

Lilia Not Mentioned in Ælfric's Homily on Judith

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The apocryphal book of Judith is preserved in the Greek manuscript of the Septuagint. No Hebrew or Aramaic manuscript has been discovered, though St Jerome remarks in the Prologus Iudith of the Latin Vulgate that he translated it from Chaldean:

Multorum codicum varietatem vitiosissimam amputavi; sola ea quae intellegentia integra in verbis chaldeis invenire potui, latinis expressi.¹

The Anglo-Saxons were also inspired by the story of Judith, and they wrote the story in their language. There exist two Old English versions—an anonymous OE poem dated to the late tenth century and Ælfric's homily about Judith. The version that will be discussed here is that of Ælfric, an OE prose version. Ælfric's version is dated 1002-5 by Peter Clemoes.² This homily is known as Assmann IX after its editor;³ it consists of 452 metrical lines. The story of Judith itself starts at line 22 and ends at line 403, thus containing 383 lines. It is preceded by a short introductory passage about the Babylonian captivity, and is followed by Ælfric's own figurative commentary on the story of Judith.

1 Quoted from *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgata Versionem* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1985; erste Auflage 1969), p. 691, ll. 7-8. The Latin Vulgate quotations will be made hereafter also from this edition.

2 Peter Clemoes, 'The Chronology of Ælfric's Works', *The Anglo-Saxons: Studies in some Aspects of their History and Culture presented to Bruce Dickins*, ed. Peter A.M. Clemoes (London: Bowes and Bowes, 1959), pp. 244-45.

3 *Angelsächsische Homilien und Heiligenleben*, ed. Bruno Assmann, Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Prosa 3 (Kassel: Georg H. Wigand, 1889), pp. 102-16.

Judith, who was very beautiful, lived in chastity after her husband's death; she fasted constantly except on festival-days, always clothed with hair-cloth on her body. However, when her city Bethulia was sieged by the Assyrian army led by Holofernes the general, Judith determined to save her hometown, and thus in lines 227-230a of Ælfric's homily, Judith, after her prayers, casts off her hair-cloth of mourning and widow's garment, which symbolize her widowhood, and adorns herself with gold and purple, with splendid garments.

Æfter þisum wordum and oðrum ȝebedum
 heo awearp hire hæran and hire wudewan reaf
 and hi sylfe ȝeȝlænȝede mid ȝolde and mid purpuran
 and mid ænlicum ȝyrlum. (Assmann IX, 227-30a)

Here it seems that an impressive contrast is created in the last two and a half lines; Judith, in order to deceive the devilish general of the enemy, no more wears mourning garment of widowhood, and adorns herself with splendid garment of gold and purple.

The relevant passage in the Latin Vulgate reads as follows:

vocavitque abram suam
 et descendens in domum suam abstulit a se cilicium
 et exuit se vestimentis viduitatis suae
 et lavit corpus suum et unxit se myrro optimo
 et discriminavit crinem capitis sui et inposuit mitram super
 caput suum
 et induit se vestimentis iucunditatis suae induitque sandalia
 pedibus suis
 adumpsitque dextraliola et lilia et inaures et anulos
 et omnibus ornamentis suis ornavit se⁴ (x, 2-3)

Our attention would be paid exclusively to the last four lines, that is, from "et induit se vestimentis iucunditatis suae" down to the bottom. The Latin clause corresponding to Ælfric's last one and a half lines, that is, "and hi sylfe ȝeȝlænȝede mid ȝolde and mid

purpuran/and mid ænlicum 3yrlum", is that in the fourth line from the bottom, that is, "et induit se vestimentis iucunditatis suae". The rest of the Latin version, that is, from "induitque sandalia pedibus suis" down to the bottom is omitted in Ælfric's version. Ælfric omits description of the various ornaments with which Judith is adorned in the Vulgate; Ælfric simply states that Judith adorned herself with gold and purple, and with splendid garments. It seems that the word *lilia* deserves particular attention: lilies are numbered among the ornaments with which Judith adorned herself, and in the Doway translation the first letter of the word is capitalized as if the word contains a special connotation.

