, unforetold, by deed of a kinsman, strewn upon the murder-bed, when Hæthcyn laid him low with an arrow, from a horn-bow, his friend and lord, missed the mark and shot down his kinsman, his other brother, with bloody arrow. That was a inexpiable fight, a visible sin, and a great grief to the heart; yet, hard as it was, the *æðeling* must lose his life unavenged': Klaeber (ed.), *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, lines 2426–43.

[101] See Chambers, *Beowulf*, p. 361; and Davidson, 'Archaeology and *Beowulf*, p. 356 (cited in Georgianna, 'King Hrethel's Sorrow', 835 n. 21).

[102] Succinctly summarized by Orchard, *Critical Companion*, p. 118.

[103] Yet, I would admit that the sacrificial connection between Óðinn and Hrethel is suggestive in this context.

[104] Whitelock, '*Beowulf* 2444–2471'. See also the remarks of Morey, 'Fates of Men in *Beowulf*', p. 31.

vengeance in the broadest sense, not one restricted to monetary payment.[105] In this sense, the king, shaken and mentally worn by the traumatic loss of his son at the hands of another son, and unable to warrant action to assuage his loss, adds to the tragic circumstances himself.

The final section of Beowulf's lengthy digression comes as he considers this reaction of Hrethel to his loss, as he digests his absolute inability to take action to remedy the crime, and to remedy his own turbulent grief (*hygemeðe*):

> Swa bið geomorlic gomelum ceorle
> to gebidanne, þæt his byre ride
> giong on galgan, þonne he gyd wrece,
> sarigne sang, þonne his sunu hangað
> hrefne to hroðre, ond he him helpe ne mæg,
> eald ond infrod, ænige gefremman.
> Symble bið gemyndgad morna gehwylce
> eaforan ellorsið; oðres ne gymeð
> to gebidanne burgum in innan
> yfreweardas, þonne se an hafað
> þurh deaðes nyd dæda gefondad.
> Gesyhð sorhcearig on his suna bure
> winsele westne, windge reste
> reote berofene. Ridend swefað,
> hæleð in hoðmanæ nis þær hearpan sweg,
> gomen in geardum, swylce ðær iu wæron.
> Gewiteð þonne on sealman, sorhleoð gæleð
> an æfter anumæ þuhte him eall to rum,
> wongas ond wicstede. Swa Wedra helm
> æfter Herebealde heortan sorge
> weallende wæg. Wihte ne meahte
> on ðam feorhbonan fæghðe gebetanæ
> no ðy ær he þone heaþorinc hatian ne meahte
> laðum dædum, þeah him leoht geceas,
> eaferum læfde, swa deð eadig mon,
> lond one leodbyrig, þe he of life gewat.'[106] (2444–71)

I agree with Georgianna that this scene, even in its grim conclusion, nevertheless escapes easy interpretation and closure, and that the language of the *Beowulf*-poet emphasizes

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[105] Compare O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'Heroic Values', p. 112.

[106] 'So it is sorrowful for an aged man to endure that his youthful son should swing from the gallows, then he mouths a *wrece*, a sorrowful song, when his son hangs as a delight for the raven, and he, old and wise, might not muster a means to help him. Each morning he recalls always the passing of his son; he does not care to wait within the stronghold for another heir, now that the first has through death's necessity experienced his portion of deeds'. Klaeber (ed.), *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, lines 2444–71.

precisely the confusion of events, in order to illustrate the confusion in the mind of Hrethel: 'In addition to grieving for the loss of his son, he seems to grieve for the loss of a whole system of values that had seemed coherent, a system centered on kin loyalty and the satisfaction gained by vengeance'.[107] Indeed, it is precisely this sweeping move from the fate and condition of the individual to that of the society that we have come to expect in epic poetry, and this also further connects the passage with the problems of sacrificial violence itself. Hrethel is unable to read the narrative of his son as a sacrificial death; there was no greater purpose to his death, and there was no considered crime to avenge. Hrethel is also unable to forgive, apparently, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the *Beowulf*-poet does not tell us of any such forgiveness, but does hint at its absence, perhaps even its inability to be considered, by the term *feohless*, which I have translated (following Klaeber) as 'inexpiable'.[108]

