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THE SYNTHESIS OF ANGLO-SAXON AND CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS IN THE OLD
ENGLISH *JUDITH*

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Bachelor of Arts in English
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December 2008

submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

at the

CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSTIY

December 2013

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Dedicated
to
Joseph Zilkowski

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ABSTRACT

The Anglo-Saxons were a people who took great pride in their heritage and culture. However, they faced various challenges in preserving the pagan traditions of their Nordic ancestors while being heavily influenced by Christianity. Many Anglo-Saxon texts demonstrate these cultural challenges, but the Book of *Judith*, found in the *Nowell-Codex*, attempts to unify the two conflicting cultures by uniting Anglo-Saxon and Christians traditions in a distinctly Old English format. The Old English adaptation of the Latin Vulgate *Judith* text portrays the actions of the heroine in light of Christianity while incorporating deeply-rooted Anglo-Saxon traditions. Judith is the unifying figure within the story, because she exemplifies both Anglo-Saxon and Christian ideals. Judith's dual characteristics create a picture of a unified Christian/Anglo-Saxon woman, whose morals, virtues, and heroic actions are reflected in the minor characteristics of the story. From the Old English writing style, to the opening feast, to the beasts of battle, to the collection of the spoils of war, the *Nowell-Codex Judith* is filled with traditional Anglo-Saxon imagery that creates a cohesive Anglo-Christian world for readers and listeners of the time to emulate.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Old English scholars have long speculated regarding whether the Anglo-Saxon book of *Judith* found in the *Nowell-Codex*, i.e. *Beowulf Manuscript*, was written as a religious text, ancestral tribute, or political propaganda. Readers will never be able to ascertain the thoughts and intentions of the author and each different reading of the *Judith* text has its own merits. There is a certain advantage to looking at *Judith* from each different perspective individually; however, there is also an advantage to looking at *Judith* scholarship collectively. *Judith* interpretation can be divided into two distinct scholarly varieties: as a religious text with heavy Christian symbolism or a historical text focusing on the Anglo-Saxon cultural symbols and their relation to the time period. Looking at each category separately can illuminate the meaning behind the text and strengthen scholarly understanding of the story. For example, Thomas Honeggar's article "Form and Function: The Beasts of Battle Revisited" focuses exclusively on the animals of war who appear before the battle between Holofernes' men and the Bethulians. Honeggar's article shows how a re-occurring metaphor in Old English poetry helps identify the *Judith* poem as distinctly Anglo-Saxon. However, one might also read *Judith* with the understanding that the two categories of Anglo-Saxon tradition and Christian

teaching are integrated to form one unique Old English adaptation of the well know *Old Testament Judith* story. Alexandra Hennesey Olsen states in “Inversion and Political Purpose in the Old English ‘Judith’” that “The extant Old English poetry was- to borrow a phrase from Edward B. Irving Jr-‘formed by the collision of two cultures and is always a mixed kind of poetry’” (Olsen 289). The two colliding cultures Irving Jr. and Olsen are referring to are the Anglo-Saxon and Christian cultures. Irving’s observation, a direct response to the *Judith* poem, shows both contemporary and modern readers that Judith as a character and her society are an idealized image for the Anglo-Saxons of the time to emulate.

While the interpretations of *Judith* are numerous, there is no single fully agreed upon way to read the Old English poem. In order to come to a place of common understanding, readers must first agree that the Anglo-Saxon book of *Judith* found in the *Nowell-Codex*, is just that- Anglo-Saxon. The poem is incomplete with portions missing at the beginning and possibly end, but what remains is a bound manuscript immediately following a copy of *Beowulf*. The *Beowulf* text is an epic tale of a Germanic hero, while the *Judith* poem is inspired by the *Vulgate* and *Septuagint* versions of Hebrew material. The *Judith* story first appeared in the Jewish *Septuagint*, a Greek translation of the Old Testament in the 3rd century BC (Chadwick 33). However, Bernard Huppé points out that the text, while Hebrew in nature, was never a part of the Hebrew canon (138). Still, Jerome included the story in the *Latin Vulgate* Old Testament. Early Church fathers like Augustine and Origen discuss the pressure towards the standardization of the Christian Bible, which led to the official incorporation of *Judith* into the Christian Old Testament (Chadwick 33). The prevailing belief is that the Anglo-Saxon *Judith* poem was written by

an unnamed author in the later part of the tenth century (Treharne 196). The scribe adapted Jerome's *Vulgate Judith* into an Old English verse format with added Anglo-Saxon details, making the text, I argue, both Anglo-Saxon and Christian in nature.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

The original Hebrew *Judith* story is found between the books of *Tobiae* and *Esther* in the *Vulgate* (Vulgate.com). However, the author of the *Nowell-Codex Judith* transforms the original text with the use of Anglo-Saxon and Christian characteristics. In order to understand the significance of this adaptation, the reader must understand what it means to be an Anglo-Saxon and Christian in and around tenth century England, the time when the author was probably writing (Cassidy 346). The exact beginning date of the Anglo-Saxons' arrival in Britain is unknown, because of the sporadic arrival of the various Germanic tribes and lack of documentation, but it is commonly assumed the Anglo-Saxon period dates from "A.D. 449 to 1066" (Raffel xi). However, "the first date is shrouded in legendary history" (Raffel xi). Following the Roman troop withdrawal from Britain and the threat of the Picts from the North, it is traditionally thought that the Celtic king Vortigern commissioned troops from the Germanic tribes on the continent to help him defeat his enemies in 449. (Raffel xi). These men and women who responded to his invitation were the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. In reality, there were several different dates of the migration from Europe, and those who came to Britain had a difficult time

establishing themselves in the new country. There are records of a Saxon revolt in “441 or 442” for the subjugation they suffered (Morris 59). Thus, the first Saxons to arrive in Britain came at least a few years earlier than the traditionally agreed upon date of 449. The fighting did not stop in 442; instead there were British-Saxon wars “between about 440 and about 495” (Morris 59). The final and successful second Saxon revolt occurred from 570 to 600. Overall, there was unrest and discord between the Saxons and earlier Britons for more than a century. Consequently, creating a lasting culture as Angles, Saxons and Jutes of the British Isles proved problematic. Many of the surviving stories written in Old English look remember the days before the influence of the Celts and other peoples of Britain, and harken back to the days of paganism, tribal life, and as Raffel and Olsen describe it, a “heroic” society (xii).

Few manuscripts from the Old English period remain. Of those that survived, themes of courage, honor, and loyalty, qualities of Anglo-Saxon tribal life, are often emphasized. However, Britain had established ecclesiastical Christian structures at least 200 years before the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes arrived from the continent. According to Frend the “earliest references to Christianity [in England] found in Tertullian c. 200 and Origen sc. 240 may be derived from travelers’ tales” (46). A more reliable date for the arrival of Christianity to the Early Britain, however, is 312. We are uncertain about the earliest introduction of Christianity to England, but even if the latest of the three dates were verified as most accurate, then Christianity was established more than 100 years before the approximate arrival of the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. The roots of British Christianity extend back into the 3rd century, but the growth of Christianity on the British Isles was sporadic at best. Missionaries such as Origen came to the wild country from the

more civilized cities of the Roman Empire and bring Christian faith and teachings with them. However, they were not always well-received and the journey to England, one of the farthest outposts of the Roman Empire, was not one many missionaries were willing to make. The British and Celtic devotion to Christianity waxed and waned with the arrival and departure of missionaries. When the Roman troops withdrew, shortly before the arrival of Angles, Saxons, and Jutes in 449 (Raffel xi), due to the beginning collapse of the Roman Empire, Christianity began to lose its stronghold in Britain. When the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes arrived, Christianity was no longer as stable as it once was, and new converts began picking and choosing which parts of the religion they would incorporate into their worship.

It was not until St. Augustine arrived in 597 (Treharne xiii), at the request of St. Gregory, that Christianity became a more firmly respected institution in England. By the time of the *Judith* text, nearly 400 years later, there was a clearly established Church structure complete with archbishops and bishops, priests, parishes, monasteries, convents, and regular contact and guidance from the pope in Rome.

There were still inconsistencies, however, between the actions of the faithful and the rules they were called to follow. Thus, preachers like Wulfstan chastised the people and claimed that their sins brought the downfall of their society. During this same time period, there are also texts which modeled a united Christian and Anglo-Saxon lifestyle for their readers, though the two traditions were not always easily integrated. *Judith* is one such text: it offers an example for living a life rooted in the traditions of the Anglo-Saxons and teachings of Christianity.

Historically, Anglo-Saxon culture and Christianity were often at odds with each other. Anglo-Saxon poetry commonly shows readers the “collision of two cultures” (Olsen 289), but historical texts have been effective in providing concrete evidence explaining how and why Anglo-Saxon and Christian cultures collided. Campbell explains that there was “the possibility that Germanic invaders had developed a common consciousness and sense of identity in their island home is serious and possibly important in explaining the speed and nature of ‘conversion’” (Campbell 125). Because of this Germanic unification, the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons was a slow process. However, *The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity* points out, “Monastic worship shaped the religious feeling of early medieval society more than did any other single factor” (Mayr-Harting 111). With preachers like Wulfstan and writers like the *Judith* author in the forefront of Christian scholarship and teaching, religious men found ways to unite the Anglo-Saxon and Christian cultures and bring about lasting conversion. Wulfstan used a fire-and-brimstone approach complete with chastisements and threats of condemnation. Meanwhile authors like the *Judith* poet created a setting within their manuscripts that demonstrated a fusion of Anglo-Saxon pagan culture and Christianity.

Monasteries were the cornerstone for the advancement and preservation of the church in England, and they received their guidance from the church in Rome. Henry Mayr-Harting discusses how the *Admonitio Generalis* was “a programme for giving the clergy social power” in his chapter entitled “The West: The Age of Conversion” (103). This program allowed the clergy, under the dispensation of Charlemagne, to look to the Old Testament for advice on leading the Christian Church in the outer realms of the

Roman Empire (103). Additionally, and perhaps more appropriately, Mayr-Harting finds that

When we move... to the Christian ideal of rule in general, it is at once necessary to point out an important fact about Christianity: that its book, the Bible, consists of two Testaments, which are very different from each other in ethic. However much the Christian religion taught of Christ, the Old Testament played a vital part in the reconciling of Germanic society and Christianity. (Mayr-Harting 101)

The Old Testament was the Christian authoritative vehicle used to demonstrate the similarities between well-established Anglo-Saxon tradition and Christian Orthodox teaching. Old Testament symbolism and references are found scattered throughout Old English literature, precisely because the majority of Old English texts were being produced by religious monks. Seamus Heaney points out that “it has often been observed that all scriptural references in *Beowulf* are to the Old Testament” (xix). *Judith*, meanwhile, was transposed *directly* from an Old Testament story. The *Judith* poet uses the Old Testament story as a platform to showcase the possibility of Germanic society and Christianity coming together as one unified Anglo-Saxon Christian identity. By demonstrating how Christianity and Germanic society can work together in an adapted Old Testament story, the poem reflects the integration of Germanic culture and Anglo-Saxon tradition. The practice of adapting Old Testament material was not unusual in Anglo-Saxon England. In fact, Old Testament stories were some of the favorites of the Anglo-Saxons.

In “Questioning Bede,” James Campbell clearly explains that in order for Christians to successfully convert the Anglo-Saxons, it was necessary to unite Christianity to the pagan traditions the Anglo-Saxons already practiced. Campbell says,

One should weigh an important observation by Patrick Wormald: Christianity had been successfully assimilated by a warrior nobility which had no intention of abandoning its culture, or seriously changing its way of life, but was willing to throw its traditions, customs, tastes and loyalties into the articulation of the new faith. (121)

The best way to reach the Anglo-Saxon pagan community was through their Germanic roots, and by linking their cultural identity to the biblical Old Testament and Christian teachings there was a greater chance to achieve conversions. For the Anglo-Saxons’ the Old Testament stories were in many ways similar to their own. Bede, the famous monk, author, and historian of early England used the overarching motif of common beasts of battle as a unifying point for his readers. The reference of the wolf is clearly found in both the Old Testament and pagan Anglo-Saxon traditions, ‘Benjamin shall ravine as a wolf’ (Campbell 124). Honegger mentions that “generally speaking, animals do not play a prominent role in Old English heroic literature- with the possible exception of the so-called ‘Beasts of Battle’, i.e. the wolf, the eagle, and the raven. These three animals were repeatedly used by various Old English (and Old Norse) poets, so that, in time, they became a ‘theme’” (289). Because Old Norse also featured these images, it can be inferred that the beasts of battle were a secular image. This imagery was shared by several heroic Germanic cultures, which encouraged religious writers to continue to incorporate the animals into their stories.

The *Judith* narrative uses the same plot line as the Hebrew story; however, several Anglo-Saxon traditions and Christian symbols, like the beasts of battle, are liberally integrated into the text. Mitchell states that “favourite [sic] Old English topics like warfare and the victors’ plundering of their defeated enemy are developed with all the traditional motifs in place” (Mitchell 300). Additionally, the Anglo-Saxon story focuses most of its 379 lines on the relationship between Judith and Holofernes, which is heightened by the fact that their names separate them from the rest of the cast of characters. In the *Vulgate* book of *Judith*, Judith and Holofernes’ interactions and beheading scene are condensed into one chapter out of 16 (Vulgate.com). Though Judith and Holofernes keep their names from the original version, much of the rest of the story is told with Anglo-Saxon and Christian traditions and themes monopolizing the text. Holofernes takes on the characteristics of an Anglo-Saxon lord and typically Anglo-Saxon monstrosity in different scenes of the poem. Mitchell and Robinson point out that “the Jewish heroine” Judith “is not only heroicized in the traditional Germanic way but is also Christianized” (300).

Judith herself may be a heroicized Christian character, but her humanity is most important for the secular, Anglo-Saxon aspects of the story, and the political agenda that seems to align itself with them. Authorities such as Wulfstan would have read Judith’s virtues like courage, and weakness like physical strength as a way to encourage the women and men of the time to have courage as well. In “*Sermo Lupi Ad Anglos*,” dated 1014 (Cassidy 257), the rape of women is a main point of concern for Wulfstan, and he explicitly discusses it in text. He condemns the rape of Anglo-Saxon women by Viking and Norman invaders, and he focuses on gang-rape in particular:

And it is shameful to think of what happens too commonly, and dreadful to know what too many often do, who practice a wretched deed: they pool their money together and buy a woman in common as a joint purchase, and with the one woman commit foul sin, one after another and each after the other, just like dogs who do not care about filth... (Luizza 199)

Judith's victory over Holofernes, a man who "intended to corrupt with defilement and with polluting sin" (trans mine l 57), is a symbol and example of hope and inspiration for the threatened and tortured Anglo-Saxons of the time. Because of the peril of the very real possibility of rape and sexual abuse found both in Anglo-Saxon England and in the *Judith* poem, Judith's Anglo-Saxon/Christian persona can be seen as a model for Anglo-Saxon women. Scholars, like Olsen, link *Judith* to Wulfstan's homily. Olsen describes Judith as an ideal image for the women of the time:

Anglo-Saxon women found themselves in a position in which the men of their households were not able to protect them from the Danes, the people of the period needed not just the ideals embodied by the poem but also the action depicted therein brave physical action to end physical abuse. (292)

Anglo-Saxon women were helpless in the face of Viking invasion, and Olsen suggests that the *Judith* story offered an example for these women to emulate.

Where as Wulfstan tries to convert his listeners with fear and threats, the *Judith* story takes a milder approach. The story preaches a more accessible Christian lifestyle by incorporating, highlighting, and honoring Anglo-Saxon heritage. The poem is unique in its message of an integrated Anglo-Saxon, Christian society. At the time the poem was written, Germanic culture and its era of *mead halls* and *thanes*, so central to Anglo-Saxon

tradition, was quickly losing its once-real grasp. Instead of cherishing the good, noble, and worthy traditions of the past, preachers like Wulfstan, were calling people to turn away from pagan traditions and turn to God as the “this world is in haste and it draws near its end” (Luizza 196). Wulfstan spends his sermon chastising and condemning his congregation, and he does not incorporate the qualities of Anglo-Saxon life which can be preserved and honored while practicing the Christian faith. Still, he is an important source because his sermon occurred at roughly the same point in time as the *Judith* poem. Wulfstan offers a glimpse into what real life was like for at least some inhabitants of Britain in 1014. However, it is the Judith author who incorporates the *Admonitio Generalis* and creates an example of how to live as an Anglo-Saxon and Christian.