Another account on the lily connected with Judith is found in Aldhelm's prose *De Virginitate*, Chapter 57.

quasi candens lilium pia castitate florescens atque a publicis
conspectibus delitescens in cenaculi solariorum pudica conver-
sabatur:

[Flowering like a bright lily in her devout chastity and hiding
from the public gaze she lived a pure life in an upstairs solar]⁵

Here Judith is described as "quasi candens lilium pia castitate florescens" (flowering like a bright lily in her devout chastity). Judith's devout chastity is compared to a bright lily.

It should be pointed out, however, that Aldhelm, a few lines later

4 'And she called her abra, and going downe into her house she tooke from her the hearecloth, and put of the garmentes of her widowhood,/ and washed her bodie, and anoynted her self with ointement, and plaited the heare of her head, and put a crowne vpon her head, and clothed her selfe with the garmentes of her ioyfulnes, and put pantoffles on her feete, and tooke braceletes, and Lilies, and eareletes, and ringes, and with al her ornamentes she adorned her self.' Translation is quoted from *The Holie Bible, Doway 1609*, facsimile reproduction (Kyoto: Rinsen Book Co. Ltd, 1990).

5 The Latin quotation is cited from Rudolf Ehwald, *Aldhelmi Opera*, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctorum Antiquissimorum, Tomus XV (Berlin, 1919; repr. 1961), p. 317; translation is by Michael Lapidge and Michael Herren, *Aldhelm: The Prose Works* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer 1979), p. 127.

in the same chapter, states that he has quoted the passage on Judith's adorning herself with ornaments from the Septuagint, and the quotation does not contain the word "lilia".

De qua in ·LXX· translatoribus scriptum est: *Induit se vestem iocunditatis suae et imposuit periscelides et dextralia et anulos et omnia ornamenta sua . . .*

[Of her, it is written in the Septuagint: 'And she clothed herself with the garments of her gladness, and put sandals on her feet, and took her bracelets, and lilies, and earlets, and rings, and adorned herself with all her ornaments]

Nor does Aldhelm's quotation contain Latin words corresponding to 'on her feet' and 'earlets'. In Lapidge's translation, however, the word "lilies", as well as 'on her feet' and 'earlets', is inserted, because he remarks that quotations from the Vulgate are given from the Douay-Rheims translation of 1582-1609.⁶ Lapidge adds that they have noted Aldhelm's deviations from the Vulgate.⁷

The relevant passage in the LXX is as follows:

... καὶ ἐνεδύσατο τὰ ἱμάτια τῆς εὐφροσύνης αὐτῆς, ἐν οἷς ἐστολίζετο ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς Μανασση, καὶ ἔλαβεν σανδάλια εἰς τοὺς πόδας αὐτῆς καὶ περιέθετο τοὺς χλιδῶνας καὶ τὰ φέλια καὶ τοὺς δακτυλίους καὶ τὰ ἐνώτια καὶ πάντα τὸν κόσμον αὐτῆς . . .

[... and put on her garments of gladnesse, wherewith she was clad during the life of Manasses her husband./ And she tooke sandals vpon her feete, and put about her, her bracelets and her chaines, and her rings, and her earerings, and all her ornaments, . . .]⁸ (x 3-4; underlines mine)

6 Lapidge & Herren, p. 21.

7 *Ibid.*

8 The Greek quotations is cited from *Septuaginta* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979; first published in 1935). Translation is quoted from *The Holy Bible*, an exact reprint in roman type, page for page of the Authorized Version published in the year 1611, with an introduction by Alfred W. Pollard (Oxford: Oxford University Press; Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 1985).

Aldhelm's Latin quotation cited above does not contain the phrases or the words corresponding to the underlined Greek "ἐν οἷς ἐστολίζετο ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς *Μανασσῆ*", which means 'with which she was clad during the life of Manasses her husband', "εἰς τοὺς πόδας αὐτῆς", which means 'on her feet', "τὰ φέλια", which means 'chains', and "τὰ ἐνώτια", meaning 'earrings'; nor does it contain the Latin "pedibus suis", "lilia", and "inaures", which are found in the relevant passage in the Vulgate. To sum up, the point to be made concerning Aldhelm's quotation is that his quotation is much deviated, or abridged, from the Septuagint.