Grotesque Jests and Horrific Sacrifice: Discovering Humor in Trauma

Engelbert refrains from fully describing the horror of the battlefields at Fontenoy, drenched with Frankish blood, 'ploratum et ululatum nec describo amplius' (15.1). Not all writers were so circumspect about the gore and furor of the actual violence of armed conflict, however. The question is often one of degree. Lucan may be the exemplary Roman poet of the grotesque, but Vergil himself does not shy away from descriptions that contain a gruesome element, as in the moment when Aeneas, still enraged by the murder by Turnus of Pallas, kills Tarquitus, who begs the Trojan for his life:

> ille reducta
> loricam clipeique ingens onus impedit hasta,
> tum caput orantis nequiquam et multa parantis
> dicere deturbat terrae, truncumque tepentem
> prouoluens super haec inimico pectore fatur:
> 'istic nunc, metuende, iace. non te optima mater
> condet humi patrioque onerabit membra sepulcro:
> alitibus linquere feris, aut gurgite mersum

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[107] Georgianna, 'King Hrethel's Sorrow', 837.

[108] See Klaeber (ed.), *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, *s.v.*. A possible exploration of Hrethel's sorrow and the Germanic *warg- (Old English *wearg*, Old Icelandic *vargr*) remains to be done, to my knowledge; see material collected by Jacoby, *wargus, vargr 'Verbrecher' 'Wolf'*.

unda feret piscesque impasti uulnera lambent'. (10.552–60)[109]

Ernst Robert Curtius, in his monumental study *European Literature in the Latin Middle Ages*, supplied a useful (albeit preliminary) examination of the juxtaposition of the serious and the comic which one finds frequently in Classical and medieval literature.[110] It is unnecessary to attempt a comprehensive analysis here; a quick summary will be sufficient. After a description of the Classical prescriptions allowing under certain conditions the mixture of 'jest and earnest', and surveying the early Christian response to these, which continued and developed throughout the medieval period, Curtius concludes that despite occasional attempts at prescribing against jocularity, as unworthy of the proper Christian, or as undignified for a man of status, the practice was that both forms maintained a constant companionship in the literature of the Middle Ages.[111]

Not atypical of humour in a Germanic heroic context is that exhibited by Beowulf when, while describing how he will contend against Grendel in Hrothgar's hall, he shows an awareness of the grisly fate which potentially awaits him, as it has befallen many others. The passage, despite its 'ghoulish' or 'grim' humour,[112] is rich with wordplay and poetic flourishes typical of the *Beowulf*-poet:

'Na þu minne þearft
hafalan hydan, ac he me habban wile
d[r]eore fahne, gif mec deað nimeð.
Byreð blodig wæl, byrgean þenceð,
eteð angenga unmurnlice,
mearcað morhopu; no ðu ymb mines ne þearft

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[109] In the translation of Allen Mandelbaum: 'Aeneas draws his lance, pins Tarquitus' / cuirass and ponderous shield; as Tarquitus / prays helplessly, wanting to say so much, / Aeneas strikes his head to earth and kicks the warm trunk over, cries with hating heart: / "Lie there, you dreaded one; no gracious mother / will bury you in earth or weight a native / tomb with your limbs. You will be left to savage / birds; or the waves will bear you, sunk below / the sea, where famished fish will suck your wounds."' The translations of *nequiquam* as 'helplessly' and of *parantis* as 'wanting' strikes me as nearly bathetic here, and I would suggest the more literal 'in vain' and 'preparing'. The scene is also reminiscent of Aeneas' lasting image of Priam's corpse on the shore (2.557–8), 'iacet ingens litore truncus, / avulsumque umeris caput et sine nomine horror'.

[110] Curtius, *European Literature*, pp. 417–35.

[111] The *Regula sancti Benedicti* is among the stronger voices of opposition: 'verba vana aut risu apta non loqui risum multum aut excessum non amare', declares Benedict in his fourth chapter.