The *Judith* poem shows readers how to be an Anglo-Saxon and Christian through the story of a woman who overcomes the impending rape of an evil foreigner. The *Judith* poem clearly shows that the Anglo-Saxons should not abandon all of their ancestral traditions through the many images of Anglo-Saxon tradition found throughout the text. Additionally, it demonstrates, through Judith’s prayers to the Christian God, that the worship of pagan gods is not acceptable for Anglo-Saxon Christians. Barbara Yorke’s book *The Anglo-Saxons* discusses how “churchmen...were constantly vigilant for Christian ceremonies being corrupted by remnant of non-Christian religious practices surviving among the Anglo-Saxons” (60). Being both Anglo-Saxon and Christian did not mean that one should worship both Christian and Anglo-Saxon pagan gods, but rather that one should follow a Christian God with Christian morals while remaining true to the assimilable cultural aspects of the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes who came before them. This is something the Judith character does perfectly, and in return she and her people are

rewarded for it. *Bright's Old English Grammar and Reader* explains it beautifully when it states, "Judith is a remarkably successful account of the devotion and derring-do of a saint militant, whose success is in direct proportion to the strength of her faith" (Cassidy 346). Furthermore, "the author...has followed quite freely the *Vulgate* version of the Book of Judith, amplifying the story into a Christian epic which freely embodies not only the language of the older Germanic heroic style, but sometimes even the attitudes and institution to which this style was subservient" (Cassidy 346).

Scholars like Estes and Dockray-Miller admit that *Judith* displays the qualities and characteristics of both Christian and Anglo-Saxon culture. However, Old English literary scholars still tend to divide themselves into one of three camps when talking about the *Nowell-Codex* version of *Judith*. Mary Dockray-Miller puts it best when she states that Judith herself "has been read as a figure of Mother Church, or as a Germanic warrior, or as a warning against rape" (165). Huppé notes that early Church Fathers like Ambrose and Jerome view Judith as Church Ecclesia. He states "one of Jerome's references to Judith is so allusive, even cryptic, as to suggest his assumption of an accepted understanding of her allegorical typology" (142). Peter Lucas more fully explains the allegory first presented by the early Judith scholars, in relationship to the *Nowell-Codex Judith*. He states that "she is a figure of the Church representing the conquest of moral degradation and evil typified by Holofernes" (17). Furthermore, he states that "as an example of faith in action against evil and oppression Judith becomes an instrument in God's hands" (Lucas 17). Others like Olsen suggest the "those who allegorize *Judith* may be misinterpreting the poem" (292).

Dockray-Miller considers Judith to be “a manifestation of a ‘conventional stock character- the Germanic warrior woman” (166). However, Anderson presents a thorough and convincing argument for how Judith could qualify as a Germanic warrior: “as a maiden, Judith is homologized to the amazon-warrior of Germanic tradition. When it counted, she wielded a sword and slew her enemy” (281). However, all of these ideas on their own leave certain important questions unaddressed, and none of them fully describe or explain the Judith story completely. Even Anderson admits that Judith does not wholly conform to the traditional Germanic warrior woman; instead the Germanic/Amazon warrior “appears in extant Old English literature...figuratively. She appears *in bono* in metaphors applied to Judith...” (285). Anderson does make a further connection linking her pagan and Christian metaphors, “in her role as an amazon-warrior, she is the Church Militant” (283).

Finally, Lucas offers his reading of Judith suggesting that no modern interpretation of Judith is entirely correct because Judith herself “transcends them” (17). While Lucas, and others like Anderson and even Olsen, make a valid argument that not one category perfectly fits Judith, instead of transcending or roughly fitting into none or one category, perhaps it would be beneficial to see how the Judith story can be all of these categories, to a greater or lesser extent. In this way, the reader can see how religious and secular allusions, metaphors, and direct references work together to create a more unified reading and understanding of the characters and the example they, Judith most especially, are supposed to be setting for their contemporary readers.

There are a large number of articles which emphasizes the importance of the secular imagery or Christian references in the interpretation of *Judith*. Many, too, look at

Judith as a fragmented work. Kim recognizes the importance of all the fragments in the story solely for what they are, stating that “the *Judith* that we have is, whole or not, a poem which present two most graphic fragments, the two parts of Holofernes’s body” (286). Further analysis based on this observation provides a largely secular, though important, perspective. When one considers the secular and religious imagery, neither perspective can necessarily offer a complete interpretation on its own, but together they can illustrate a practical and more complete understanding the *Judith* poem adaptation. A fuller understanding of how the Anglo-Saxon and Christian characteristics meld offers a clear example of how to live a life that is simultaneously Christian and Anglo-Saxon.

The integration of two cultures would not be possible without a strong lead character. Judith herself exhibits the qualities of a saintly Christian and a Germanic warrior hero. This is possible for several reasons, but the first (and most obvious) characteristic is that Judith is a woman. In Anglo-Saxon England a story’s hero could be female. Up through the turn of the first millennium women in England could, and sometimes did, lead as a queen, abbess, or warriors. Raffel and Olsen state that

Judging from the literary and historical records, women held high status in Anglo-Saxon society: women were respected for their wise counsel and played important roles in all classes. Aristocratic women in both literature and history were assertive in speech, which was as important as action in Germanic society. (Raffel xii)

One thing that cannot be disputed is that Judith was assertive in speech. She prayed out loud to the Christian God before beheading Holofernes,

Grant me Prince of Heaven/ Victory and true faith” (trans mine ll 86b- 87a).

When she returned triumphant to the townspeople of Bethulia she instilled courage in the men to fight Holofernes’ army, “Carry shields forward/ Shields for breasts and mail coats/ Gleaming protection into the troops of enemies/ Cut down the commander with gleaming swords/Fated leaders. Your enemies/ Doomed to death. (trans mine ll 191b- 196a)

Finally in the ending lines Judith recites her own magnificent to God beginning with “Glory to the Lord of hosts who gave her (Judith) honor/ Glory in the kind of Earth, likewise reward in heaven...” (trans mine ll 344-345b). She continues for five more lines describing how the Christian God helped save her and her people because of the faith she had in Him.

A leader’s speech was as important as their action, but in Anglo-Saxon society action was a necessary leadership quality. In Anderson’s chapter he goes through a list and explanation of different ways women could lead in Anglo-Saxon England and the pagan, pre-Christian days that preceded it in both Britain and Germanic Europe. Anglo-Saxons would have been familiar with the stories and legends of Amazon warriors, Germanic shield-maidens, and Valkyries (276-279). Furthermore, with the popularity of Christianity, many Anglo-Saxons would have seen the lives of female saints as a different form of leadership that would have also had heroic aspects. *Elene* and *Juliana* are two Old English stories of female saints that have been preserved in manuscript form, and the two stories are often grouped together with *Judith*. In “*Judith, Juliana, and Elene: Three Fighting Saints, or How I Learned That Translators Need Courage Too*,” Marie Nelson groups the stories together as three stories of fighting female heroes (85).

Women leadership was not a concept the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes introduced to the original inhabitants of Britain. While the Anglo-Saxons shared in the idea that women could be granted leadership roles, women rulers in Britain was first recorded by Tacitus in *The Annals of Imperial Rome*. In the latter part of the first century, when Britain was a part of the Roman Empire under the direct rule of Suetonius Paulinus, there was a revolt of the British people (291). Boudicea, with her three daughters, led the Britons into battle against Suetonius and his men. Her words, recorded by Tacitus, incorporated many of the same ideologies as the Anglo-Saxon culture:

...it is not as a woman descended from noble ancestry, but as one of the people that I am avenging lost freedom, my scourged body, that outraged chastity of my daughters. Roman lust has gone so far that not our very persons, nor even age or virginity, are left unpolluted. But heaven is on the side of a righteous vengeance...If you weigh well the strength of the armies, and the causes of the war, you will see that in this battle you must conquer or die. This is a woman's resolve; as for men, they may live and be slaves. (Tacitus 294)

Boudicea motivates her soldiers to fight by speaking of the sexual assault against the British/Celtic women. She encourages using violence for a noble and just cause, a justification Bede agrees with. Finally, she admits that the only proper resolution for a true warrior is victory or death. To lose and live would mean to become a Roman, and being a Roman slave would mean that, as a woman, she would be subjected to all forms of violence both physical and sexual. She therefore "must conquer or die;" there was no other alternative. Tacitus records the bloody battle and notes that "our soldiers spared not to slay even the women" (295). Tacitus estimates that in the British defeat "there fell little

less than eighty thousand of the Britons, with a loss to our soldiers of about four hundred” (295). Boudicea ended her life “by poison” (295) rather than be taken as a hostage. The outcome of the battle was certainly bleak, but the memory of Boudicea as a passionate warrior and leader has survived nearly two millennia.

Though Boudicea is of a different time and culture than the Anglo-Saxons, Anderson makes it clear that “the British princess Boudicea [was] a true amazon-warrior” (279). It is likely the Anglo-Saxon people would have known of the Roman occupation and early British royalty like Boudicea and her daughters. However, even if Boudicea had been unknown to the Anglo-Saxon people, her words and actions are in accord with the way the Anglo-Saxon culture sought to conduct themselves, and additionally, how Judith is portrayed as a heroine. Boudicea’s story also demonstrates that certain tribal morals like female purity, freedom, and fighting until victory or death are heroic qualities that were a part of British tradition long before the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons.

Though there was not an overabundance of heroic female figures in literature, there were a few in history books, and while not all men and women could read and write there would have been a general knowledge of past history that was commonly shared. Tacitus, a Roman historian, documents the leadership of Celtic Queen and her daughters during a battle against the Romans some four centuries before the Anglo-Saxons arrived (294). To have Judith as the heroine in Anglo-Saxon England is something both men and women would have been able to identify with. By the end of the story Judith is appointed a place of honor when her people “reward her for the journey” (trans mine ll 335) by giving her all of Holofernes’ gold, jewels, and armor. She was presented with “all that the

arrogant lord of warriors/ possessed of treasure or of personal inheritance” (trans mine ll 335, 338b- 339).

In addition to heroic warrior women from the British Isles those first Christian readers would also have been familiar with the lives of early Christian martyrs. “From an early period, the Christian Church endeavoured to keep alive and to celebrate the memory of its martyrs” (Herzfeld vii). These accounts were collected to form the text *An Old English Martyrology*. The Martyrology is a compilation of the lives of martyred saints from the earliest days of the Church. The actual *Old English Martyrology*, which was a calendar with a saint’s story corresponding to a specific day, dates approximately to the time of Bede (Herzfeld ix). With emphasis on female virginity in both Christian and Anglo-Saxon tradition, it is easy to understand Judith’s *Vulgate* character was altered from a widow to a maiden, (i.e. a virgin). There were many virgin martyrs from the beginnings of Christianity who gave their lives for chastity and the Church. St. Agnes and St. Agatha are two young girls who chose torture and horrific death over marrying pagan men. *The Old English Martyrology* combines four Latin source texts together to retell the story of St. Agnes. She was a virgin martyr in Rome who was stripped and taken to a brothel after refusing to marry a Roman man. She was protected by an angel and remained a chaste and devout virgin, though she was eventually executed (Phillips 178). With their chastity in jeopardy both St. Agnes and Judith were miraculously protected by the Christian God’s grace.

St. Agatha is another early martyr who died to preserve her virginity. She was put to death sometime between 250-253 AD (Kirsch). She refused the advances of a Roman nobleman and he “subjected [her] to various cruel tortures. Especially inhumane seemed

his order to have her breasts cut off” (Kirsch). Kirsch mentions that this detail of St. Agatha’s torture was of particular importance to “Christian medieval iconography.” However, legend continues that St. Agatha was “consoled by a vision of St. Peter, who miraculously cured her” (Kirsch). Eventually the repeated tortures killed her, and she died a virgin and martyr.

These and similar Christian stories would have also been known to Anglo-Saxons. The Old English story of *Julianna* relays the tale of a girl who refutes her father and refuses to marry a pagan man. Nelson describes it most succinctly saying “Juliana says to her father...[that]...she doesn’t care what he has promised she is not going to marry that wicked pagan Heliseus” (87). Juliana’s example of defiance in favor of living a chaste life is consistent with the theme of a chaste and devout maiden. Christian stories from across the empire and at home demonstrated the importance of virginity and chastity not just in the pages of history, but in the real lives of their listeners.

Ælfric and others discuss the value of virginity during this time period; particularly in regards to the *Vulgate Judith* story Ælfric says, “take example by this Judith how chastely she lived before the birth of Christ and never feign to God in the time of the gospel holy chastity, which you vowed to Christ because he condemns secret fornication and foul shames” (Huppé 143). Chadwick, similarly, notes that “the pagan world was familiar with the widespread beliefs that sexual contact between a man and woman hindered the soul’s rise to higher things, and even that one who has been favored with the love of a god ought to forgo mortal love” (25-6). Therefore the rape of all women, especially virgins was an outrageous travesty no matter what a person’s religion was. Judith thus makes a natural transformation from widow to maiden, in keeping with

the more valued and precarious position in Anglo-Saxon England. By describing Judith as a blessed maiden she is linked to the saintly women of the Church as well as the Germanic female hero.

While Judith can be linked to both the Amazon warrior and saint, as Anderson has stated, it is hard to make an argument strictly for one side or the other. Instead, with the precise lexicon, specific descriptions, and blended secular and religious characteristics found in the story, the *Judith* poem shows that Judith, and her real life Anglo-Saxon counterparts, can simultaneously be good Christians and maintain Anglo-Saxon traditions. The *Judith* story paints a picture of an integrated religious and secular life in Judith, even in her precarious rape scene, which may not have been unlike what some Anglo-Saxon women were facing. There is evidence in historical texts to show that the religious and secular readings are both appropriate. Instead of looking through the selective microscope at only one argument, a broader perspective can be utilized to see the advantages of a dual reading. The melding of the two parts, religious and secular, equates to a perfected Anglo-Saxon, Christian woman. Though Judith is extraordinary, she is still able to serve as a model for her readers.

There are two surviving Old English *Judith* stories. Ælfric wrote a prose version of the story that is very nearly a word for word translation of the Vulgate text (Huppé 138), and the second was the *Nowell-Codex Judith* poem written by an anonymous author. Of the two versions, only Ælfric's has any commentary from contemporary scholars. While both rely heavily on portions of the Old Testament imagery, they are very different in nature. The *Judith* poet from the *Nowell-Codex* version uses the *Vulgate* story as a guideline and adapts it to fit into his agenda. However, the *Vulgate Judith* as

translated by Ælfric was a, more or less, word for word prose translation, though Huppé admits “Ælfric does omit verses...transforms some, and makes phrasal additions” (137). This translation focused on the religious metaphors and symbolism, and provided commentary on the character Judith at the end of the story. Therefore, like many other early scholars and Church fathers of England, namely Jerome, Isidore of Saville and Rabanus Marus, Ælfric did not leave the interpretation of his text up to the readers, but rather provided it for them as a sort of guide and lesson to right Christian living. Hostetler discusses the final lines of Ælfric’s text and explains that “Ælfric’s adaptation of the book of Judith concludes with forty-one lines of Christian exegesis on the figure of *Judith* broken into two codas” (152). She goes on to say that the first coda discusses the canonicity of the book of *Judith* while the second addresses a group of female religious readers (Hostetler 152).

However, the religious commentaries on Ælfric’s *Judith* translation provide insight into the *Judith* poem as well, especially since there is no surviving original commentary on the poem. The earliest discussions on the story of *Judith* center around Judith’s chastity. It is important to note that many of the commentaries about the Old Testament book of *Judith* between the 8th through the 11th centuries in England, by men such as Ælfric, Isidore of Saville, and Rabanus Marus, discuss the religious symbolism of the *Vulgate Judith* story. There is little material of the time which solely discusses a secular interpretation of the story, though Rabanus is one of the first to remark that there is secular metaphor in the story when he discusses the beheading scene. He is also one of the first to discuss the symbolism behind the removal of the canopy above Holofernes’ bed after the beheading (Huppé 143).