The Old English *lilie*, a weak feminine noun, is an adaptation of Latin *lilium*, and it occurs fairly frequently in OE homilies and hagiographies. It is employed very often in contrast to (*h*)*rose*, "rose", as in the following instance (the reference number of the quotation is that of the *Microfiche Concordance to Old English*):

Seo readnes þære rōsan lixeþ on þe, & seo hwitnes þære lilian scineþ on þe, & mid eallum missenlicum afeddum blostmum sý se Cristes brydbúr gefrætwood.

[The redness of the rose glitters in thee, and the whiteness of the lily shines in thee; let Christ's bride-bower (chamber) be adorned with every variety of flowers that are produced.]⁹

(HomU 18, BlHom 1, 82-85)

This homily is in what is called the Blickling Homilies, dated by Wenisch between 875 and 950.¹⁰ The homily is titled "Annunciatio S [anctae] Mariae" (The Annunciation of Saint Mary), and here the whiteness of the lily shining in the Blessed Virgin Mary is described as contrasting with the redness of the rose glittering in her. The word *lilian* occurs with the word *rosan* also in the

9 Quoted from Richard Morris, *The Blickling Homilies*, EETS, OS 58, 63 and 73 (London: 1874, 1876, and 1880; repr. 1990).

10 Franz Wenisch, *Spezifisch anglisches Wortgut in den nordhumbrischen Interlinearglossierungen des Lukasevangeliums* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag 1979), p. 30.

following quotation (Scragg's lineation is followed by that of Förster in the square brackets):

þonne bryt se lichoma on manigfealdum bleon; ærest he bið on
medmicles mannes hiwe, þonne æt nehstan on þam fægerestan /
manes hiwe; swa æt nehstan þæt he þara wyrta fægernesne,
lilian 7 rosan, 7 þonne swa forð þæt he hæfð gelic hiw golde 7
seolfre 7 swa þam deorwyrðesta[n] gymcynne 7 eorcnanstanum;
7 æt nehstan þæt he glitenað swa steorra, 7 lyht swa mone, 7
beorhtaþ swa sunna þonne hio biorhtust bið scinende.¹¹

(HomU 9, VercHom4, 155-61 [Fö. 172-79])

This homily is one of what is called the Vercelli Homilies, and is dated by Wenisch the first half of the 10th century at the latest.¹² The following passage is about the Assumption of the Virgin Mary:

Hi hine þa gegyredon mid hire lichrægle and ða samnunga þæt
leoht þanon gewat and on ansine þære halgan marian wæs
swilce lilian blostman and on micelre swetnesse swæc ut eode
of hire muðe.¹³ (LS 21, AssumptTristr, 144)

Here the lily blossom is employed also in connection with the Virgin Mary. The passage tells that when people clothed her with the winding-sheet, the light immediately departed thence, on the countenance of the holy Mary was something like lily-blossoms, and fragrance with much sweetness came out of her mouth.

Ælfric's works are well supplied with instances of the word *lilie*. The OE *lilian* in the following passage refers to "the lilies of the field".

Behealdað þas lilian hu heo weaxst. heo ne swincð. ne ne spinð;
Ic secge eow to soðan. þæt furðon Salomon on eallum his

11 Quoted from D.G. Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*, EETS, O.S. 300 (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1992).

12 Wenisch, p. 74.

13 Quoted from the *Microfiche Concordance to Old English*.

wuldre. næs swa fægere ymscryd. swa swa lilian beoð¹⁴
(ÆCHom II, xxxi, 13-15)

The above passage from Ælfric is relevant to the following Latin passage from the Vulgate:

et de vestimento quid solliciti estis
considerate lilia agri quomodo crescunt
non laborant nec nent
dico autem vobis
quoniam nec Salomon in omni gloria sua coopertus est sicut
unum ex istis¹⁵ (Mt VI, 28-29)

This passage is cited from Matthew Chapter 6, Verses 28-29; a similar passage occurs also in Luke Chapter 12, Verse 27. The OE *lilian* here is the Latin *lilia agri*, "the lilies of the field".

The following is a quotation from "Passio Sanctae Cecilie Virginis" (Passion of Saint Cecilia, Virgin) in Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*:

Hi smeaddon þa mid glædnysse . and embe godes willan spræcon .
oþ-þæt his broþor com bliðe on mergen him to .
and cyste hi butu . and cwæð mid blisse .
Ic wundrige þearle hu nu on wintres dæge
her lilian blostm oþþe rosan bræð .
swa wynsumlice and swa werodlice stincað .
Deah þe ic hæfde me on handa þa blostman .
ne mihton hi swa wynsumne wyrt-bræð macian .
and ic secge to soþan þæt ic swa eom afylled
mid þam swetan bræða . swylce ic sy geedniwod .