[112] Irving, *A Reading of Beowulf*, p. 66; Orchard, *Critical Companion*, p. 213.

lices feorme leng sorgian'.[113] (445b–51)

As others have noted, the sense of the grotesque suggested by this passage is highlighted by the presence of verbal wit: by the verb *byrgean* which can mean 'to taste' but is also reminiscent of the verb *byrigean* meaning 'to bury', picking up on the phrase *hafalan hydan* in 446a;[114] by using the noun *feorm*, Beowulf indicates that neither the *enjoyment* or *entertaining* of his body (which will have become in turn *sustenance* for the monster Grendel), or the *disposal* of his body, need trouble the Danes should he fail in his task.[115] Such wit results in a 'ghoulish situation totally controlled by humour', as one Anglo-Saxonist has put it;[116] the speech is not dissimilar, as Orchard has noted, to Beowulf's words later on when he is describing (to Unferth, Hrothgar, and the assembled warriors) the perils he met with during his swimming-contest with Breca. The hero demonstrates the same blithe wit concerning the lives and deaths of sea-monsters as he did concerning his fate at the hands of Grendel:

'Swa mec gelome laðgeteonan
þreatedon þearle. Ic him þenode
deoran sweorde, swa hit gedefe wæs.
Næs hie ðære fylle gefean hæfdon,
manfordædlan, þæt hie me þegon,
symbel ymbsæton sægrunde neah;
ac on mergenne mecum wunde
be yðlafe uppe lægon,
sweordum aswefede, þæt syðþan na
ymb brontne ford brimliðende
lade ne letton'.[117] (559–69a)

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[113] 'There will be no need for you to cover my head, since he will have covered me with blood, if death takes me. He will bear off the bloody corpse, think to savour it, the solitary wanderer will eat it without remorse, mark the wetland-slopes; you will not need to grieve for long about how to take care of my body.' Trans. Orchard, *Critical Companion*, p. 213.

[114] Although Irving seems to suggest this pun, he then retracts, believing that the poem has an Anglian origin, thus rendering paronomasia unlikely, since in the Anglian dialect the verb for 'to taste' would be *bergan*. Orchard is less circumspect, and strengthens the possibility for wordplay in noting the same pun is found in *The Dream of the Rood*, lines 101–2, at 101a ('Deað he þær byrigde; hwæðere eft Dryhten aras / mid his miclan mihte mannum to helpe').

[115] Orchard, *Critical Companion*, p. 213.

[116] Irving, *A Reading of Beowulf*, p. 66.

[117] 'So, often, the hateful persecutors closely oppressed me; I served them with my splendid sword, as was fitting. In no way did those wicked creatures have joy of their feast, that they might consume me as they sat at their feast near the sea-floor; but in the morning, wounded by my blade they lay up along the seashore, pput to sleep by my sword, so that never afterwards did they hinder seafarers in their travels.' Trans. Orchard, *Critical Companion*, p. 252.

Given the existence of this tradition, the *Bella Parisiacae urbis* can be viewed as fairly conventional in having several scenes of rather grotesque comedy in its pages. The first instance of this occurs on the second day of battle, as Odo is defending the tower. He is praised, in fairly conventional terms of Christian heroism, as victorious and undefeated in battle ('victor bellis invictus ab ullis', 1.96), and as a comforter to the weary ('Confortando fatigatis vires revocabat', 1.97). Upon seeing some Danes attempting to weaken it through digging ('cupiunt murum succidere musclis', line 1.99), Odo scalds them horribly with a mixture of molten oil, wax, and pitch:

> Qui vero cupiunt murum succidere musclis,
> Addit eis oleum ceramque picemque ministrans,
> Mixta simul liquefacta foco ferventia valde:
> Quę Danis cervice comas uruntque trahuntque,
> Occiduunt autem quosdam quosdamque suadent
> Amnis adire vada. Hoc una nostri resonabant:
> 'Ambusti Sequanę ad pelagos concurrite, vobis
> Quo reparent alias reddendo iubas mage comptas!'[118] (1.96–106)