Though not directly related, these early interpretations help pave the way for the *Judith* poem's incorporation of both spiritual and pagan characteristics the adapted text. The *Nowell-Codex Judith* story captures a moment in time, and shows the readers a world where ancient traditions dating back to ancestral Europe collide with the newer religion of Christianity, while Wulfstan's contemporary version shows itself in the telling of the tale. Early scholars like Ælfric tended to see the pagan in light of the spiritual, often considering the one as a way to enhance the importance of the other, "Take example by this Judith how chastely she lived before the birth of Christ and never feign to God in the time of the gospel holy chastity which you vowed to Christ because he condemns secret fornications and foul shames" (Huppé 143). Though Judith's virginity is never explicitly stated in the poem, she emulates the chastity of Judith the widow in the scenes with Holofernes. However her chasteness is as much a part of the pagan tradition as it was the religious tradition of the time period. James Campbell offers an historical account of the importance of purity in women in Germanic society in his article "Questioning Bede" found in *Intersections: The Archaeology and History of Christianity in England, 400-1200*:

A leading example is St. Boniface's account of an example for Christians set by pagan Saxons on the Continent. How? In their treatment of women who committed adultery. Such women were flogged from place to place by other women and in the end left dead or almost dead. (124)

Understanding that this practice was taking place in pagan societies on the European Continent proves that the idea of female chastity was as important to the Germanic cultures as it was to the Christian culture. Judith's virginity in the *Nowell-Codex* poem

then proves that it is not entirely spiritual symbolism like Ælfric suggests, but rather has roots also in Anglo-Saxon tradition and symbolism as well.

Besides virginity, there are other Germanic themes that appear in the *Judith* poem. To further understand the intricacies of Anglo-Saxon tradition and symbolism a comparison between *Judith* and *Beowulf* shows the predominate, overlapping themes in the two texts. The story of the *Beowulf* immediately precedes *Judith* in the *Nowell-Codex*. There is no way to know whether *Judith* was meant to follow *Beowulf* in the *Nowell-Codex*, but it is certain that *Judith* “is written by the same scribe who writes *Beowulf* lines 1939b to 3182 [the end]” (Treharne 196). For several reasons *Beowulf* has gained more popularity in the literary canon than *Judith*, but with the same scribe writing portions of one text, including the lament of the Geat woman, the similarities in Anglo-Saxon themes are resoundingly clear. Both stories depict feasts, battles, intimate scenes between the hero and monster, *comitatus* relationships, beasts of battle, victories, and collections of the spoils of those victories. The *Beowulf* epic, set in the land of the Geats, “a territory situated in what is now southern Sweden” (Heaney ix), tells the tale of a great lord of the ancestral *mead halls* of Germanic society. In R. M. Liuzza’s *Beowulf* translation he states that “the [Beowulf] poet looks back on a world long vanquished, imaginatively bringing its textures and values to life” (17). The detail found in the *Beowulf* text can be used to show how the Old English traditions in the *Judith* poem are a part of the Germanic culture. This connection between the two texts provides a direct link between the cultural and secular symbols of *Judith* and the Anglo-Saxon culture.

One of the most poignant moments in *Beowulf*, and a key transition into the *Judith* text that follows, is when Beowulf dies at the end of the tale there is an old woman who

weeps as his body is carried out to sea. “With heavy spirits/ they mourned their despair, the death of their lord;/ and a sorrowful song sang the Geatish woman,/ with hair bound up, for Beowulf the king,/ with sad cares, earnestly said/ that she dreaded the hard days ahead,/ the times of slaughter, the host’s terror,/ harm and captivity” (Liuzza 149-150, ll 3148-3155). Though the old woman cries for the loss of her lord, she also weeps for the “hard days ahead” and the loss of the culture of lords, *thanes*, and *mead halls* that died with Beowulf. “Their [Anglo-Saxon] society was of the kind called “heroic,” organized for war, with a code of values that emphasized physical and moral courage” (Raffel xii). This lifestyle of tribal community was known as the *comitatus* community, literally meaning “retinue or following” (Raffel xii). While the *mead halls*, tribal life and pagan deities were diminished as Christian religion became more wide-spread. The values of the *comitatus* community remained close to the Anglo-Saxons in England. Stories like “The Battle of Maldon” and even in “The Dream of the Rood,” a Christian poem about Christ narrated by the Cross from Calvary, highlight examples of men embodying *comitatus* values.

“The Battle of Maldon” describes, “with considerable poetic licence [*sic*], the events of the historical Battle of Maldon in 991,” (Treharne 141). The Old English poem employs the heroic ideals of the Germanic warrior lifestyle to show how important loyalty to one’s lord was in battle. After their lord Byrtnoth dies in battle, one soldier after another steps up to share how important courage and loyalty are. “Ælfwine then said... ‘Remember the words that we once spoke over mead/ when we raised a vow at our bench/...about the hard battle;/ now it will be tested who is brave” (Treharne 151, ll 211-215). There was no greater honor than dying for one’s lord, and fleeing from battle

demonstrated “a cowardice that [was] completely unacceptable within the heroic code that governed the ideals of warriorship” (Treharne 155).

The *comitatus* values of loyalty and bravery were the values upon which the Germanic warrior lifestyle and community were based. Each community consisted of a lord and his warriors, *thanes*, and their family members. A *thane* was a man who pledged allegiance to and went to battle with his lord. Often large gatherings would occur, and the entire community would come together to celebrate in *mead halls*. There they heard stories that were told by *scops*, “professional singers who accompanied themselves on the harp” (Raffel xv). These singers would regale their listeners with tales of battles and other epics. The fifth century Anglo-Saxons were largely illiterate (Raffel xv), and stories were rarely written down. Instead the *scops* learned thousands of lines, memorized each tale, and performed for large crowds during feasts. In the *mead halls* food and drink were shared and sometimes gold and jewels were handed out by the lord to the *thanes*. In line 352 of *Beowulf*, Hrothgar the original lord of Heorot is called a “giver of rings” (Liuzza 64). Additionally, Hrothgar promises to give Beowulf “treasures for his true daring” (Liuzza 65, l 385) if he can get rid of the monster plaguing Heorot. Little is known of the oral society of the Anglo-Saxons before literary records became popular. However, Andy Orchard points out that there is a school of thought which suggests “formulaic phrasing of Old English poems such as *Beowulf* necessarily implied oral composition” (225). He goes on further to say that even “several Christian Anglo-Saxons who chose to compose in Latin or in prose (or both) appear to have been influenced by vernacular verse at every level of composition” (226). The *Judith* poem found in the *Nowell-Codex* is one such

poem that mirrors oral tradition, most especially when one looks at the intermittent use of the first person *ic* narrator found in lines 7 and 246 (Mitchell 302, 309).

The idea of having a home and a people to belong to was crucial to Germanic culture and one's survival. In the raw and untamed wilderness of Northern Europe and Britain before even the Middle Ages, the wilderness was a scary place, and no one wanted to face it alone. There was strength in numbers and, like the Geats and Danes before them, the Anglo-Saxons lived in "clannish" divisions, each with a lord and his warriors, *thanes*. This was the way of the *comitatus* lifestyle and this was the way of the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes of Europe.

The elegiac poems of the period convey the heart and soul of the culture, describing in beautiful metaphor and verse the *comitatus* bond that linked the men of a tribe together in a nearly sacred bond. The poem of "The Wanderer" is about a man who, for unknown reasons, no longer has a tribe to call his own. Whether he was cast out, left behind, or deceased at the time of his narration is all speculation. What is known is that he once had a community to call home and now he is wandering in the wilderness "lonely" (l 1) and "with [a] sorrowing mind" (l 2). "So said a wandered, of his hardships mindful/ of hostile slaughters, his dear friends' fall/ 'Oft I must alone, each morn/ my care bewail: there is now none living/ to whom my thoughts I dare tell openly" (McDonald ll 6-11a). Perhaps the suffering is not physical, but his heart is heavy and his thoughts are on better days when he shared in the *mead hall* celebrations and lived with his lord as "he remembers the hall-retainers, and receipt of treasure/ how him in youth his bounteous patron/ train'd to the feast; but pleasure all has fall'n" (McDonald ll 34-36a).

Though the Wanderer remembers the happy times of the *mead hall* they are overshadowed by the memory of the fallen days of feasting and camaraderie.

As “The Wanderer” poignantly reflects, life was safe inside the *mead hall*, and the outside world was thought to be a dark and scary place. According to Raffel and Olsen this idea was one that was shared by all Anglo-Saxons despite their different classes: “the worse misery was exile, separation from the community” (Raffel xiii). With the harsh climates of England and Northern Europe, wild animals, and lack of today’s comforts, the wilderness was not the bucolic fantasy of today but rather a place full of foreboding and dark mystery. People took comfort in the *mead halls*. The wanderer, who has been separated from his community, cries out that “Where is the treasure-giver?/ Where are the festive sittings ? Where are the joys of the hall?/Alas bright cup! Alas mail'd warrior! (94)/ Alas chieftain's splendour [*sic*]!” (Thorpe ll 92b-95a). Just as the old woman in *Beowulf* cries, the wanderer also laments the loss of his community through the remembrance of the *mead hall* and tribal community.

As the different tribes migrated to England they slowly stopped living the way of life of their European ancestors and adopted a more Christian system of living. By the end of the fourth century, before the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes arrived, “Britain... was fully part of the Latin-Western tradition” (Frend 42), proving that the tribal lifestyle was quickly becoming out of fashion even before the Anglo-Saxons were invited to England. The Geatish woman’s cries in *Beowulf* reveal the death of the Germanic *mead hall* living not only in literature but also in history. Still, British Anglo-Saxons stayed true to the mentality of *comitatus* living and never lost the spirit of the people who came before them.

The story of *Beowulf* closes the chapter on the great traditions of the *mead halls* and *comitatus* lifestyle. However, *Judith* follows closely behind, showing readers a world where Anglo-Saxon culture and Christianity can co-exist. With early British Christians choosing to continue practicing the pagan faith as well, it was necessary to demonstrate how someone could worship the Christian God and stay true to their Anglo-Saxon culture, without worshiping additional deities. *Beowulf* laments the loss of the Germanic warrior culture, but *Judith* demonstrates how the best parts of that culture can be preserved while living a saintly Christian life. The *Judith* poem is adapted from the *Vulgate* text which is entirely religious in its nature, but Olsen explains that Old English “stories borrowed from continental sources were transformed by poets who translated them into formulaic Old English verse” (289). She further quotes Irving Jr. and states that “an idea expressed in the Latin prose of a homily is never the same as the idea expressed in Old English verse” (Olsen 289). *Judith* adheres to the formula of a borrowed Old Testament story transformed into Old English verse.

Past Anglo-Saxon traditions were purposefully preserved in *Judith* through content, vocabulary, and textual format. Cassidy and Ringler mention that the language and vocabulary of the Germanic heroic style plays a part in keeping the oral tradition alive in a written text. The Roman numerical markers found in the Old English manuscript are a formatting tool and indicate different sections within the story. These Roman numerals appear at first glance to be haphazardly thrown into an otherwise calculated story. However, when looking back at the history of the Britain, one is reminded of the lengthy Roman occupation which lasted for centuries. During this time the Romans assimilated into the tribal cultures on the island, and it is clearly evident

through remaining architecture that the Roman culture also made its way, in part, into the lives of those peoples already established in England. Thus it is no surprise that Roman numerals became part of this blended culture the author is depicting. Even in writing a distinctly unique text, the *Judith* still manages to bring in characteristics from previous cultures that have naturally made their way into Anglo-Saxon and Christian tradition. Therefore, the story incorporates an additional structural marker within the text by using Roman numerals to indicate certain lines and sections of the text.

Mary Smyth discusses the Roman numerals at length. She suggests that the Roman numerals are found within the text are part of a coded system pointing out the key lines of the poem in relation to the Old Testament tale. With the Anglo-Saxon culture's fondness for riddles, she proposes that the Roman numerals "X, XI, XII, may be regarded as sign-posts along the poet's path, set up to direct him from one important event to another" (Smyth 197). Raffel and Olsen support Smyth's idea by connection her notes to the oral tradition evident in the written form of the *Judith* poem. They write that riddles are 'an ancient and worldwide form in both oral and written literature'" (Raffel 107). The Anglo-Saxons were no exception. They enjoyed riddles immensely and "the earliest known compilation of riddles in England was found in *The Exeter Book*" (Raffel 107). The Anglo-Saxons might have found the seemingly arbitrary numerals in the text to be a riddle themselves. Smyth's findings suggest there is much in *Judith* in the way of secular detail, including penmanship and layout of the text. This detail can help form the blended interpretation of an Anglo-Saxon exemplary character of *Judith* combining the religious and secular details.

Smyth's journal article does more than note the Roman numerals that appear in the poem. She also points out that the *Judith* poem is clearly fragmented, beginning at the end of a line with the single word *twēode* (Mitchell, 302, l 1). *Twēode* is the preterit, third person singular form of the work *doubt*, meaning that it can be translated into *he, she, or it doubted*. Since the discovery of the *Nowell-Codex* and the *Judith* poem, scholars have debated to what extent the story is intact. Huppé begins his analysis of his translation by saying, "the beginning of the Judith is lost, but how much is a matter for debate" (136). Some authors like A.S. Cook count the missing portion to be "negligible" (Huppé 136). "On the other hand, B. J. Timmer considers that the surviving lines constitute merely the last fourth of a poem of 'about 1344' lines" (Huppé 136). Smyth surmises that "several scholars have recently reached the conclusion that *Judith* is almost complete as it stands" (197). The debate seems to confirm only that there is in fact a portion of the text missing. Smyth, herself, engages the idea that the poem is nearly whole by attempting to unravel the riddle that is the presence of the Roman Numerals within the text.

There is no question that the Judith text is missing portions; the question is one of quantity. How much of the text is missing? This is something that will most likely go unanswered. One irrefutable fact, however, is that some lines of the beginning of the *Judith* poem are missing. There is speculation that the end of the text is missing as well, but the key components of the story-- namely the beheading and battle scene-- are complete. The *Judith* poem is not simply the content of the well-known Hebrew story condensed into an Old English poem. Instead the text is completely Anglo-Saxon in nature. Not only does the content reflect Anglo-Saxon culture and traditions but the way the story is formatted with two half line phrases per line and Roman numerals marking

the corresponding *Vulgate* line and verse showcase Old English characteristics. Huppé makes it clear that “*Judith* is free, heroic, narrative poetry” (137). Cassidy and Ringler confirm this calling the work “Germanic heroic style” (346). Looking again at Mary Smyth’s claim that the Roman Numerals are markers for the reader, the idea is perpetuated that the author made a written attempt to keep the oral tradition alive. Elizabeth M. Tyler also comments on the author’s unique language in “Style and Meaning in *Judith*” by saying “he [the author] consciously controls his language, applying it in the traditional manner as we find it in *Beowulf*, and breaking expectations by applying it in ways which are, strictly speaking, inappropriate” (16). Adding ambiguous Roman numerical markers to an Old English text is unusual and non-traditional, but Smyth, Cassidy, Ringler, and Tyler all agree that the unconventional move was a strategically done to highlight each section’s correlation to the lines to the *Vulgate* chapters .

The *Judith* poem has Anglo-Saxon characteristics found in the text format, but the Anglo-Saxon characteristics are seen even more prominently in the content of the text. The storyline and the central details were adapted to deliver a message primarily to those who identified themselves as Anglo-Saxon and/or Christian at the turn of the first millennium.

The story the *Judith* author conveys remains intact, with crucial scenes like the beheading and epiclike battle taking up most of the lines. However, the poem starts *in medias res*, literally “in the middle” of the action. More accurately, it starts in the middle of a line of fragmented verse. The poem begins with only one word, “...doubt” (trans mine l 1). The word immediately following it is *gifena*, the genitive plural form of the

verb “gift” (Mitchell 344). Mitchell and Robinson explain “most scholars assume that a negative preceded *twēode*, the sense of the sentence being ‘she did not doubt His gifts in this wide world’” (302). Still, Treharne takes a more direct approach and translates the first phrase in the without the negation, though she does indicate more may be missing from the poem, “...She doubted gifts in this wide earth” (197 l 1-2). With an unknown number of words missing, and with the gender of the person doubting or not doubting the gifts in question, it is unclear who the first lines are about.