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14 Quoted from Malcolm Godden, *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The Second Series, Text*, EETS, SS 5 (London: Oxford University Press 1979).

15 'And for rayment why are you careful? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow: they labour not, neither do they spinne. But I say to you, that neither Salomon in al his glorie was arayed as one of these.' Translation is quoted from *The New Testament, Rhemes 1582*, facsimile reproduction (Kyoto: Rinsen Book Co. Ltd. 1990).

þa cwæð se broðor . þurh mine bene þe com
 þæs wynsuma bræð to þæt þu wite heonan-forð
 hwæs blod readaþ on rosan gelicnysse .
 and hwæs lichama hwitað on lilian fægernysse .
 We habbað cyne-helmas halige mid us
 scinende swa swa rose . and snaw-hwite swa swa lilie .
 þa þu ne miht geseon þeah þe hi scinende beon .¹⁶

(ÆLS, xxxiv, 100-16)

The word *lilie*, which is underlined by the present writer, occurs three times with the word *rose*. It is described here as carrying a pleasant fragrance and as snow-white in contrast to the redness of the rose.

The following instances are all quoted from Ælfric (underlines mine).

þa gecyrde hé ut ymbe þæs cuman ðenunge. ac hé ne gemette
 nænne cuman ða ða hé inn cóm. ac lagon ðry heofenlice hlafas
 on lilian beorhtnysse scinende. and on hrosan bræðe stymende.
 and on swæcce swettran þonne beona húnig;

(ÆCHom II, x, 65-69)

Ne mihte se wuldorfulla Salomon ne nan eorðlic cyning. swa
 wlitige deagunge his hræglum begytan. swa swa rose hæfð. and

16 'Then they pondered with gladness and spake concerning God's will./ until his brother came blithely in the morning to them./ and kissed them both, and said with joy:/ 'I wonder exceedingly how now, on a winter's day,/ here lily-blossom or rose's breath/ smells so winsomely and so sweetly./ Though I had the blossoms in my hand/ they could not make such a winsome perfume:/ and I say in sooth that I am so filled/ with the sweet breath as if I were made anew.' Then said the brother: 'through my prayer/ this winsome breath came to thee, that thou mayest know henceforth/ whose blood is red in likeness to a rose,/ and whose body is white with a lily's fairness./ We (both) have holy crowns with us/ shining like a rose and snow-white like a lily,/ which thou mayest not see, though they be shining.' The quotation and the translation are cited from Walter W. Skeat, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, EETS, OS 76, 82, 94 and 114 (London: Oxford University Press 1881, 1885, 1890 and 1900; repr. as two vols. 1966).

lilie. and fela oðre wyrta þe wunderlice scinað;
(ÆCHom II, xxxi, 70-73)

Ða wearð þæt bryd-bed mid bræðe afylled .
swylce þær lægon . lilie and rose . (ÆLS, iv, 32-33)

þa cyne-helmas wæron wundorlice scinende
on rosan readnysse . and on lilian hwitnysse .
(ÆLS, xxxiv, 76-77)

The above instances further exemplify the word *lilie*, used with, or in contrast to, (*h*)*rose*; it is depicted as shining with whiteness and carrying fragrance. The first example, quoted from Ælfric's Catholic Homilies, the Second Series, Chapter 10, lines 65-69, contains a phrase "*ðry heofenlice hlafas on lilian beorhtnysse scinende. and on hrosan bræðe stymende*", which means 'three heavenly loaves shining with brightness of lilies, and emitting fragrance of roses'; the second example, which is also quoted from Ælfric's Catholic Homilies, the Second Series, Chapter 31, lines 70-73, has "*swa swa rose hæfð. and lilie. and fela oðre wyrta þe wunderlice scinað*", which means 'as have a rose, a lily, and many other plants that shine wonderfully'; the third example, quoted from Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*, Chapter 4, lines 32-33, says "*mid bræðe afylled . swylce þær lægon . lilie and rose*", 'filled with fragrance just as though a lily and a rose were lying there'; and the last example has "*scinende on rosan readnysse . and on lilian hwitnysse*", 'shining with the rose's redness and the lily's whiteness'.