While the tactic is not uncommon in descriptions of siege warfare, what makes the scene here especially grotesque is the comic focus on the effect of the molten brew upon the *hair* of the Danes (*comas* [...] *iubas*), followed by the mocking jeer of the attendant Franks. The scene's grim comedy is amplified by the immediate description of Odo's ecclesiastic comrade-in-arms, Ebolus. Depicted as a fine archer,[119] and not to be outdone by Odo's gambit, he dispatches seven heathens with a single bowshot, and demonstrates a fine sense of both comedy and mockery with a single verbal barb:

> Fortis Odo innumeros tutudit; sed quis fuit alter?
> Alter Ebolus huic socius fuit ęquiperansque;
> Septenos una potuit terebrare sagitta,
> Quos ludens alios iussit prebere coquinae. (1.107–10)

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[118] 'One was Odo, victor, unconquered in warfare, who summoned up courage in weary men, constantly guarding the tower and slaughtering his enemies; when they desired to undercut the wall with 'mice', he served up oil and wax and pitch, mixed together and liquified, boiling hot from flame: this burned and stripped the hair from Danish necks, killing some, persuading others to head toward the river's banks. Our people called out together, "Flee, incinerated ones, to the breakers of the Seine, which might render up for you restored and better-coiffured hair!"'

[119] Ebolus' role as clergyman and warrior is discussed in chapter three. See also Prinz, *Klerus und Krieg*, p. 130.

Peter Godman compares the spoken abuse hurled at the scalded and skewered Danes to 'slapstick' comedy, and to the 'taunting and abuse to be found in verbal *flytings*'.[120] Curtius includes this scene in his discussion of 'kitchen humour',[121] although it fits rather poorly with the more common kitchen jests involving fun with food, cooks, oven accidents, and clowning with pots and pans that he describes.[122]

The scene of the scorched Danes fleeing the tower is picked up by and deepened by an unusual scene occurring shortly thereafter, in which Abbo imagines the Danish wives chastising their husbands for their failure and possibly cowardice in fleeing the scene of battle:

> Huc preda redeunt equites, certamina stipant,
> Incolumes adeunt speculam saturique ciborum,
> Anteque durcones multi repetunt morientes
> Quam lapides iaciant illamque gravent lapidando,
> Dulce quibus flamen Danae spirantibus aiunt,
> Quaeque suo lacerans crines lacrimansque marito:
> 'Unde venis? fornace fugis? scio, nate diabli,
> Hanc nullus poterit vestri superare triumphus.
> Non tibi nunc Cererem vel apros Bacchumque litavi?
> Tamque cito quare repedas ad tegmina stratus?
> Haec iterum gestisne tibi poni? redeuntne
> Elluo, sic alii? similem mereantur honorem!'[123] (1.121–32)

The passage manifests several persistent themes of both the *Bella Parisiacae urbis* and its analogues. The Danes, 'stuffed with food' (*saturique ciborum*), are here first compared

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[120] Godman, *Poetry*, p. 313. On the flyting in its wider context, see Clover, 'The Germanic Context'.

[121] Curtius, *European Literature*, pp. 431–3.

[122] To his selection, one might also add, as relevant in this context, the famous anecdote involving King Alfred and the 'burning of the cakes', a story which makes it earliest appearance in the late tenth-century *Vita S. Neoti*. In several versions, it is Alfred's preoccupation with the Viking threat that causes him to neglect his kitchen duties, leading to his upbraiding by the swineherd's wife. In the version found in the *Vita S. Neoti*, Alfred is even depicted reflecting on the same words Alcuin chose to remind Higbald of after Lindisfarne's destruction ('Whom the Lord loves, He chastises': Heb 12:6). For further discussion, see Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, pp. 197–202.

[123] 'They return safely, laden with booty, stirring up strife, and then approach the tower unharmed and sated with food. But many go back dying to the boats, before they can assail the tower or pelt it with stones. As they gasp out sweet breath, the Danish women speak, as each one tears her hair, and asks her husband: "Where do you come from? Do you flee the crucible? Son of the devil, know this, no triumph on your part will conquer this. Have I not sacrificed wheat, boars, and wine for you? So why do you seek so swiftly your roof to rest? Do you then yearn for offerings again? Do others come back as well, glutton? May they earn similar rewards!"'

with wolves and bees, devouring their prey and glutting themselves.[124] The term 'son of the devil' (*nate diabli*) reminds us of the origin of these pagan invaders.[125] Moreover, we see the recurring image of the battle as a furnace (*fornace*), now made more explicit through the scalding of the Danish men.