The first line may be ambiguous, but when the first character makes an appearance in line 7b the vocabulary is quite direct. Though not one of the main three characters: Judith, Holofernes, or the handmaid, the first character is important none the less. Line 7b is the first mention of the first person narrator, *ic*, who disappears for much of the story and only inserts himself once more in the middle of the battle scene in line 246. The narrator uses the first person *Ic* (*I*) to speak of himself as if he is orally relaying the tale like the *scops* of the days of the *mead hall* feasts. This personal interjection only happens twice in the story, and it is often dismissed by translators. Raffel and Olsen omit the translation of *Ic* altogether, and Treharne translates it as a first person narrator but offers no other explanation for it, “I have heard...” (197 l 7) and “Then I have heard...” (207 l 246). Huppé translates the phrases as “Then I learned...” (115 l 7) and “Then I heard...” (129 l 246). My own translations for lines 7 and 246 respectively are “Then I found out...” and “Then I immediately found out...” Though all the translations are slightly different, they refer to a narrator who learns of a situation by acquiring the knowledge from a second party. Liuzza explains “when the narrator affirms the truth of his story he uses expressions such as ‘I have never heard’... or ‘I have heard’” (21). The

narrator tells the reader what is happening in a scene after he learns of it, though the effect is that *ic* is a framing device for specific scenes for the text.

The possibility for readership was growing during the pre-Middle Ages, but the *Judith* poem goes to great lengths to showcase an oral Anglo-Saxon style in with a written format. This observation verifies the deliberate style that was used in this specific translation. By the time *Judith* was written literary bards were not forgotten, but they had most definitely been out of practice. If there were just one instance of *ic* it might have been a mere mistake, but because it appears twice in two completely different parts of the story it is obvious that it was purposefully part of the story. In “Questioning Bede” James Campbell sheds light on Bede’s historical England and he states that “In England, as in Gaul, there could have been a significant number of literate laymen” (Campbell 126). Additionally there is evidence that there were more literate women than originally thought: “the Jerome manuscript forms part of the evidence for the scale and depth of women’s learning in Bede’s England” (126). Bede died in 735 (Colgrave xxii). His death occurred over 250 years before the *Judith* poem was written, and it can be assumed that the number of readers only increased in this time. So, the first person narrator, incorporated 200 years after Bede serves as a transitory link between the oral traditions of the past and the written word. Some might diminish the importance of *ic* in both instances in *Judith*, but the words and the character they stand for should not be overlooked.

The Anglo-Saxon references to historical culture, such as oral tradition, in the poem are plentiful. However, there are also many Christian symbols working together with them. A first reading of the text might suggest that these symbols are in conflict with one another, but when read from that blended perspective of a contemporary Anglo-

Saxon reader, the symbols instead begin to blend harmoniously. Peter Lucas notices, for instance, that “in action against evil and oppression Judith becomes an instrument in God’s hands” (Lucas 17). However, in order to make Judith’s faith-based reactions more relatable, the author gives Judith “a role that seems to grow out of a conformity with ideal female behavior in a heroic society” (Lucas 17). Though Judith’s prayers and actions belong to a saintly person, her characterization, description, and even some actions are grounded in Anglo-Saxon culture. While Judith is a perfect mix of both Anglo-Saxon and Christian, she is also fiction. Readers could use her story, words, and actions as a model for their lives, but no human woman could ever actually hope to attain the real title of *idese* nor could a man expect to be a perfect *thane* for God. Judith should be imitated as best as one can but to copy her exactly is simply not possible. The merging the Anglo-Saxon and Christian qualities help paint a picture of a person whose dual ideology provides an example for how to live in the real world.

Paganism and Christianity were not mutually exclusive in Anglo-Saxon England. Christians and pagans lived side-by-side, and were well aware of each other’s culture and heritage, “in the fifth to eleventh centuries, to be ‘Anglo-Saxon’ was not to be necessarily of Germanic descent, but an indication of political and cultural allegiance” (Yorke 2). Thus, the author of the *Judith* text is using the story to show the link between Christianity and the popular Germanic pagan tradition, showing how they are able to work together. He takes a note from Bede and other church fathers who rely on the Old Testament stories to win over new converts and explain Christian teaching. Campbell explains that “the religious culture in which Bede played so important a part was one which valued brutal violence in what was seen as a good cause” (124). The violence found in the Old

Testament was an appealing tool in evangelizing non-Christians. Judith was especially appropriate with the vivid depiction of Holofernes' beheading found in the Vulgate, and was therefore easily adapted and translated for an Old English audience. Within *Judith* the spiritual symbolism needs the secular and vice versa to show how Christianity and Anglo-Saxon culture and tradition can become fused into a new culture encompassing both.

Judith was written relatively late in the Anglo-Saxon period when Vikings were waging countless battles against the cities, towns, and monasteries on Britain's East coast. The Viking armies, known collectively as "The Great Army" (Yorke 64) were given tracts of land and established their settlement "in much of the eastern half of England which is sometimes known from this time as the Danelaw" (Yorke 64). The Anglo-Saxon *Judith* poem shows readers how one can be Anglo-Saxon and Christian in a world where Anglo-Saxon life was continuously threatened by invading countries and Christian pressures. The *Judith* poem shows precisely how Anglo-Saxons of the time can preserve his or her cultural identity while living a Christian life amidst the real threat of war from enemies. For example, the way Judith is described in physical appearance clearly fits in with Anglo-Saxon tradition, but many of the things she says and does are resoundingly Christian. By combining different elements of the two different cultures into the characterization of the story's heroine, Judith becomes a metaphor, symbol, and example of how to live for Christians and Anglo-Saxons.

There are clear connection between the Vikings and Holofernes and Judith and the Anglo-Saxons. However to analyze these connections one must first examine Judith, Holofernes, and their relationship; only then will the additional textual analysis hold

merit in re-enforcing the unification of Christianity and Anglo-Saxon tradition in this story. As will be shown, Judith, the model Christian and *thane* for Trinitarian God, shows her readers how to live in an Anglo-Saxon society as a Christian, Anglo-Saxon woman. This is seen in her words, description, and actions. However, it is not until the rest of the story is analyzed that living as a Christian in Anglo-Saxon society proves itself to be a realistic possibility.

CHAPTER III

JUDITH AND HOLOFERNES

The story of Judith is about a maiden who travels to the enemy camp threatening to destroy her city of Bethulia. She goes only with her handmaid and the intention to kill the leader of the army, Holofernes. The events transpire in Judith's favor. Holofernes holds a feast for drinking and eating with his soldiers, *thanes*. Then, after becoming deeply intoxicated he orders Judith, who is staying somewhere separate in the camp to be brought to his tent adorned with rings and jewels. She arrives at his tent, and when he comes in, Holoferens is so inebriated he immediately passes out on his bed, which is surrounded by gold netting. Then Judith prays to her Christian God for the strength to defeat the sleeping Holofernes. With a burning anxiety and passion in her heart, she grabs Holoferenes' hair, re-positions the body, and takes his short, broad sword out of its sheath. Then with two strokes she beheads him, and the poem notes how Holofernes's head rolled onto the floor. After all of this has been done, Judith calls her handmaid to help her collect Holofernes's bloody head. Leaving the body and sword behind, Judith and her handmaid walk quietly back through the camp of intoxicated, sleeping enemy soldiers to their own town of Bethulia. When Judith and her handmaid arrive, the townspeople come to meet them, and after the handmaid displays the bloody head for

everyone to see Judith gives a motivational speech that sparks courage in the Bethulian men who make preparations to attack the enemy camp.

The Bethulians attack Holofernes's camp, and once the enemy soldiers find out that Holofernes is dead they begin to flee the camp. Some are hunted down and killed, while others escape to live in exile. After one month of collecting the armor and treasure of the defeated enemy, the poem ends with the Bethulians giving Judith Holofernes's armor. The final lines are Judith's prayer of praise, for everything the Christian God has done for her and her people.

Judith is the sole heroine of the *Nowell-Codex* poem, and as a Christian and Anglo-Saxon it was necessary for Judith to be as perfect as possible. Judith is saint-like in word and deed. She is described as *ides* (Mitchell 302-306, ll 14, 55, 58, 109, 128, 133,146) or *woman*. However, in Old English *ides* can indicate a special type of person. Rather than an average woman, calling Judith *ides* gives the readers the sense that she is more than a queen but less than a goddess. Estes defines the term as "wise in thought, elf-bright woman" (344). Such an image conveys to Christian and Anglo-Saxon readers the idea of perfection. Categorizing Judith as anything less than ethereally perfect could present a far greater chance that she could fail in her mission. Additionally, imitating Judith exactly would be a near impossibility since Judith lies somewhere in the realm of a saint or fairy. Instead she is describe as an image of perfection, that readers are encouraged to imitate without the expectation that they must act as valiantly as Judith does.

While Judith is wholly Christian, she is also a truly Anglo-Saxon woman. Readers learn Judith possesses all the best qualities of an Anglo-Saxon when she is described as

ides ellenrof (Mitchell 305 l 109a). According to Olsen *ellenrof* means “remarkably daring or brave,” and it is used to “characterize heroes of both secular and religious poetry” (289). To use a word describing both secular and religious heroes is more than appropriate for Judith; it is necessary. She is a single being who brings together the secular and religious aspects of the story, and using a word encompassing both genres gives the impression that Judith has command over both the pagan and Christian traditions. The author used a word ambiguously characterizing Judith as a hero whether the reader read the story as a Christian tale or Anglo-Saxon epic. In the one phrase, *ides ellenrof*, Judith is seen as a woman of ethereal beauty and spirituality while being a hero who is both religious and secular. She truly fits into that idealized, in-between space, somewhere above a queen and below a goddess. Judith is nearly saint-like with one foot on earth and one in the heavens. This is seen in all aspects of her: her motivational speeches, her fervent and devout prayers, her character description and emphasized purity, the imagery of her dress as a ring-adorned woman, and her hair braided in the traditional Anglo-Saxon manner. Olsen says that the poet wrote “Judith as a heroic warrior” (290). However, care is taken to see that “Judith serves as an inspirational figure, leader in a spiritual sense” (Fee 406). Not only does the story allow for the reader to determine which interpretation they choose, but it leaves room, through the use of this one word, for readers to see both the Christian and Anglo-Saxon working together. Judith is not just a secular hero as Beowulf is, nor is she entirely Christian like St. Agnes or St. Agatha. Judith is both. As the story unfolds around Judith it is clear that the whole text incorporates qualities that are both religious and secular.

There is an additional crossover between Anglo-Saxon and Christian culture in the description of Judith's hair. Anglo-Saxon women typically kept their heads covered and hair in a braid. Christian and pagan traditions cross over in this description. The author makes sure that the description of Judith as an Anglo-Saxon and Christian woman, done primarily during the beheading scene, is evident during her most pivotal scene. She is described physically as an Anglo-Saxon woman with "braided hair," *wundenlocc*, in lines 77 and 103 and notable jewelry in lines 37 and 138, *hringum gehrodene*, "ring adorned." There are several vocabulary choices that clearly link Judith to the Anglo-Saxon tradition as well. But it is her hair that has so often impressed the reader of the story. It is a visually descriptive and appealing image of Judith in a text where there... the veil or head-rail... was indispensable; "it was worn by all classes, even in bed, though sometimes discarded in intimate domestic life" (Lucas 20). Lucas goes on to explain, "In the Old English poem there is no mention of Judith's covering her hair- on the contrary, we are told something about it: it was *wunden*, so it must be visible, at least in part" (Lucas 20). Though we cannot be sure how much of Judith's hair was visible, the fact that it was mentioned at all in a text with so few physical descriptions proves it was of some importance. To reveal a portion of her hair was to show certain vulnerability at the same moment she was to behead Holofernes. Holofernes's tent, Lucas explains, is "a context appropriate for intimacy" (20). With intimacy comes the implication of vulnerability. Despite the fact that Holofernes "fell drunk with wine/ the powerful one upon his resting place" (ll 66-67a), Judith was still vulnerable and the author shows this to us through an Anglo-Saxon detail, the *wundenlocc*. The poet creates an emotional connection between the character and the audience by a brief, yet powerful description.

When Judith is described with her hair braided she is in the inner shrouded chamber of Holofernes' tent. Holofernes men lead Judith to his tent where she must wait for him, per his request. He comes in and immediately falls on his bed passed out drunk, but only after making clear his intentions to "corrupt [Judith] with defilement and with polluting sin" (l 57). So, Judith's true vulnerability within Holofernes' tent is made manifest by the description of her visible hair.

Judith's specific and detailed beheading of Holofernes is as violent as the brutal gang-rapes Wulfstan describes. However, Judith's actions are done with a clear, resolute, and devout purpose. Though it is an execution, Judith's decapitation of Holofernes is rife with sexual imagery and power. Olsen argues that the scene, and Holofernes reduction to an object/animal is "an ironic inversion of that realistic situation in which men reduce women to objects to be abused and that the decapitation of Holofernes is presented as the symbolic rape of a man by a woman" (291). Thus, Judith's actions make a very loaded statement clearly opposing sexual violence of any kind.

In the moment when Judith is supposed to be sexually intimate with Holofernes and become one with him, she actually severs his body in two with a double blow to the neck by his own sword. "Maiden of the Creator, took a sharp sword/ Fierce from the storm of battle, and from its sheath drew it with/ A mighty right hand" (ll 76-78). The actual beheading takes a full 8 lines, "The one with braided hair struck/ The enemy with a stained sword/ Hateful one, that she cut through half/ His neck that he lay in a swoon/ Drunk and wounded. He was not yet/ Lifeless of all (dead yet); then struck earnestly the/ courageous woman/ The heathen dog on the other side that his head rolled/ forth onto the floor. The foul torso lay behind dead" (ll 105-114). The length contrasts greatly to the

Vulgate scene which takes only one verse, “And she struck twice upon his neck, and cut off his head, and took off his canopy from the pillars, and rolled away his headless body” (13:10).

In the Old English poem Judith makes herself vulnerable to Holofernes, even showing a portion of her hair. Through this display of vulnerability she shows her true strength and defeats the man and army leader who had come to corrupt her, destroy her people, and their city. Along with her actions and words, Judith’s physical description makes her stand out as well as offers encouragement to the poem’s readers and listeners. At the same moment she is also given strength and grace from God the Trinity to overcome her situation and defeat her enemy in a decidedly brutal and permanent manner. Thus, she is seen as a *thane* or warrior for God at the same moment she is described as vulnerable: “Judith’s courage in defeating Holofernes, and the triumphant rout of the Assyrians by the Israelite army, are presented as examples to English warriors fighting Danish attackers. In presenting Judith as an example both to nuns and to warriors, Ælfric demonstrates the range of meanings she could have for an Anglo-Saxon audience” (Estes 327).

Whether by coincidence or design, the similarities between Wulfstan’s sermon and the *Judith* story cannot be overlooked. While Wulfstan preaches that only prayer and faith will help end the Viking invasions, “for with great demerit we have earned the miseries that oppress us, and with very great merits we must obtain the remedy from God, if things are to improve henceforth” (Liuzza 196). The *Judith* author actually demonstrates how prayer and faith can overcome a pagan enemy. The first words Judith speaks are in petition and thanksgiving to God the Trinity (l 81-95). Instead of direct communication with his audience, the *Judith* poet shares a story that is perhaps more convincing and reassuring than the fire-and-brimstone sermon Wulfstan preaches. The

reason usually ascribed to misfortune in life or loss in battle was simply that people were not holy enough. It was commonly thought that it “was certain that God would strike punitively at the first sign of sin” (Mary-Harting 105).