Furthermore, as in the following quotation, which is cited from the homily titled "In Natale Sanctorum Martirum" (On the Nativity of Holy Martyrs), the word *lilie* is used symbolically.

Godes gelaðung hæfð on sibbe lilian. þæt is clæne drohtnung.
on ðam gewinne rosan. þæt is martyrdom;
(ÆCHom II, xxxvii, 153-54)

This means 'God's congregation has in peace a lily that is pure

condition, in toil a rose that is martyrdom'. Here the word *lilie* is used figuratively in association with purity, whereas *rose* is connected with martyrdom.

It seems to me that in the following passage, which is cited from "De Assumptione Beatae Mariae" (On the Assumption of the Blessed Mary), the figurativeness is more impressive.

Be ðissere heofonlican cwéne is gecweden gyt þurh ðone ylcan Godes Gast: he cwæð, "Ic geseah ða wlitegan swilce culfran astigende ofer streamlicum riðum, and unasecgendlic bræð stemde of hire gyrlum; and, swa swa on lengtenlicere tide, rosena blostman and lilian hi ymtrymedon." Ðæra rosena blostman getacniað mid heora readnysse martyrdom, and ða lilian mid heora hwitnysse getacniað ða scinendan clænnysse ansundes mægðhádes. Ealle ða gecorenan ðe Gode geþugon ðurh martyrdom oððe þurh clænnysse, ealle hi gesiðodon mid þære eadigan cwéne; forðan ðe heo sylf is ægðer ge martyr ge mæden.¹⁷ (ÆCHom I, 30 444. 8-18; underline mine)

Here Ælfric makes more explicit mention of the lilies symbolizing the shining purity of inviolate maidenhood by their whiteness, which contrast well with the roses symbolizing martyrdom by their redness. In the following passage, which is cited from the same homily, Ælfric proceeds to mention that roses and lilies encircle the Blessed Virgin Mary so that her virtues may be strengthened by virtues and her fairness may be increased by the splendour of chastity.

17 'Of this heavenly queen it is yet said by the same Spirit of God, "I saw the beauteous one as a dove mounting above the streaming rills, and an ineffable fragrance exhaled from her garments; and, so as in the spring-tide, blossoms of roses and lilies encircled her." The blossoms of roses betoken by their redness martyrdom, and the lilies by their whiteness betoken the shining purity of inviolate maidenhood. All the chosen who have thriven to God through martyrdom or through chastity, they all journeyed with the blessed queen; for she is herself both martyr and maiden.' The quotation and the translation are cited from *The Sermones Catholici or Homilies of Ælfric*, ed. Benjamin Thorpe, 2 vols (London 1844-46).

Nis heo nanas haliges mægnes bedæled, ne nanas wites, ne nanre beorhtnysse; and forðy heo wæs ymbtrymed mid rosan and lilian, þæt hyre mihta wæron mid mihtum underwriðode, and hire fægernys mid clænnysse wite wære geyht.¹⁸

(ÆCHom I, 30 444. 33-446.1; underline mine)

Conclusion

As far as the passages quoted from Ælfric as well as those from the other sources discussed here are concerned, the word *lilie*, except for an example referring to "the lilies of the field", is used in most cases in contrast to a red rose, and is used more significantly in reference to the Blessed Virgin Mary to symbolize her purity, whereas *rose* is used in association with her martyrdom.

The flower lily is listed in the Vulgate as one of the ornaments which adorned Judith. The passage in the Vulgate seems to have stirred up Aldhelm's association of the flower even with devout chastity of Judith in his prose *De Virginitate*, although his quotation from the Bible, which he says is from the LXX, does not contain the flower. Judith is a widow, but she is counted by Aldhelm as one of the virgins, or more precisely as a widow virgin, with a more religious connotation which developed later in the word *virgo*. In Chapter 55 of his prose *De Virginitate* Aldhelm makes a persuasive argument that virginity is an interior quality, not an exterior one.