[124] For comparison of the Danes to wolves, see 1.164; for bees, see 1.229 and 1.259. *Elluo* is glossed *glutto* ('glutton, gourmand') in **P**.

[125] For mention of Satan, see 1.227.

CODA: SACRIFICE JUSTIFIED AND LEGITIMATED?

The Middle English poem *Havelok* is a late thirteenth-century romance with strong connections to Scandinavian-English relations.[1] It is the story of Havelok, the young prince of Denmark, banished from his homeland by traitors, yet who manages to ascend first to the throne of Denmark, and then to that of England through his marriage to Godeborw, daughter of King Athelwold. The poem begins with Athelwold's death, characterized as a deeply pious and just ruler who 'gode lawes / He dede maken an ful wel holden' (28–9), who loved his subjects regardless of their status and wealth (30–3), and who 'louede God with al his micth, / And Holi Kirke, and soth ant ricth' (35–6). This ideal state of government is upset by his death, and through the subsequent betrayal of his final wishes by the trusted Earl Godrich, whom Athelwold has appointed to be guardian of the realm and of his daughter until she has come of age. In contrast to the former king, Godrich rules his subjects through fear rather than reverence, as 'his þe beste fro þe gad' (279). An identical state of affairs occurs in Denmark, where King Birkabeyn, reaching the end of his days, appoints a protector for his one son and two daughters until 'þat he kouþen speken with tunge; / Speken and gangen, on horse riden, / Knihtes and sweynes bi here siden' (369–71). This trusted man, 'þe kinges oune frende' (375), is Godard, who imprisons the children immediately upon the death of the king.

A vivid and memorable role is played by several episodes of violence. Neither Godard nor Godrich die in battle; rather, each are captured, tried, and executed, the former meeting death in one of the goriest scenes in the poem. The careful structuring of the poet allows the reader (or listener) to understand that each of the executions is meant to represent both necessary sacrifice and vengeance. For an ideal order of righteous and legitimate government to be restored in *Havelok*, the treacheries of the early part of the

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[1] Smithers (ed.), *Havelok*; see pp. lxiv–lxxiii, and his notes to lines 265 and 1179, for dating.

poem must be redressed. A chiastic structure emerges from the narrative, as the usurpers first gain power, then lose it and their lives:

Godrich usurps power—Godard usurps power || Godard is executed—Godrich is executed

These rather excruciating scenes have not received an intense amount of attention by readers of the poem. The Skeat edition (revised by Sisam in 1956) passed over the relevant sections in silence, although, since the majority of their commentary was philological in nature, such taciturnity might be excused.[2] The most recent editor of the poem, however, had little to say either, despite a far fuller and more historical commentary.[3] Levine's article on the audience for the poem includes some commentary on the violence, as perhaps indicative of certain tastes.[4] The traitor Godard endures a horrible execution after his military defeat by Havelok. The English usurper Godrich is also defeated and burned at the stake. Thus, the violence is both traumatic and horrific, as an original action is met by an equally-brutal act of revenge.

I will examine one such pairing: the slaying of Havelok's two sisters by Godard, and his later execution. The children have been confined in the tower. Checking in on them, Godard is met by Havelok, who complains regarding their extreme thirst and hunger. Godard comes up with a speedy solution to their problems: he decides to cut their throats.

> Godard herde here wa—
> þer-offe yaf he nouth a stra,
> But tok þe maydnes boþe samen
> Al so it were upon hiis gamen,
> Al so he wolde with hem leyke
> þat weren for hunger grene and bleike.
> Of boþen he karf on two here þrotes,
> And siþen hem al to grotes.
> Þer was sorwe, wo-so it sawe,
> Hwan þe children bi þe wawe
> Leyen and sprauleden in þe blod![5] (446–75)

The boy Havelok manages, through verbal rhetoric, to forestall his own execution. The

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[2] Skeat (ed.), *The Lay of Havelok the Dane*, rev. Sisam (Oxford, 1956).