Few characters have a physical description in the *Judith* poem, and those with a physical description are not typically complete. Judith is referred to as “illustrious” (Treharne 199 | 43) or “bright” (Treharne 199 | 59) on several occasions. However, together it is Judith and her handmaiden together who are called *blāchlēor ides*, “fair cheeked women” or women who have a fair complexion (l 130). The beheading scene gives Judith her most detailed physical description, *wundenloc* (ll 75 and 105), meaning “braided hair.” In both instances of physical description, Judith is described in Anglo-Saxon terms, showing as Lucas puts it that “the poet is...careful to adopt a Germanic model for his heroine” (18). Mitchell and Robinson explain that “the Old English poet is in firm command of the traditional heroic style” (301), and he enhances it with distinctly Anglo-Saxon characteristics. To suggest that Judith was more than human would be inappropriate, but to say that she was incredibly beautiful and spiritual surpassing the average woman in both categories would be close to the image that is conveyed in the poem. She was irrefutably a woman, but also an idealized, perfect model of one in every way. McManners states, “Medieval Chroniclers inherited and reveled in the Old Testament notion of God sending portents and punishments” (2). With the idea of just punishment for evil actions in place, Judith’s upright, moral character who overcomes a terrific evil in Holofernes then becomes herself a sort of “everyman” for Anglo-Saxon men and women. This model thus serves as an inspiration for the men and women of the day; in particular, those with the real threat of rape by the Vikings/Danes. Scholars often

make a case for one reading of Judith over another, but the additional possibility and explanation of how *Judith* could be “all of the above” is rarely discussed.

One key component Anglo-Saxon component of Judith is that the reader can see the *comitatus* bond properly exhibited in her words and deeds. She is often compared to a warrior *thane* and is called an embodiment of the “Church Militant” by Anderson (283). She proves her loyalty and allegiance to the Christian God when she goes to Holofernes’ tent and kills him despite her own fear, worry, and anxiety that is clearly revealed in her opening prayer, “I bid wish, you then, God of created things and Spirit of consolation/ Son of the Lord/ Mercy to thine to me in my need/ Glory of the Trinity. Severely now is my/ Heart inflamed (burning) and my mind sad/ With sorrows very stirred up” (ll 81-86b). As Judith prepares to behead Holofernes she asks for mercy because her heart is burning with anxiety and her mind is sad knowing the evil deed she must commit.

Because of the integrated aspects of her character, Judith is a complex to say the least. Some people dismiss her as passive. Lucas explains that “although she is the hero of the Old English poem Judith is not a warrior woman. She is not shown as possessing physical strength. She is no wonderwoman with bionic powers” (21). Others like Olsen disagree and say that “it is clear that the poet deliberately depicted Judith as a heroic warrior rather than as the passive instrument of God’s vengeance” (290). Still others like Nelson compare Judith’s story to the lives of the saints, and Mary Dockray-Miller cites scholars who see Judith as a “conventional stock character- the Germanic warrior woman” (166).

It is hard to imagine one character providing her readers with such contrasting views of who she was, but Judith the character has proven to be a constant topic for

debate over the centuries. The Anglo-Saxon Judith was characterized as a virgin by writers like Ælfric and Rabanus Marus, Lucas says one common interpretation of the Old English Judith story is that Judith “is a virgin beauty seen as a type of chastity overcoming Holofernes’s lust” (17). She was pure and chaste, a virgin and holy woman. However, a close examination of the poem reveals the word *virgin* is never used. In the *Septuagint* and *Vulgate* versions of the story Judith is a widow, “And her husband was Manasses, who died in the time of the barley harvest... And Judith his relict was a widow now three years and six months” (8: 2, 4). But, the *Nowell-Codex* poem presents Judith as the *eadigan mægð*, “the blessed maiden” (Treharne 1991 35). The contrast between the traditional *Vulgate* and *Nowell-Codex* stories shows that in the Anglo-Saxon Judith is clearly made to stand for purity and holiness in sharp contrast to Holofernes’ stance for filth, lust, and avarice. Lucas explains the two characters as being “diametrically opposed” (23).

Judith overcomes Holofernes and his filth, lust, and avarice, and is therefore elevated to something beyond or above human with her multiple descriptions as *idese*. In the *Nowell-Codex Judith* story, Holofernes merely glimpses Judith. By the time she gets to his tent to wait for him, he is so inebriated that he passes her by and falls onto his bed without saying a word to her, “he entered [his tent], their great general/ and fell across is bed/ so full of wine that his brain/ was numb” (Raffel, ll 67-70). Even more intriguing is that, holy, chaste, beautiful Judith is ordered by Holofernes to adorn herself in jewelry, namely bracelets and rings, before she is taken to Holofernes’ tent, “the one with malice ordered/ The blessed woman to be fetched with haste/ To his bed, ring adorned” (trans mine ll 34b-36). Though he gave the order for Judith to be presented to him in traditional Anglo-Saxon jewelry he barely glimpses the *hringum* she wears before collapsing, drunk and unconscious onto his bed. Holofernes does not bother to learn whether or not Judith

is beautiful in her own right, but he makes plans for her to be adorned in jewelry when she is first presented to him nonetheless. Robinson explains that “the implication is that the lascivious Holofernes is fixated on female finery... [and] that the adornment of women is for the depredation of men” (47-8). Holofernes effectively has her cover up the natural beauty, *blachleor ides* (Mitchell l 128), Judith is described as having in order to become a more sexualized and objectified womanly figure for Holofernes to have intimate relations with.

Though Holofernes objectifies Judith, Huppé points out also that “Holofernes is reduced to an object, (both literally and grammatically)” (167) when he is described on line 110 as a *hæðenan hund*. So too is Judith objectified by Holofernes when he orders her to be “blazened with rings” (Huppé 117 l 35b). She is a picture of beauty and innocence, a “blessed maiden,” before Holofernes insists that she adorn herself with jewels and meet him at his tent so that he might take advantage of her. It is clear through the author’s precise wording that Holofernes had the worst of intentions and planned to have intercourse with Judith whether or not she offered resistance: “he intended to corrupt [Judith] with defilement and with polluting sin” (trans mine l 57). Thus Judith is brought to Holofernes tent, but he collapses on his bed without saying a word. The “fierce prince of men” (trans mine l 87) cannot even lie down properly across his bed, let alone find the self-awareness to “corrupt” Judith. Instead it is the holy maiden who struggles to position Holofernes as she wants him for the execution. Judith uses Holofernes’ own sword, an obvious phallic symbol of violence and power, to behead Holofernes. Then “she seized the heathen man/Securely by the hair, pulled him shamefully towards her/ with her hands, and skillfully placed/ the wicked and loathsome

man so that she could most easily manage the miserable one well” (Treharne, ll 98b-103a).

Not only is Holofernes beheaded, but the scene is a messy one, taking two strikes before Holofernes’ head rolls onto the floor. Judith, the pure maiden takes off Holofernes head by his most phallic of all possessions, his own *scearpne mece* (l 78), “sharp sword,” which had been “hardened in the storms of battle” (Mitchell 305). Thus Judith becomes champion over the enemy leader, his body, and his sexuality, without ever having an actual sexual encounter. Just when Holofernes’ men believe Judith and their lord are embraced in the most intimate bond between a man and a woman, Judith figuratively strips Holofernes of his manhood, seizes his *mece*, and beheads him with it. Such an act by any woman is bold and daring, but most especially by a woman who is said to humble and saint-like. Judith is a fairy-like creature of elfin beauty and yet she is the one, a maiden, who finds the strength and courage, *mode* (l 97), through the grace of the Christian God to kill the most vile and base heathen creature once again they are both thought of at times as something other than human. However, at the moment when it matters most, human is exactly what Judith and Holofernes are. It is very clear when their two sexual natures are amplified within the privacy and isolation of Holofernes’ *eallgylden fltheonet* (ll 46-7), the curtain of gold that hung around Holofernes’ bed within the leader’s tent, that the two main characters are absolutely human by nature.

Judith is *idese*, and Holofernes is the *hæðenan hund*. This distinction shows the extreme difference between the two characters both in a religious and secular context. Judith is fairy-like, and Holofernes is an animal. Judith is saintly, while Holofernes soul

flies down to hell. At the moment of decapitation the *Judith* poet writes, “his spirit flew elsewither” (trans mine l 114).

It is clear early on in the text that Holofernes had every intention of having intercourse with Judith, whether she wanted him to or not, but through his own gluttonous desires he became too drunk to even remain coherent when Judith came to him, and he fell on the bed passed out and drunk. Judith, arriving with her head at least partially uncovered and clearly vulnerable had no way to defend herself, but the Christian God provided her with the strength, courage, and grace she needed. Dressed as an Anglo-Saxon woman, she speaks for the first time with a clearly Christian prayer.

I bid wish, you then, God of created things and Spirit of consolation/Son of the Lord/ Mercy of thine to me in my need/ Glory of the Trinity. Severely now is my/ Heart inflamed (burning) and mind sad/ With sorrows very stirred up. Grant me Prince of Heaven/ Victory and true faith, that I with this sword be allowed/ To kill this bestower of the crime; grant me my success/ Fierce Prince of men/ Fierce Prince of men/ I do not, have never needed your/ Mercy more than now/ now, Mighty Lord/ Glorious bestower of glory/ that is in this way grievously at my heart/ Burning within my heart. (ll 81-95b)

It is at this moment, after being described like an Anglo-Saxon and speaking the prayer of a Christian that Howell Chickering, in “Poetic Exuberance in the Old English *Judith*” cites and agrees with Arthur G. Brodeur’s statement that “Judith exhibits an intensity of feeling and an eloquence in conveying it unmatched in any other Anglo-Saxon poem” (122).

Judith purposefully calls upon all three persons of the Trinitarian Christian God in her opening line to help her in her hour of need “God of created things... Spirit of consolation... Son of the Lord” (ll 81-82). By calling upon each person of the Christian Trinity she purposefully separates her prayer from pagan ones. Though Judith is Anglo-Saxon she never refers to any God but the Christian God and relies solely on Him for mercy “I bid wish... mercy of thine to me in my need,” and aid “Grant me/ Prince of Heaven/ Victory and true faith, that I with this sword be allowed to kill this bestower of the crime” (trans mine ll 81-83, 86-88). She calls upon the Prince of Heaven to protect her and heal what is burning in her heart.

Judith’s prayers are answered, but as Lucas points out Judith’s success is because “Holofernes has rendered himself defenseless rather than because of her strength” (21). Even Judith’s physical limitations “in arranging Holofernes’s sleeping body” (Lucas 21) are spelled out for the reader. She struggles to angle him appropriately on the bed, “She seized the heathen man securely by his hair/ pulled him shamefully towards her” (Trehearnem ll 98b-100a). Judith only succeeds in arranging the body because Holofernes was sleeping. Still Lucas explains that “Judith is invested with moral rather than physical strength, and nearly all the references to her character indicate either her moral purity or her wisdom and mental powers” (21). The struggle Judith has in moving Holofernes’s body shows her own bodily weakness which she must overcome through courage and God’s grace. The beheading takes eight and a half lines,

The one with braided hair struck/ the enemy with a stained sword/ Hateful one,
that she cut through half/ His neck that he lay in a swoon/ Drunk and wounded.
He was not yet/ Lifeless of all (dead yet); then struck earnestly the/ Courageous

woman/ The heathen dog on the other side that his head rolled/ Forth onto the floor. The foul torso lay/ Behind dead. (trans mine ll 105-114b)

Immediately following the beheading is an additional nine lines describing Holofernes's soul first flying to hell and then suffering there, "torment bound forever after/ enveloped with worms (serpents), bound with punishment/ firmly held captive in hell-fire/ after death" (ll 116-119a). Holofernes's beheading takes Judith two strokes of the sword. Despite, or perhaps because of her bodily weakness and spiritual anxiety, when Judith strikes the second time, Holofernes' head "rolled forth onto the floor." (ll 112b-113a). Lucas claims that Judith is physically weak and that may be true. However, she still possesses a certain command over Holofernes' body. After the beheading, the head rolls of its own accord onto the floor because of Judith's previous actions. Though weak, she not only kills the "heathen dog" (l 112) but her actions directly send Holofernes' soul to eternal punishment, with a vivid description and explanation. Without Judith, Holofernes's damnation would not have happened as it did. Her physical actions lead to a spiritual consequence, one that is negative for Holofernes and one, as we see at the close of the story, which is positive for Judith. In these few lines the reader is able to see again the cross-over between the secular symbols and the religious ones. It is from this point forward Judith attains the position and status of leader of her people, as well as a more fully developed saintly life.

After the beheading Judith takes on an authoritative role though her actions are less profound. Instead her words are what qualify her as a leader and Anglo-Saxon model. When making the journey back home to the walled city of Bethulia Judith is not even the one who carries Holofernes severed head; it is her maid instead, "Then she

[Judith] lifted the head/ and all gory, Prudent Judith then gave it to her handmaid to carry home” (trans mine ll 130b- 131a). Judith’s handmaid is the only other character, besides Holofernes, from the Hebrew tale that the author chose to keep in his poem. For this reason alone her presence is unique and important, Dockray-Miller points out that “Judith is the only female figure in Old English poetry who works with another woman to achieve a common goal” (167). What’s more, the author is intent on painting a portrait of Judith as the true woman she is. Yes, he most certainly idealizes her, calling her *idese*, and everything about Judith, though often vague, is beautiful and pure. Still Judith once again acts as an example through her interaction with her maid “the class barriers between the two women break down because the maid is merely an extension of Judith’s heroism, not because Judith and the maid have a relationship unbounded by patriarchal class distinctions” (Dockray-Miller 169). Calling upon the maid to help her is another way to make Judith an example for the people. She is not so strong and heroic that she can do everything on her own, but rather, she calls upon her aid for help, to assist in the heroic warrior persona. The author shows that Judith too must rely on others for help, just as the Anglo-Saxon people must help one another overcome the foreign enemy invasions.

The Anglo-Saxon text depicts Judith as perfect and flawed at the same time. Through its religious and secular aspects, the whole story shows an almost attainable model for people, as long as they have a devotion solely to the Christian God. The text describes both the positive and negative of her character, namely her physical weakness and moral strength. By presenting the heroine in this way the poem shows how her flaws can be made up for by God the Father. These flaws are seen in Judith’s prayers, as she willingly admits, and further shows her humanity as something which the reader can

relate to. Most everyone has felt *geomor*, “sad”, and *gedrefed*, “troubled” (Mitchell 344, 332). Judith makes a point to emphasize these emotions before the beheading.

Without Judith’s courage and victorious deed, the Bethulian people of Judith’s town could not have been liberated. Judith’s defiant opposition to the potential threat of sexual abuse from Holofernes saves herself and her people. Olsen says that “in the *Liber Judith*, Judith is unconcerned about her own fate” (290). However, “the Old English Judith is concerned to protect herself, both body and soul from the diabolical pagan” (Olsen 291). The Old English Judith takes matters into her own hands, and literally positions Holofernes the way she wants him “she took the heathen man/ firmly by the hair, drew him toward her/ ignominiously, and the evil one/ skillfully laid out” (trans mine ll 100-103). Through her very deliberate actions, both the positioning of the body and the beheading, Judith is showing readers that good can and will triumph over evil. Once she has completed her task, only then are the townspeople able to overcome the whole Assyrian army and win the final victory in an epiclike battle.

CHAPTER IV

CONTINUED TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

As readers finish the beheading scene, Judith hands her maid Holofernes' head where she places it in their *fætelse*, "pouch." (Mitchell 306 l 127). Then the two walk back to Bethulia together. Judith then proceeds to give her speech encouraging the men of the city to prepare for battle because God is on their side. She then has her handmaid show Holofernes' head to the crowd. Emboldened by Judith's speech and the handmaid's presentation, the Bethulian men begin to prepare for battle. Fee explains clearly that unlike the *Vulgate Judith*, "in the Old English *Judith* this role of hero is modified from an active one to one largely inspirational in nature: Judith's own words are most telling in their shift from those of a wily leader imparted with a conspiratorial air, to those of a chaste virgin saint, meant to inspire with much-needed courage otherwise competent warriors" (402). Judith inspires the Bethulians to fight valiantly in battle, but it is obvious the soldiers only need her to incite courage in the men. They are otherwise physically capable of fighting in battle.

The *Judith* story is 349 lines long, and the battle scene between Holofernes' men and Judith's people takes up nearly half of it. The text is separated into two fragments, the beheading of Holofernes and the battle of the two armies. In the Anglo-Saxon

rendition of the tale Judith's actions, while important, are merely the catalyst for the rest of the tale "Judith's mission is simply to instill the Israelites with the proper zeal" (Fee 403). The *Nowell-Codex Judith* story is truly an epic with many parts, and like all epic stories, Judith's tale culminates in a large fighting scene between the Bethulians and Holofernes' men. The *Beowulf* tale ends with the fight with the dragon (Liuzza 124-137 ll 2312-2891).In the *Judith* poem, the Bethulians won while those who survived on the losing side fled from the area, "fled who survived/ shield-warriors of hostile ones" (l 297-298a), a disgraceful act in Anglo-Saxon war etiquette.