It is probable that the Latin version of the book of Judith consulted by Ælfric included the word *lilia*, and also that Ælfric had read Aldhelm's prose *De Virginitate*. The great majority of surviving manuscripts of the prose *De Virginitate*, as Lapidge states,¹⁹ was copied in England in the tenth and eleventh centuries,

18 'She is void of no holy virtue, nor any beauty, nor any brightness; and therefore was she encircled with roses and lilies, that her virtues might be supported by virtues, and her fairness increased by the beauty of chastity.'

19 Lapidge, p. 2: 'Nor was Aldhelm's influence limited to England and to the eighth century. The Anglo-Saxon missionaries to Germany were well acquainted with his writings, and it is not surprising that Aldhelm's works should subsequently have been studied in continental centres, particularly those associated with the Anglo-Saxon mission. In fact the earliest surviving

and it seems that those manuscripts were attentively studied as curriculum texts.

Ælfric, however, does not mention this flower in his Homily about Judith. His reference to Judith's adornments comprises two half lines only, i.e. "mid 3olde and mid purpuran/ and mid ænlicum 3yrlum" (with gold and purple/ and with splendid garments). This may be merely a matter of space; Ælfric's intention was to condense the Biblical story into a homily by omitting a great deal, and *lilia*, together with pantofles, bracelets, earlets and rings, may have been ignored as a minor element.

Alternatively, it is probable that Ælfric intentionally suppressed the minute depiction of the excessive adornments which include *lilia*. As he remarks in his treatise *On the Old and New Testament*,²⁰ he set down "on ure wisan" (in our manner—Crawford renders it "according to my skill"); that is, he set down in their or his manner.

manuscript of Aldhelm's Letters (the Codex Vindobonensis 751, s. ix^{med}) was copied at Mainz, and the earliest copy of the prose *De Virginitate*, a ninth-century manuscript written at Würzburg in Caroline script but containing Insular (English) additions; may possibly have been copied from a manuscript sent by Dealwine in England to Lul in Germany. In the tenth century, when English learning was re-established through the energy of the Benedictine reform movement, Aldhelm's Latin writings once again received the careful attention of English monastic audiences. At this time many manuscripts of Aldhelm's works were imported into England from the continent. Aldhelm became one of the principal authors on the English curriculum. The great majority of surviving manuscripts of the prose *De Virginitate* was copied in England in the tenth and eleventh centuries. That these manuscripts were attentively studied may be appreciated from the vast number of glosses, both Latin and Old English, which were entered in them."

- 20 "Iudith seo wuduwe, þe oferwann Holofernem þone Siriscan ealdormann, hæfð hire agene boc betwux þisum bocum be hire agenum sige; seo ys eac on Englisc on ure wisan gesett . . ." [Judith the widow, who overcame Holofernes the Syrian general, has her own book amongst the others, concerning her own victory; it is also set down in our manner in English. . .] (*On the Old and New Testament* 772-77)

Quoted from *The Old English Version of the Heptateuch, Ælfric's Treatise on the Old and New Testament and his Preface to Genesis*, ed. Samuel J. Crawford, EETS, OS 160 (London: Oxford University Press 1922, repr. 1990); translation by Professor Godden, 'Biblical literature: the Old Testament', *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. Malcolm R. Godden & Michael Lapidge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1991), p. 219.

In Ælfric's own commentary on the story of Judith, as cited below, he reproaches some nuns for fornicating and advises them to take an example from Judith in living cleanly.

Sume nunnan syndon, þe sceandlice libbað,
tellað to lytlum ȝylte, þæt hi hi forlicȝon
and þæt hi leohtlice mazon swa lytel ȝebetan.
Ac heo ne bið na eft mæden, ȝif heo hi æne forliȝð,
ne heo næfð þa mede þæs hundfealdan wæstmes.
Nimað eow bysne be þyssere Iudith,
hu clænlice heo leofode ær Cristes acennednysse,
(Assmann IX 429-35)

Ælfric's intention of avoiding full description of ornaments with which Judith adorned herself may have been that he did not want to create an image of Judith adorned with ornaments and charming decorations which were forbidden in nunneries. A further remark may be made on the matter of *lilia*; in most of Ælfric's works, as discussed above, *lilie* is used in reference to the Blessed Virgin Mary to symbolize her purity or chastity, and therefore Ælfric may have been unwilling to employ the significant word for Judith, who was to deceive Holofernes, the Assyrian general, even if he played a devilish character.

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