[3] Smithers (ed.), *Havelok*, p. lix, notes that the flaying of Godard is noted for not being impossible, given the reality (albeit rare) of flaying as a punishment in England.

[4] On this question, see Levine, 'Who Composed *Havelok* for Whom?'.

[5] Smithers (ed.), *Havelok*, pp. 15–16.

scene is reminiscent of certain scenes from Middle English cycle plays on Abraham and Isaac, such as in the Towneley cycle. In this play, Isaac plaintively asks Abraham to show him the mercy owed to a son by a father, or to explain his transgression, whatever he has done that is worthy of death: 'What haue I done, fader? What haue I said?' (line 205). He concludes that 'thus gyltles shall [I] be arayde? [...] I luf you ay' (line 208).[6] These arguments of Isaac, which Rosemary Woolf found 'unimpressive', do not seem to benefit him. Havelok manages to better his own outcome through an offer of land and power, but most of all through the foreswearing of vengeance:

> Louerd, merci nov!
> Manrede, louerd, biddi you:
> Al Denemark I wile you yeue,
> To þat forward þu late me liue.
> here Hi wile on boke swere
> þat neuremore ne shal I bere
> Ayen þe, louerd, shel[d] ne spere,
> Ne oþer wepne bere þat may you dere.[7] (483–90)

The stratagem has its effect: instead of killing the child himself, he hands him over to the fisherman Grim, who stuffs him into a bag, which is then smashed against a stone by Grim's wife Leve. Havelok's initial response to such mistreatment is to imagine Godard being eaten by a lion (line 574).[8] The observation of Barbara Newman, that sacrifice in medieval texts is rarely shown from the victim's perspective, is far more true of the texts of the later Middle Ages.[9] The situation is not as clear in earlier texts: the blending of the dreamer, Cross, and Christ in a text like *The Dream of the Rood* is a case in point.

Even more graphic than the slaying of Havelok's sisters is Godard's gruesome execution scene, which begins with the swift approach of the flayer (a *ladde*, 'serving-man; *valet* is used in the French sources):

> Sket cam a ladde with a knif,
> And bigan rith at þa to

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[6] Stevens and Cawley (eds.), *Towneley Plays* i: 48–57; cited in Frantzen, 'Tears of Abraham', 448.

[7] Smithers (ed.), *Havelok*, p. 16.

[8] See the discussion of certain scenes in *Havelok* as featuring childish fantasy in Couch, 'The Vulnerable Hero', especially the discussion on 344–5 concerning Havelok's revised memory of events, which could almost be considered 'traumatic'.

[9] Newman, *From Virile Woman*.

For to ritte, and for to flo,
So it were goun or gore,
And he bigan for to rore
Þat men miþe þeþen a mile
Here him rore, þat fule file.[10] (2493–9)

The bloodiness of the entire lengthy scene (lines 2488–2511) is only matched by that scene relating the sentencing and burning of Godrich (lines 2808–41). The triumphal sacrificial violence of this scene of vengeance offers an ironic inverted parallel to the approach of Christ to the Cross in *The Dream of the Rood.* There, Christ hastens (*efstan*) toward his own sacrifice. As the Cross reports,

Geseah ic þa frean mancynnes
efstan elne mycle þæt he me wolde on gestigan.[11] (33–34)

The sense of haste has struck readers of the poem as increasing the sense of the violence, a world to which the Cross is 'suddenly drawn'. Referring to lines 30–3, Burrow wrote that the 'suddenness and the violence, together with the passivity of the Cross itself, are conveyed in the compressed paratactic syntax, the lengthened line, and the rapid sequence of verbs of action in the passage immediately following.'[12] Further confusion, or a desire to escape confusion, is added by the repetition of *þær*. An ordinary tree, thrust into a world of violence, sacrifice, and vengeance, the Cross (and possibly the dreamer) is afraid (*bifode ic*, line 42), 'troubled with sorrows' (*ic wæs mid sorgum gedrefed*, line 59) and it finally weeps (line 70).[13] As Christ's wounds are implied in the tree, there is 'an obscurer transfer which suggests a kind of "dream condensation" between Christ and the Cross'.[14] In the horrific sacrifice of the flaying alive of Godard, the perspective of the victim is truly submerged in the near-joyful desire for vengeance.