Aside from Judith there are many symbolic details within the story that would have carried meaning to the Anglo-Saxon readers. The story starts out with Holofernes and his men at a banquet feast with wine and food in abundance. "Then I found out Holofernes was making eager to the invitation of wine and all wondrous things sumptuous/ Dressing up a banquet" (ll 7b-9a). This image and the revelry that is described along with it bring to mind the *mead hall* celebrations of the Anglo-Saxon ancestors. The Assyrian warriors feasted with Holofernes in the same fashion that Beowulf and his men feasted in Hrothgar's Hall the night before Grendel came

Then the giver of treasure (Hrothgar) was greatly pleased.../then that courteous wife offered the full cup.../ with pleasure he received the feast and cup, victorious king.../then...there in that hall were strong words spoken, the people happy/ the sounds of a victorious man. (Liuzza 72 ll 607, 615, 618-19, 642-644)

Holofernes and his men didn't just share in a part of the Anglo-Saxon culture that the readers were familiar with; they shared in a time honored tradition where the bond between lord and *thane* was cemented by word and deed. While Holofernes was called

an “arrogant bestower of treasure” (trans mine l 30) at the feast, he was only a perversion of what a good lord should be. Hrothgar, the lord of Heorot, also dubbed “the giver of treasure” (Liuzza 72 l 607), was the epitome of what a good lord should be.

The *Judith* feast was a representation of the *comitatus* bond that should have existed between Holofernes and his men, despite the possibility that the bond was not actually there. The enemy camp proved this absence when they fled from battle after realizing Holofernes was beheaded, “then they sad at heart/ Threw their weapons down, departed themselves weary-hearted/ Hastening fled” (trans mine ll 290b- 292a). But, the fact that the feast was included and given the attention that it did, is important. Though the characters participating in the feast should have been in accordance with Anglo-Saxon *comitatus* loyalty, they ultimately were not. The banquet, short in description at 29 lines long, reminds the readers of the many feasting scenes with *Beowulf* in the preceding *Nowell-Codex* poem. However, where Beowulf’s men party and carry-on before the monster, Grendel, comes to kill them, the *Judith* poem shows the inversion of this. Holofernes, referred to later as a monster or “heathen dog” (l 112), drinks and makes-merry with his men only to be killed after the party is over by Judith.

The monstrosity of Grendel and his mother in the *Beowulf* story is seen inverted when Holofernes is described with “increasing bestiality” as “the terrible one,” “the enemy,” and “the heathen dog” (Kim 290). Furthermore Kim quotes Anne Astell as saying that “when Judith finally kills him she kills a monster” (Kim 290). Holofernes is the monster of the *Judith* text. Even the poem’s enemy, through his physical description, becomes a part of the Anglo-Saxon theme for monstrosities.

In nearly every scene of the *Judith* epic poem there is at least one instance where the symbolism of Anglo-Saxon culture is seen. In the *Judith* beheading scene there are similarities to Beowulf and his battle in the Grendle's den. Both scenes take place hidden deep away from the outside world. The Beowulf scene takes place in a cave beneath a body of water "Then the earl perceived/ that he was in some sort of battle-hall/ where no water could harm him in any way/ and, for the hall's roof, he could not be reached by the flood's sudden rush- he saw a fire-light" (Liuzza 99 ll 1512b-1516). Meanwhile, the Judith scene occurs hidden behind the golden curtain in Holofernes' room, "there was a beautiful/ all-golden fly-net that the commander/ had hung around the bed" (Treharne ll 46-8). In both scenes the heroes use swords belonging to their enemies. Beowulf too takes a sword from Grendle's den, "he saw among the armor a victorious blade.../The Scyldings' champion seized its linked hilt/...drew the ring-marked sword" (Liuzza 101 ll 1557-1564). Judith too "took a [Holofernes'] sharp sword, a hard weapon in the storms of battle, and drew it from the sheath" (Treharne ll 78b-79). Finally both victors return with the head of the enemy. Though, Beowulf returns with Grendle's head and not Grendle's mother's, both he and Judith return triumphant with a token of their victory. Beowulf and his men greeted the people of Hrothgar's hall as they "dragged by its hair/ Grendle's head across the hall-floor" (Liuzza 103 ll 1647-1648). Judith returns with Holofernes head, which is held high by her handmaid to show to the townspeople "The wise one commanded, gold adorned/ Her attentive handmaid/ Unwrap the warrior's head/ And display it as a sign, bloody to/ The citizens" (trans mine ll 171-175a).

The *Judith* poem incorporates Anglo-Saxon and Christian symbolism, but some of the Anglo-Saxon traditions are distorted or perverted. The traditions found in

Holofernes' camp, while they follow the formula of Anglo-Saxon culture, are actually an evil perversion of it, they are not good like the traditions of the townspeople in the later scenes. There is a grave juxtaposition between the two sides. Both are Anglo-Saxon but only one is Christian, and the author shows how pagan tradition can be both good and bad. In Holofernes's camp pagan tradition is shrouded in evil. At the opening feast Holofernes is first given the attribute of "arrogance" before his more lordly moniker "bestower of treasure" is used. In Judith the reader finds a devoutly Christian woman, who is able to preserve Anglo-Saxon tradition by her action and appearance, such as her *wunderloc*. At the same time she shows her piety through the words she speaks. The last line of the poem is part of Judith's prayer of praise and thanksgiving to God, and the surviving lines, end with the words "For that glory Lord/ Who created wind and air, skies and spacious grounds, likewise fierce seas/ And the delights of heaven through His own favor"(trans mine ll 347a-349). Thus the poem ends with Judith praying to God and showing the readers how the Christian God has protected the Bethulian people, preserving what is good and just both morally and culturally in secular and religious tradition.

Secular imagery and metaphor plays an important part in the second half of the *Judith* poem. As Judith is walking back to her home the author says "the walls of the beautiful city shine" (trans mine l 137) and as Judith and her handmaid are let in through the city gate Bethulia is described as a "mead-city" (trans mine l 167). So the city too, not just the enemy camp, is the place of another *comitatus* community. With this description of the city, Judith's image as a *thane* is now complete. She has done the duties of a *thane*: gone into battle for her lord by entering the enemy camp, asked for his blessing through

her prayer, defeated her enemy, and brought home a token of victory, Holofernes' head. She remained loyal to her lord in a time of peril, and returns to the safety of her *comitatus* community after her battle is over. The gold and jewels that adorn her body are then very similar to the gold and mail-clad armor of the *thane* who served an earthly lord "Judith's putting on ostentatious attire was for the special purpose of bringing about a triumph over her people's enemies" (Robinson 48).

Just as the Bethulians carried "shields for breasts and mail coats" into battle (trans mine l 192), Judith and her handmaid are "gold adorned" (trans mine l 171) when she returns to the city of Bethulia. This could in some ways be seen as battle armor. The jewelry helps enhance Judith's femininity but is also a sign of what she has been through. The accessories enhance her sexuality. Even though she left Holofernes's sword behind in his tent, she still shows she is in control and has authority because she possesses his head. The dismemberment of his person, head from the body and sexual organs, is enough to show that Judith has won the battle for herself and brings back a motivating story for her people. She feared for herself when she was in a vulnerable position where rape was imminent, but with God's grace she defeated her enemy. Judith's armor was the jewelry that Holofernes ordered her to wear. She went into battle with gold and metal as well as any man, only hers was in the form of *hringum* not mail-clad armor. However, being gold adorned describes her just as it does the *thanes* of the *comitatus* community. Having Judith come home to a mead-city, and having her do the work of a warrior, while clad in gold adornments depicts an image of an Anglo-Saxon *thane*, even if she is a woman.

Just as contemporary readers of the poem would have accepted Judith as a heroine, so to upon her return from beheading Holofernes, the characters in the story readily accept Judith as the heroine and leader as well. The town's people are emboldened when Judith and her return from the enemy camp and rush to greet her by the thousands "old ones and young" (trans mine l 168). After Judith entered the town she had her handmaiden "Unwrap the warrior's head [Holofernes]/ And display it as a sign, bloody to/ The citizens" (trans mine ll 173-175a).

However it was Judith's following speech, even more than Holofernes head, which led the men of the town on to fight a glorious battle. Hermmman's emphasizes the importance of Judith's speech for the Bethulians "the Judith-poet alters the details of his source in order to emphasize that the Bethulians are not dependent for their triumph upon the weakness of the powers arrayed against them, but already possess the courage and strength to emulate Judith in victory over Holofernes" (5). In other words, there are no outside forces that will affect the outcome of the battle, but rather those warriors who are fighting with good intentions already possess the power and courage needed to win the battle. Judith boldly proclaims to the warriors that "Your enemies/ [are] Doomed to death, and you possess judgment" (trans mine ll 195b-196b).

The Bethulian warriors are drawn together by Judith. She is a *thane* in the Christian *comitatus* relationship, but she brings the men of the town together under their own *comitatus* Germanic warfare bond, for the just cause of defending the city and people of Bethulia. This is clearly a mark of tribal society, and just as Bede turned Old Testament stories and their familiar themes into Anglo-Saxon tales for evangelization, so too does the *Judith* poem take the Vulgate story and transform it into something resembling the Anglo-Saxon Christian culture.

The *Judith* poem goes one step further and not only creates a familiar society, but creates two main characters who were heroic and evil while still being, in some ways, relatable. By changing the setting of the story quite drastically and creating a scene that shows two super-human, yet fully human characters the text shows just how relatable and perhaps familiar Judith and Holofernes could be. Judith is noble, devout, chaste maiden, and yet she is also a warrior hero. For the Anglo-Saxons there was certainly a place in society for such a person. What seems like a strange dichotomy to the modern reader was far more understandable and even admirable in the Anglo-Saxon culture. While Holofernes is made out to be larger than life for today's readers, he was in effect no more large or unlife-like than Beowulf or other lords of the *comitatus* communities. Holofernes is described as a "lord of men" (trans mine l 91). Likewise Beowulf was described as being "of all the kings of the world/ the mildest of men and the most gentle" (Liuzza 150, ll 3180-3181), and Byrtnoth from the "Battle of Maldon" is given many epitaphs by his men, including "beloved lord" (Raffel 50, line 259). However, Holofernes was the antithesis of Beowulf or Byrtnoth. He was called "the terrible lord of Noblemen" (l 21) and "the wicked one" (l 28). He was evil whereas good lords like Beowulf and Byrtnoth were thought to be wise and benevolent. Certainly all lords had their faults, but they were remembered as good men with good intentions. At the end of the poem, the "Battle of Maldon," after lord Byrtnoth has died and it is apparent the Anglo-Saxons will be defeated by the Vikings, Brytwold gives a short speech and closes with the "I'm old. I want no other life/ I only want to lie beside/ My lord, near Byrthnoth, who I loved so well" (Raffel 51-52).

Through the whole of the poem only one soldier in Holofernes camp speaks, and his short speech comes after he discovers Holofernes is beheaded. When the *thane* entered Holofernes's tent the morning after his beheading "he found the pale one lying dead on the bed/ His gold-giver deprived of spirit/ Deprived of life. Then he quickly fell/ Trembling to the ground, began to tear his hair/ Troubled in heart, and his garment too" (trans mine ll 277-281). Finally he speaks to the other warriors saying, "here is revealed to ourselves/ Future destruction in that it is near to that time/ With trouble near approaching which we must by necessity be lost/ Perish together at battle/ Here lies dead cut down by a sword/ Our lord beheaded" (trans mine ll 285-290). It is immediately following this speech that the men flee the camp instead of staying to fight the Bethulians.

With just one speaking enemy warrior, the lack of voice of Holofernes men before the fight begins shows once again how fear for their lord overtakes their loyalty to him, though loyalty is the first priority of the *comitatus* bond. Instead the men cannot speak at all and stand outside Holofernes's tent *cohhetan* (Mitchell l 270), which means "coughing" or Kim describes it as "mak[ing] ineffectual noises," (295) by clearing ones throat. Kim further explains that the "Assyrians are in a realm outside of language" (295), but still attempt to get Holofernes's attention as the Bethulian army draws close. *Cohhetan* is unique. The use of *cohhetan* in Judith "is the earliest documentation of a form of the modern English verb *cough*," (Robinson 50). Still we know the meaning of the word because its derivative *coughen* "is well documented in Middle English [as]... 'to clear one's throat or cough' (to attract attention or announce one's presence'" (Robinson 50). Holofernes men are discreetly trying to announce their presence outside his tent by

coughing. Just before the flight of the Assyrians this final example of a broken *comitatus* bond is seen in the enemy camp, though the feast at the beginning of the poem would suggest otherwise.

The *comitatus* bond was a strong one, and it was believed that it preserved men's loyalties even after death. Therefore, breaking that bond and deserting one's lord and master who provided one with everything he needed in life, shelter, food, clothing, armor, even treasure from defeated enemy camps, was the worst and most horrific crime one could commit. In "The Battle of Maldon," Godric son of Odda, "was the first/ fleeing from honor as he left the lord who'd loaded his arms with presents and rings" (Raffel 48 ll 186-188). To make matters worse he fled from battle on his lord "Byrtnoth's horse" (Raffel 48 l 189). This act of treason was almost unthinkable during Anglo-Saxon times. Godric was seen as a traitor and received the worst punishment imaginable for Anglo-Saxons, that of exile. To be an exile during the Anglo-Saxon era and in their culture meant to have no home or lord to belong to. Perhaps even more importantly he lives on infamously in literature as the most treacherous of *thanes*. The last lines we have of the poem translate as "this/ was not the Godric who'd run from the fighting..." (Raffel 52 ll 324-5). There were two Godrics in "The Battle of Maldon." The first fled from battle, and the second led the remaining *thanes* further into battle after Byrtnoth dies with a fearless speech right before the poem is cut off. Having the final line then show the explicit distinction between the two men is important and memorable.

There was no bond that was supposed to be stronger than that of a lord and his *thane*, but instead of showing the loyalty of Byrtnoth's men Holofernes's men fled. There was no mention of even staying to fight for their lord after his death. Holofernes's *thanes*

quickly decide to flee the battle scene “our lord beheaded. Then they sad at heart/ Threw their weapons down, departed themselves weary-hearted/ hastening fled” (trans mine ll 290-292a). What is even more discouraging about the flight of Holofernes’s men is that they shared a *mead hall* feast together the night before the battle took place. According to Anglo-Saxon tradition, if the men of Holofernes army had followed the *comitatus* code and lived up to the standards set in place by the time-honored tradition of the *comitatus*, they would not have fled but would have stayed on the battle field and fought until they died. None of Holofernes’s men stay and take up the position of leader after he dies. No one urges the men on to fight for the glory and victory of Holofernes. They do not even wish to avenge his death but that is exactly what should have happened. In Anglo-Saxon England “the rules and institutions of society were preserved not by a public system of justice buy by a private system, the *blood feud*” (Raffel xiii). This *blood feud* meant that “if a member of a family was killed, someone from that family killed the slayer or a member of his family in revenge” (Raffel xiii). At the very least, Holofernes’s men should have stopped and considered staying behind to fight.

What separates Holofernes from other lords is not necessarily his actions but his intentions. He acted like most lords did holding feasts and bestowing treasure upon his soldiers; in the opening scene it says, “So the wicked one over all the day/ Drenched his warriors with wine/ Arrogant bestower of treasure” (ll 28-30a). However, when he called Judith to his tent with the intention of “corrupting” her and “polluting her with sin” it was clear by his thoughts and desires that he was an evil character. Holofernes’ evil character is further verified when his soldiers flee at the knowledge of his death “then they [the soldiers] sad at heart/ threw their weapons down, departed themselves weary-hearted/

Hastening fled” (trans mine l 290b- 292a). A good lord like Byrtnoth from the “Battle of Maldon” undoubtedly had *thanes* who stood beside him in battle and fought for him even after he died. An evil lord, such as Holofernes, could expect their men to run away and abandon their lord’s memory instead of defending it. The fact that Holofernes’ men fled, plus knowing his rapacious intentions with Judith is a two-fold way to know that Holofernes was not a well-liked, well-intentioned, good and honest man. He was evil in every sense of the word.

Because of his lack of love and compassion for his *thanes*, in return, his men had no passion for the battle though they displayed the same qualities and characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon warrior bands. What sets them apart from Judith’s people is that Judith’s men unite under her as she encourages them to battle,

Now I will ask each one of the men/ of the city people/ of the shield-bearing
warriors, that you quickly/ send forth to battle afterwards God of Creatures/
Merciful King, has sent from the East/ A bright light. Carry shields forward/
Shields for breasts and mail coats/ Gleaming protection into the troop of enemies/
Cut down the commander with gleaming swords/ Fated leaders/ Your enemies
doomed to death/ and you possess judgment/ Glory at battle as the/ Mighty Lord
has shown to you through my hand. (ll 186b-198)

When Judith’s handmaid was ordered to “display it [Holofernes head] as a sign, bloody to the citizens” (l 174-5a), the sight of the severed head spurred on the courage of the Bethulians. The warriors are triumphant in battle because of Judith’s action. However, it was not Judith’s actions, but rather her faith and speech which makes her the hero of the story. Certainly she would not be thought of as the hero if she had not beheaded

Holofernes, but her actions would have been in vain if she did not have the faith to complete the task which she was so anxious to perform, “Grant me Prince of Heaven/ Victory and True Faith” (trans mine ll 86-7). In Holofernes tent Judith is put in a position of power, but even in this position she is still meek and humble, “as an example of faith in action” (Lucas 17).

The battle between the Assyrian and the Bethulians begins only 75 lines after the beheading scene. While Judith is motivating the men of the city to fight in battle and battle preparations are happening inside the city “then it happened the troop of bold ones quickly prepared/ of the brave ones to battle” (trans mine ll 199-200a); outside the city walls the beasts of battle are beginning to arrive. “The lean one [Beasts of Battle] rejoiced in that/ Wolf in the forest, and the black raven/ Bird greedy for slaughter... Moreover the eagle/ Flew behind them eager, dewy-feathered/ Dark-coated sang a battle song/ Horny-beaked” (trans mine ll 205b -212b). The beasts of battle are a tradition dating back even further than the Anglo-Saxons. Bede’s discussion of the wolf in the Old Testament is an example of the link that existed with the beast of battle theme in Germanic heroic society. According to Honnigar, providing the imagery of the beasts of battle “strengthen[s] the atmosphere of impending doom and focuses on the ominous ‘wyrd’ in many of the Anglo-Saxon heroic poems” (290).

It is during the battle preparations that the author begins to formulate a battle scene similar to many other Anglo-Saxon battle fields. There are the two armies which will converge on a common ground in between them, and while they are making preparations the wolf, raven, and eagle arrive just before the battle begins. As Honnigar said, these animals are characteristically found on nearly every Anglo-Saxon battlefield.

In the *Battle of Maldon* the animals arrive at the beginning of the battle. Raffel and Olsen eloquently relay the animals gathering for battle, “The/ Wolf, deep in the wood, exulted/
And the bloodthirsty raven, both of them knowing/ That men meant to spread a feast/ For
their empty bellies. And behind them flew/ The damp-feathered eagle, dark and hungry/
For human meat, singing a war song/ Through his horny beak” (trans mine ll 204b- 210).

These animals appear in *Beowulf* on several occasions and always in the battle scenes,

Thus many a cold morning/ shall the spear be grasped in frozen fingers/ hefted by
hands, nor shall the sound of the harp/ rouse the warriors, but the dark raven,
greedy for carrion, shall speak a great deal/ ask the eagle how he fared at his feast/
when he plundered corpses with the wolf. (Liuzza 145 ll 3021-3026)

There are many poems describing these beasts, and they never fail to appear in battles in Anglo-Saxon literature. The animals appear in *Judith*, just as they do in every text they are incorporated into, as a forewarning of the battle to come. While the use of these animals may seem minimal, they are a central Germanic tribal characteristic to Anglo-Saxon literature “they became a ‘theme’” (Honeggar 289). The beasts of battle usher in the Anglo-Saxon battle scenes, and they clean up the dead bodies that are left behind “the army lay destroyed in battle/...as a pleasure for the wolves and also as a joy to bloodthirsty birds” (Treharne 209 ll 293-296) . While sinister and ominous in appearance, the wolf, raven, and eagle are important to every battle scene. Even *The Battle of Maladon*, a poem based on an actual battle that took place according to the “*Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (in) A.D. 991” (Raffel 43), records the animals’ arrival just before the fighting began. In reality this gathering of animals before the battle was unlikely, but even in an account linked to historical events the beasts of battle are still present.

Judith not only qualifies as a heroic poem but also follows the traditional Anglo-Saxon order. The animals await the battle, as Judith is motivating the troops to fight valiantly, at the same time her speech assures the men that “you need not mourn longer...your enemies/ [are] doomed to death” (trans mine ll 153, 195a-196b). Judith’s prophecy of doomed enemies comes true during the battle scene. Though there are many men who flee the battlefield, there are a far greater number of casualties, and it takes the Bethulians over a month to collect all the armor, gold, and treasure from the dead, “Then all the nation/ Of the glorious woman in the space of one month/ Splendid one, with braided hair, carried and brought/ To the bright city Bethulia/ Helmets and short swords, metallic gray coats of mail/ Armor of men gold adorned/ More treasure than any/ Of the wise ones can tell” (trans mine ll 323-330). The act of collecting and taking into possession the enemy’s most prized treasure is something that happened throughout all of Anglo-Saxon culture. Even at the end of *Beowulf*, after he kills and is killed by the dragon, his remaining men retrieved the gold that was in the dragon’s lair. The confiscation of enemy treasure was just as much a part of the battle ritual as was the appearance of the beasts of battle. The end of the battle is not when the fighting has stopped, but rather when the spoils of war have been collected and presented to Judith.

It was said the Bethulians collected “more treasure than any of the wise ones can tell” (trans mine ll 329-330). The men and women of the town renewed with faith, hope, and courage by Judith and her success “Then all the men of the nation went with courage/ Brave ones under banners in battle/ Through the wise teaching of Judith/ of the courageous maiden” (trans mine ll 331-334a). The Bethulians treat her as they would a manly hero, offering her the treasure of the battle.

They/ Brought to reward her for the journey/ Noblemen brave in battle/ The sword sweaty helmet of Holofernes, likewise a large coat of mail/ Ornamented with red and gold, and all that the arrogant lord of the warriors/ Possessed of treasure or of personal inheritance/ Of rings and bright treasure, that they/ Gave to the wise, bright woman. (trans mine ll 331-341)

The townspeople treat her as they would a man, offering Judith Holofernes' armor, with one exception. They refer to Judith as *idese*, an adjective that would have never described Beowulf. In this way the reader can see how Judith walks the line of a woman who is acting the role of warrior and leader. She is not just a female taking on a male's role, but a woman who is a hero only by playing the part of an ideal woman and Christian. She is a hero set apart from Beowulf and mead-hall *thanes*, precisely because she triumphs in victory in a feminine way. If Judith were a man, she would have never been permitted into Holofernes' tent, and the beheading could have not occurred in the same manner.

The tone of the whole poem shifts after the beheading the scene, with good firmly triumphing over evil. While Holofernes and his camp are seen as Anglo-Saxon in characteristics, they are also evil. The author is careful in his word choice for the upcoming scenes and by establishing Judith's home as Anglo-Saxon the author creates a division between good and evil morals, incorporating the best of Anglo-Saxon tradition with Christianity. Both Holofernes's and Judith's camps bookend the story by having celebrations and treasure handed out. The author shows how Judith's community also honors Christian teaching by Judith's last prayer.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The story of the *Nowell-Codex* book of *Judith* permeates Anglo-Saxon culture but at its heart it is a story of a society that is beginning to replace its pagan religion with that of Christianity. While this is also what happened at the end of the story of *Beowulf*, the Geatish woman's cry was sad and forlorn. There was a strong sense of loss, and it was clearly marked by those in the story that Beowulf's death was the end of an era. There was a fear that destruction would come now that the old way of life had been abandoned "A Geat woman too... unburdened herself/ of her worst fears, a wild litany/ of nightmare and lament: her nation invaded/ enemies on the rampage, bodies in piles/ slavery and abandonment" (Heaney 211, ll 3150-3155a). *Judith* was written by the same scribe as *Beowulf*, immediately follows *Beowulf*, and has many of the same components as *Beowulf*: a mead-hall feast, private beheading scene, beasts of battle, and amassing of treasure from a conquered enemy. However, rather than lamenting the tribal-life that has ended, the *Judith* poem leaves the readers with hope and offers an example for how to blend the pagan heroic society of the *Beowulf* era with the morals and teachings of Christianity.

The story ends with Judith's final speech where she gives praise to God, the Christian God, for all that he has done for her and her people.

Glory to the Lord of hosts who gave her honor/ Glory in the kingdom of Earth,
likewise reward in heaven/ Reward for victory in the glory of heaven, because she
had true belief/ Forever to the Almighty. Certainly at the end she did not/ Of the
reward which she yearned for a long time. For that glory be to the beloved Lord/
Who created wind and air/ skies and spacious grounds, likewise fierce seas/ And
the delights of heaven through His own favor. (ll 343-349)

Just before Judith's speech the Bethulian soldiers present her with the gold and treasure of Holofernes. Judith is the model of an Anglo-Saxon Christian woman, but it is the townspeople who are the first to reward her for her devotion to both cultures. By affirming their allegiance to Judith and her God, through the gift of Holofernes' armor, Judith is fully seen as a successful example of an Anglo-Saxon, Christian character. While *Beowulf's* woman weeps that the old life is gone, the *Judith* text shows readers, through Judith and her prayer, how one's life in 1000 AD can be wholly Anglo-Saxon and Christian.

Heide Estes suggests "several social boundaries that Judith challenges in the poem" (347). By challenging social boundaries, Judith can be seen as more than just a fictional hero, and she transcends the realm of a mere character. As a Christian figure and Anglo-Saxon manifestation, she shows the Anglo-Saxon readers and listeners that one can be both Christian and Anglo-Saxon and do so in a way that stays true to both parts of his/her identity. Few other characters known in Anglo-Saxon culture do this, and none

does it as effortlessly as Judith. There are Anglo-Saxon heroes, and there are Christian saints but never do the two intersect in such an unusual and convincing way as Judith. As this dual type of character, Judith is not just a religious symbol for the Christian Church, nor is she only a Germanic tribal symbol of a warrior *thane*. Olsen explains Old English poetry was “formed by the collisions of two cultures” (1), but the *Judith* poet rectifies this collision and creates a balanced world incorporating the best qualities of both the pagan Anglo-Saxon culture and Christianity. The *Judith* poem is meant to be a response and answer to the “collision.” Judith jumps from the pages of the *Nowell-Codex* text to show a model others could emulate, including those men and women who lived the harsh reality of England that Wulfstan and Bede so vividly describe.

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APPENDIX

TRANSLATION A

“The Wanderer”

(Translated by Benjamin Thorpe)

'Oft the lonely one experiences compassion,	the weary-minded cannot fate withstand, (15)
the Creator's kindness; though he with sorrowing mind,	nor the rugged soul'd help effect;
o'er the watery way, must long	even the ambitious a sad one oft
agitate with his hands the rime-cold sea,	in their breast's coffer fast bind.
go in exile tracks; his fate is full decreed.'-- (5)	So I my thoughts must,
So said a wanderer, of his hardships mindful,	oft miserable, from country separated, (20)
of hostile slaughters, his dear friends' fall.--	far from my friends, in fetters bind,
'Oft I must alone, each morn,	since that long ago my bounteous patron
my care bewail: there is now none living,	earth's cavern cover'd, and I abject thence
to whom my thoughts I dare (10)	went, stricken with years, over the billowy mass;
tell openly. I in sooth know,	sad sought the hall of some munificent lord, (25)
that it is in man a noble quality,	where I far or near might find
that he his soul's coffer fast bind,	one who in the mead-hall my ** might know,
hold his treasure. Strive as he will,	or me friendless would comfort,

allure with pleasure. He knows who
tries,
how hapless is care as a comrade (30)
to him who little has of faithful friends;
him an exile's track awaits, not twisted
gold;
a trembling body, not earth's riches:
he remembers the hall-retainers, and
receipt of treasure;
how him in youth his bounteous patron
(35)
train'd to the feast; but pleasure all has
fall'n;
for he knows who must his dear lord's,
his lov'd master's lessons long be
depriv'd of,
when sorrow and sleep at once together
a poor solitary often bind, (40)
that seems to him in mind, that he his
lord
embraces and kisses, and on his knee
lays
hands and head, as when he ere at times,
in former days, his gifts enjoy'd;
then wakes again the friendless mortal,
(45)
sees before him fallow ways,

ocean fowls bathing, spreading their
wings,
rime and snow descending with hail
mingled;
then are the heavier his wounds of heart,
painful after dreaming; sorrow is
renew'd, (50)
when his friends' remembrance through
his mind passes;
when he greets with songs, earnestly
surveys
the seats of men, swims again away.
The spirit of seafarers, brings there not
many
known songs: but care is renew'd (55)
to him who must send very abundantly
over the billowy mass his weary spirit;
therefore I cannot think, throughout this
world,
why my mind it saddens,
when I the chieftains' life all consider;
(60)
how they suddenly their halls resign'd,
the proud kinsmen. So this mid-earth
every day declines and falls;
therefore may not become wise a man,
ere he has pass'd

his share of winters in the world. The
sagacious must be patient,

must not be too ardent, nor too hurrying
of fortune,

nor too faint a soldier, nor too reckless,
(67)

nor too fearful, nor too elate, nor too
greedy of money,

nor ever too vaunting, ere he be well
experienced.

a man must wait, when he a promise
utters,

till that he, bold of spirit, well know (71)

to what his breast's thoughts shall lead.

The prudent man should understand,
how ghastly it will be,

when all this world's wealth shall stand
waste,

as now divers, over this mid-earth, (75)

with wind shaken walls stand,

with rime bedeck'd: tottering the
chambers,

disturb'd are the joyous halls, the
powerful lie

of joy bereft, the noble all have fall'n,

the proud ones by the wall. Some hath
war destroy'd,

borne on their journey hence; one the
fowl hath borne away

o'er the deep ocean; one the hoar wolf
(82)

by death hath separated; one with gory
countenance,

in an earth-grave a man hath hidden.

So o'erwhelm'd this world the Creator of
men,

till that of the inhabitants, in the briefest
moment,

the old works of giants stood desolate.
(87)

But he who this wall'd place wisely
devis'd,

and this dark life profoundly
contemplates,

wise in spirit, afar oft remembers (90)

his many battles, and these words utters:

Where is horse, where is man? where is
the treasure-giver ?

where are the festive sittings ? where are
the joys of the hall?

Alas bright cup ! alas mail'd warrior !
(94)

alas chieftain's splendour ! how the time
has pass'd,

has darken'd under veil of night, as if it
had not been.

Stands now behind the beloved warriors

the wall of wonderous height, with
worm carcasses foul.

The men has swept away the spearmen's
band, (99)

the slaughter-greedy weapon, and fate
omnipotent

and these stone shelters storms dash,

fierce-rushing; binds the earth

the winter's violence; then comes dusky,

darkens, the shade of night, from the
north sends

the rough hail-shower, to men's
grievance. (105)

Irksome is all the realm of earth,

the fates' decrees change the world under
heaven:

here is wealth transient, here is a friend
transient,

here is man transient, here is a kinsman
transient;

all this place of earth shall become
desolate.'-- (110)

so spake a sage in mind, sat apart in
meditation.

Good is he who holds his faith. Never
his affliction too quickly should

a man from his breast make known,
unless he ere the remedy can

vigorously forward. Well it is for him
who seeketh mercy,

comfort, at the Father in heaven, where
all our fastness standeth.