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[10] Smithers (ed.), *Havelok*, p. 68.

[11] 'Then I saw the lord of mankind hasten with great zeal, because he wished to climb upon me'.

[12] Burrow, 'An Approach', pp. 257–8.

[13] With *sorgum* supplied from the Ruthwell Cross text, suggested by Grein.

[14] Here Burrow ('An Approach', p. 259) borrows a topic from Freudian analysis, which posits dreams as being composed of *Mischbildungen* of persons, objects, and words, traits which can come to be seen as monstrous.

In his brief concluding chapter to *The Great War and Modern Memory* ('Persistence and Memory'), Paul Fussell borrows from Frye's 'theory of modes' in an effort to explain the ironic tone adopted by many poets toward the horror and violence of the First World War.[15] This is the account in which Frye establishes criteria of the availability or capability to action for the heroes in fiction. Epic, romance, myth, and tragedy are 'high mimetic', since the hero's power of action and ability to influence events is greater than the reader's own. 'Low mimetic' texts, or realistic narratives, feature heroes whose power is roughly equivalent to our own, while texts in the 'ironic' mode, the mode arguably most popular in contemporary narratives of war and sacrifice, feature heroes whose powers to act are less than our own, and 'we have the sense of looking down on a scene of bondage, frustration, or absurdity'.[16] Frye goes on to claim that as texts that make use of the ironic mode, a modal circularity becomes evident, as their narratives begin to approach the status of the mythic mode once more, 'and the dim outlines of sacrificial rituals and dying gods begin to reappear in it'. In this movement, ironic fiction looks to 'demonic' imagery regardless of the world being observed; and, in this domain, desire is absent.

> Opposed to apocalyptic symbolism is the presentation of the world that desire totally rejects: the world of the nightmare and the scapegoat, of bondage and pain and confusion; the world as it is before the human imagination begins to work on it and before any image of human desire, such as the city or the garden, has been solidly established; the world also of perverted or wasted work, ruins and catacombs, instruments of torture and monuments of folly. And just as apocalyptic imagery in poetry is closely associated with a religious heaven, so its dialectic opposite is closely associated with an existential hell, like Dante's *Inferno*, or with the hell that man creates on earth [...].[17]

Fussell summons Frye's theory in order to support his argument that war poetry of the modern era descends in its own way toward the ironic, eventually approaching the moment at which it begins to incorporate hellish or demonic imagery. Angilbert's 'battle of Fontenoy' develops this image of hell upon earth, through a model of pathetic fallacy,

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[15] Fussell, *Great War and Modern Memory*, pp. 310–34.

[16] Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, pp. 33–42

[17] Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, p. 147; discussed by Fussell, *Great War and Modern Memory*, pp. 311–13.

reinterpreted by Frye as nature expressing 'solemn sympathy' with a dying god, or for a dying faith: '[...] Frankish blood was shed in slaughter and destruction. / The fields shudder, the woods shudder, the marshes shudder'. The effort of a poet such as Alcuin to make sense of the sack of Lindisfarne within a narrative of sacred (or 'salvation') history, leads, over the course of a century of Carolingian poetry, to a steady breakdown visible in the poetry. A panegyric epic poem such as the *Paderborn Epic*, in which violent activities such as the boar hunt form a sensible, readable part of the narrative's fabric, prefigure other, grander, more combative actions such as the conversion of the Saxons (controversially) or the later quelling of the rebellious peoples who attempted to maim Pope Leo, is less and less possible by the end of the ninth century. Whether the *Waltharius* is a product of the ninth century or the tenth, it nevertheless manifests what Frye and Fussell would certainly have recognized as an ironic attitude toward its violent subject matter.[18]