TRANSLATION B

My Translation of the *Nowell-Codex Judith* Poem

(Translated using the Mitchell and Robinson Old English Text)

- 1) ... doubt
- 2) In this wide earth of gifts. She there readily found
- 3) Hope of protection at the hands (of the) famous Prince when she had the
greatest danger.
- 4) The judge of grace called this that, he protected her with the highest terror.
- 5) Protected, Lord of creatures. The Father in the sky is (him) he
- 6) Glorious boon provided, she who had strong faith
- 7) Always to the Almighty. Then I found out Holofernes was making eager
to the
- 8) Invitation of wine and all wondrous things sumptuous
- 9) Dressing up a banquet, to them the lord of men commanded/called
- 10) Then all (the) oldest thanes, that they with great haste
- 11) Carried out shield-bearing warriors, came traveling to the powerful lord
- 12) Reached, leader of the people. It was the 4th day
- 13) After which Judith, wise in thought
- 14) Woman beautiful as a fairy, first sought him.
- 15) **X** Then they (the warriors) walked to the feast (and) sat,

- 16) Proud to wine-drinking, all his companion in evil
- 17) Bold mail-clad warriors. There was a cup,
- 18) Brought frequently along the bench, also goblets and pitchers (flagons)
- 19) Full with hall sitters; they that fate received
- 20) Strong shield bearing warriors, yet the powerful one didn't expect
(anything to happen)
- 21) The terrible lord of Noblemen. Then was Holofernes,
- 22) Lord of men, merry with drink;
- 23) (He) laughed and bellowed, shouted and resounded
- 24) That people (children) could hear from afar
- 25) How the fierce (one) stormed and made a din
- 26) Arrogant and drunk with mead, urged guests frequently
- 27) That they should enjoy themselves thoroughly.
- 28) So the wicked one over all the day
- 29) Drenched his warriors with win,
- 30) Arrogant bestower of treasure, and until they lie dead in a swoon
- 31) All his mature men inebriated they were also death stricken.
- 32) Drained of every good thing. So called the lord of men,
- 33) To be filled with hall guests for the children (people)
- 34) The dark night draws near. The one with malice ordered
- 35) The blessed woman to be fetched with haste
- 36) To his bed, ring adorned,
- 37) Ring adorned. They quickly did

- 38) The servant, as their leader commanded them,
39) Lord of mail clad warriors, instantly advanced
40) To the guest hall. There they found Judith
41) Prudent and then quickly the
42) Warriors began leading
43) The bright maiden to the high tent
44) Where the powerful man was always on the bed
45) Inside at night, hostile to the Savior,
46) Holofernes. There was all of gold a
47) Beautiful curtain and about the commander's
48) Bed hung that the evil (one)
49) Might look though, the warrior lord,
50) On each one of his sons which came inside there,
51) And on him none of mankind could look
52) Except the brave one. [Unless strong in malice who was ordered nearer
to him
53) Of the warriors for getting a private consultation. Then they brought on a
couch
54) Quickly the wise woman; then went Hard-hearted: heroes [that the holy
woman was brought into his tent]
55) Warriors revealing to their lord that the holy woman was brought into the
tent

- 56) Joyous, the nobleman of strongholds (Holofernes), then to the bright
woman
- 57) He intended to corrupt with defilement and with polluting sin. The Judge
of glory
- 58) Would not consent to that, the Guardian of majesty, but he prevented him
from the deed,
- 59) Lord, Lord of mature men (seasoned warriors)
- 60) Then departed the diabolical
- 61) Lascivious warrior with troops of men
- 62) Evil (one) going to his bed, there he must lose his life
- 63) Immediately within one night; then reached his end
- 64) Violent on Earth, such an end as he had striven after previously
- 65) Fierce prince of men while he was in this world
- 66) Dwelt under the “cloud roof” (sky). He fell so drunk with wine
- 67) The powerful (one) upon his resting place so he did not know any advice
- 68) In mind. The warriors stepped
- 69) Out from the inside (of the tent) with great haste,
- 70) Men sated with wine, who led the scoundrel,
- 71) Hateful tyrant, to the bed
- 72) For the last time. Then was
- 73) The glorious handmaid of the Savior exceedingly concerned for her own
self
- 74) How she could most easily deprive the terrible (one)

75) Of Life before the impure one, foul man awakened. (She) with braided
hair, seized the man,
76) Maiden of the Creator, took a sharp sword,
77) Fierce from the storm of battle, and from its sheath drew it with
78) A mighty right hand; she began
79) To call by name the Guardian of Heaven, Savior of all
80) World dwellers, and uttered that word:
81) “I bid wish, you then, God of created things and Spirit of consolation,
82) Son of the Lord,
83) Mercy of thine to me in my need,
84) Glory of the Trinity. Severely now is my
85) Heart inflamed (burning) and mind sad,
86) With sorrows very stirred up. Grant me Prince of Heaven,
87) Victory and true faith, that I with this sword be allowed
88) To kill this bestower of the crime; grant me my success,
89) Fierce Prince of men.
90) Fierce Prince of men. (combined with lines above)
91) I do not, have never needed your
92) Mercy more than now.
93) now, Mighty Lord
94) Glorious bestower of glory, that is in this way grievously at my heart
95) Burning within my heart.” Then the highest Judge
96) Immediately inspired her with courage so he does each one

- 97) Of the dwellers on Earth
98) Who seeks Him as a help to them in advise and true faith.
99) Then He with an abundance in heart,
100) Restored hope with the holy woman; then she took the heathen man
101) Firmly by the hair, drew him toward her
102) Ignominiously, and the evil one
103) Skillfully laid out, hostile man,
104) As she was most easily able to control this wretched one
105) The one with braided hair struck
106) The enemy with a stained sword
107) Hateful one, that she cut through half
108) His neck that he lay in a swoon,
109) Drunk and wounded. He was not yet
110) Lifeless of all (dead yet); then struck earnestly the
111) Courageous woman
112) The heathen dog on the other side that his head rolled
113) Forth onto the floor. The foul torso lay
114) Behind dead; the spirit flew else wither
115) Under a deep chasm and there was prostrated,
116) Torment bound forever after,
117) Enveloped with worms (serpents), bound with punishment
118) Firmly held captive in hell-fire
119) After death. He had no need of hope,

- 120) Enwrapped in darkness, that thence he might
121) From the hall of serpents but there must dwell forever in the dark home
122) Without life
123) Without end forever more.
- 124) **XI** Then Judith had won by fighting illustrious glory
125) At Battle, so her God granted,
126) Prince in heaven, who granted her victory
127) Then the wise woman quickly brought
128) The warrior's head so bloody
129) In the bag, which her attendant (had),
130) Fair checked for both their food, Excellent one, then she lifted the head,
131) And all gory, Prudent Judith then gave it to her handmaid To carry home.
132) Then went directly thence
133) Both courageous women
134) Until she came stout-hearted,
135) Triumphant maidens out of the pagan sanctuary.
136) That they were clearly able to see
137) The walls of the beautiful city shine,
138) Bethulia. Then they ring-adorned
139) Hastened forth on the footpath
140) Until they, joyous ones, had gotten

- 141) To the wall gate. Warriors sat,
142) Men on watch kept guard
143) In the fortress, as the people before
144) Sad-minded Judith commanded,
145) Wise maiden, then she departed on a journey,
146) Courageous woman. Then came again
147) Dear to the people And then the wise woman (Judith) quickly
commanded
148) A certain one of the men
149) From the wide city walk towards her
150) And then quickly to let in
151) Through this wall's gate, and spoke the word to the victorious people:
152) "I may say to you, worthy of gratitude,
153) Things, that you need not mourn longer
154) In your hearts. The Lord is gracious to you,
155) Glory of Kings, that was made known
156) Through the world far and wide, Glorious success that for you
157) Splendid approaching future and Glory given
158) For the affliction which you endured for a long time
159) Then the citizens became glad

160) After they heard how the holy one spoke
161) Over the wretched wall. The army was joyful;
162) People hastened on toward the fortress gate
163) Men and women together, in swarms and multitudes,
164) In troops and troops pressed forward and ran
165) Toward the woman in thousands,
166) Old ones and young. To the heart of each
167) Man in the mead-city (His) spirit (was) gladden.
168) Afterwards they understood that Judith was
169) Back to the homeland, and then quickly
170) With reverence they let her in.
171) Then the wise one commanded, gold adorned,
172) Her attentive handmaid
173) Unwrap the warrior's head
174) And display it as a sign, bloody to
175) The citizens, how she succeeded at Battle.
176) Then the noble one spoke to all the people:
177) "Victorious heroes, here you are able to gaze upon,
178) A leader of the people, this most hateful
179) Warrior of heathen's head.

180) Holofernes not of the living,
181) Who brought about the greatest number of killings of our people
182) Of painful sorrow, and the most still
183) Wished to add, but God did not allow him
184) Of longer life that he may torment us with afflictions;
185) I deprived him of life
186) Through God's help. Now I will ask each one of the men
187) Of the city people
188) Of the shield-bearing warriors, that you quickly
189) Send forth to battle afterwards God of Creatures
190) Merciful King, has sent from the East
191) A bright light. Carry shields forward,
192) Shields for breasts and mail coats,
193) Gleaming protection into the troop of enemies,
194) Cut down the commander with gleaming swords,
195) Fated leaders. Your enemies
196) Doomed to death, and you possess judgment,
197) Glory at battle as the
198) Mighty Lord has shown to you through my hand.”
199) Then it happened the troop of bold ones quickly prepared,

200) Of the brave ones to battle. The nobly brave
201) Warriors and companions advanced, carrying triumphant banners
202) Traveled to battle forward on the straight away,
203) Heroes under the protections (helmets) from the Holy City.
204) On that same dawn; shields made a din,
205) Loudly resounded. The lean one (Beasts of battle) rejoiced in that,
206) Wolf in the forest, and the black raven,
207) Bird greedy for slaughter. Both knew
208) The men of the Nation intended to provide for them
209) A feast on the fated, moreover an eagle
210) Flew behind them eager, dewy-feathered
211) Dark-coated sang a battle song,
212) Horny-beaked. The warriors advanced,
213) Men toward battle, protected with shields,
214) Hollow (concave) shields, who while before
215) Endured the abuse of the foreigners,
216) Abuse of the heathens. That was firmly to them
217) A the spear-fight all requited,
218) After the Assyrians. The Hebrews
219) Under battle standards had advanced

- 220) To the camps. Then they quickly
221) Let forth fly a shower of arrows,
222) Battle-snakes from horn tipped bows,
223) Strong arrows, the fierce warriors stormed loudly
224) Sent spears,
225) Into the crowd of the cruel ones. Warriors were angry,
226) In-dwellers of the land, hostile race,
227) The stern of mood advanced, hard-hearted,
228) Aroused roughly ancient enemies
229) Besotted with mead; the warriors hands withdrew
230) From sheaths brightly adorned swords
231) Proven in edges, struck determinedly
232) The Assyrian warriors,
233) Evil schemers, not any, none,
234) The army spared, not powerful or lowly,
235) Of men alive who they were able to overcome.
- 236) **XII** So then the young retainers in the morning
237) Pursued all the foreign people for a time
238) Until they perceived who the fierce ones were,
239) The head guards of the army,

- 240) That the Hebrew men disclosed violent sword-play with them.
- 241) They with words went to inform the
- 242) Old Chief thanes, aroused the warriors, and fearfully announced the dreadful news to them,
- 243) Besotted with mead the morning attack,
- 244) Terrible sword-play (fighting). Then I immediately found out (the)
- 245) Warriors doomed to perish- shook off sleep
- 246) And toward the tent of the evil one, Holofernes
- 247) Weary-hearted-crowd pressed forward,
- 248) They intended at once
- 249) To announce the battle to the lord
- 250) Before the terror that was with them oppressed them,
- 251) The Army of Hebrews. All assumed
- 252) That the lord of the warriors and the fair maiden
- 253) Were together in the beautiful tent,
- 254) Judith the noble one and the lecher,
- 255) Terrible and fierce. However none of the noblemen
- 256) Who dared awake the warrior
- 257) Or try to discover how it had faired for the warrior
- 258) With the holy maiden,

- 259) Maiden of the Creator
- 260) Maiden of the Creator. (Combined with lines above)
- 261) Army drew near,
- 262) People of the Hebrews, fought severely
- 263) With sharp swords, repaid warfare
- 264) Their ancient quarrels, with decorated swords,
- 265) Ancient insults; Assyria's fame was diminished
- 266) In the day's work,
- 267) Pride humbled. Warriors remained
- 268) About the tent of their lord exceedingly troubled,
- 269) Downcast. Then they all together
- 270) Began to cough (to gain attention), to make noise loudly,
- 271) And gnash the teeth, without success,
- 272) With teeth suffered affliction. Then it was at an end their glory,
- 273) Prosperity and daring deeds. Then the noblemen thought to arouse
- 274) Their beloved lord; for they had succeeded not at all.
- 275) Then was tardily and belatedly a certain one to the bold of the gold-
adorned
- 276) Need so forced him that he ventured daring(ly) into the pavilion.
- 277) Then he found the pale one lying dead on the bed.
- 278) His gold-giver deprived of spirit,

279) Deprived of life. Then he quickly fell
280) Trembling to the ground, began to tear his hair,
281) Troubled in heart, and his garment too,
282) And spoke the word to the warriors
283) The sad ones who were there outside:
284) (...combined with line above)
285) “Here is revealed to ourselves
286) Future destruction in that it is near to that time
287) With troubled near approaching which we must by necessity be lost,
288) Perish together at battle
289) Here lies dead cut down by a sword
290) Our lord beheaded.” Then they sad at heart
291) Threw their weapons down, departed themselves weary-hearted
292) Hastening fled. Men fought them from behind,
293) Mighty people, until the greatest portion
294) Of the pagan sanctuary lay slain (in battle)
295) As a pleasure on the field of victory, cut down with swords,
296) For wolves and also as a comfort to slaughter greedy
297) Birds. Fled who survived,
298) Shield-warriors of hostile ones. The Hebrew army followed them on for

- 299) Honor with victory
- 300) Fame glorified; Lord god seized them
- 301) Beautiful in help, Lord Almighty
- 302) Then they quickly, with decorated swords,
- 303) Brave minded warriors, formed a passage
- 304) For the army
- 305) Through a throng of hostile ones, cut down the shields,
- 306) The wall of shields cleaved. Warriors of battle
- 307) Were enraged, Hebrew men;
- 308) Then in time the thanes severely desired
- 309) Battle. There in dust fell the greatest part of muster-role?
- 310) Of Assyrian nobility, Race of the hostile one; few of the alive came
- 311) To the native land (made it home). The nobly brave turned back,
- 312) Warriors on the way back, in among the carnage
- 313) Corpses reeking. Opportunity was to take
- 314) From the earth-dwellers on the hateful ones,
- 315) From their enemies of old not living
- 316) Gory booty, beautiful ornaments,
- 317) Shields and wide swords, shining helmets,
- 318) Precious treasure. They had gloriously

- 319) Conquered the enemies on the battlefield
- 320) Defenders of the homeland Ancient enemies killed by the swords
- 321) They rested on the trail
- 322) Those who of live kin were most hateful to them in life
- 323) Then all the nation,
- 324) Of the glorious woman in the space of one month,
- 325) Splendid one, with braided hair, carried and brought
- 326) To the bright city Bethulia
- 327) Helmets and short swords, metallic gray coats of mail,
- 328) Armor of men gold adorned,
- 329) More treasure than any
- 330) Of the wise ones can tell;
- 331) Then all the men of the nation went with courage
- 332) Brave ones under banners in battle
- 333) Through the wise teaching of Judith
- 334) Of the courageous maiden. They
- 335) Brought to reward her for the journey,
- 336) Noblemen brave in battle
- 337) The sword and sweaty helmet of Holofernes, likewise a large coat of mail

- 338) Ornamented with red and gold, and all that the arrogant lord of the warriors
- 339) Possessed of treasure or of personal inheritance,
- 340) Of rings and bright treasure, that they
- 341) Gave to the wise, bright woman.
- 342) For all of this Judith said
- 343) “Glory to the Lord of hosts who gave her honor
- 344) Glory in the kingdom of Earth, likewise reward in heaven
- 345) Reward for victory in the glory of heaven, because she had true belief
- 346) Forever to the Almighty. Certainly at the end she did not
- 347) Of the reward which she yearned for a long time. For that glory be to the beloved Lord,
- 348) Who created wind and air, skies and spacious grounds, likewise fierce seas
- 349) And the delights of heaven through His own favor