With this sense of irony as a means of dealing with traumatic violence in mind, let us turn back to the early Middle Ages. Renée Trilling, in her doctoral thesis on poetic memory in Anglo-Saxon England, traced what she felt was an emergent sense of nostalgia in Old English poetry, a nostalgia that helped produce heroic narrative. The narrative sense of history as being specifically teleological, and focused on salvation, had existed for some time,

> Anglo-Saxon England witnessed the emergence and continued use of a vernacular historiography that eschewed salvation history as a narrative framework. The rich Germanic tradition of heroic poetry offered writers an alternative model for historical discourse, and it gave rise to a mode of historiography which I should like to term 'heroic history.'[19]

Trilling regards this as profoundly nostalgic, backward-looking rather than looking forward toward the second coming. 'Anglo-Saxon historical poetry fosters a cultural identity founded not on a common faith in future salvation, but on a shared belief in a glorious past'.[20] Considering Abbo's *Bella parisiacae urbis* as exemplary of 'salvation

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[18] See Schaller, 'Ist der "Waltharius" frühkarolingisch?'; and Ziolkowski, 'Fighting Words: Wordplay and Swordplay in the *Waltharius*'.

[19] Trilling, 'Poetic Memory', p. 74.

[20] Trilling, 'Poetic Memory', p. 75. See also Boym, *Future of Nostalgia*, pp. 42–5.

history', she as merely ornamental his forays into martial gore. Paul Szarmach seems to agree with this opinion, arguing that the 'overriding concern' of what he considers a 'sub-genre' of heroic narratives featuring Christians battling pagans, and one which includes both *The Battle of Maldon* and the *Bella Parisiacae urbis*, was 'to present praise for Christian heroes and keep the narrative focus on the Christian side'.[21] The Vikings are 'mere foils' for Christian virtue and valor; it is only later, Szarmach suggests, when the adversaries of the Christian warriors become worthy in their own right. Yet, while the Danes do become rehabilitated after a time, and can themselves be the subject rather than the object of heroic sacrifice, they are merely replaced in turn by new adversaries, such as the Saracens, who become the victims of greater, and more imaginative, atrocities. Scenes such as that from *Havelok* become applied to entire peoples.[22]

The poems I have examined in this thesis point to the use of violent scenes to position their narratives with glances forward and backward. Sacrificial violence recalls the Crucifixion, as well as the courageous deeds of the heroes who have gone before, establishing examples for later leaders to emulate. But they also look to the future, hoping to establish in some secure way a link toward salvation both on earth and in Heaven. Sacrificial violence is an attempt to overcome a tragic sense of life in the present, by appealing to a glorious past and a magnificent future at the same time. Charlemagne was seen by a sequence of his own heirs, and by later poets, as providing such an example, giving rise to later epics such as the *Chanson de Roland*. For Anglo-Saxon England, such models could be provided by a kings or saints, but also by traditional heroes such as Beowulf.

Yet, when applied to contemporary events, early medieval poets cannot hide their sense of anxiety with such a practice, the sense that the heroic model remains an often desperately-sought goal rather than an achievement. Poetic skill cannot hide that *The Battle of Maldon* remains a poem about a defeat, and that the *Bella Parisiacae urbis* contains much that is deeply pessimistic. The sense of the traumatic in the violence of the ninth and tenth centuries shades easily into the triumphal scenes of horror, such as in the

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[21] Szarmach, 'The (Sub-)Genre', p. 60.

[22] The gruesome execution of Caiaphas in *The Siege of Jerusalem* (lines 693–712), is one such example, and deserves more treatment than it has received, although see Nicholson, 'Haunted Itineraries'.

delight afforded to the abbot Ebolus at seeing the Danes burned by oil and pitch, or by the execution of Godard in *Havelok*. That such scenes seem to become more common in the war poetry of the High Middle Ages, in texts such as *The Siege of Jerusalem*, the *Sege off Melayne*, or *Richard Coer de Lion*, seems to suggest that for a time, at least, the sense of salvation afforded by the sacrifice of foreigners overcame the sense of horror glimpsed by men such as Angilbert upon the field at Fontenoy.

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