THE OLD ENGLISH LIFE OF JULIANA
Translated by
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Introduction

The Old English life of Juliana of Nicomedia is typical of its genre—“hagiography” or “writing about the saints.” Roman persecutions of Christians, beginning with Nero in 64 CE and ending generally with the Diocletianic persecution in 313, produced a number of exciting and inspirational narratives describing the athletic faith of the early martyrs, whose pious lives and gory deaths provided the inspiration for one of the most widely read and enduring genres of the medieval period. The life of a prototypical virgin martyr, like Juliana, begins when a devout young woman rejects the efforts of a local Roman official to marry her and force her to sacrifice to the gods. After an argument designed to demonstrate the saint’s verbal acuity and the superiority of Christian values over pagan (and sometimes Jewish) ideals, the virgin is subjected to a series of grisly, inventive, and often sexually humiliating tortures, all of which the saint steadfastly endures. Exasperated, the pagan persecutors then order that the holy person be swiftly executed, after which the martyr’s soul flies triumphantly up to heaven. Even though their formulaic and expressly didactic nature is sometimes off-putting to modern readers, medieval audiences found in the lives of the saints and the martyrs useful examples of Christian heroism and role models for spiritual strength.

Though the Old English Juliana participates in typical hagiographic tradition in many respects, it also offers readers a distinctly Anglo-Saxon take on the cult of the saints. The author, possibly called Cynewulf, whose runic signature appears at the conclusion of this and three other poems, adapted his prose Latin source into the secular, Germanic form of verse familiar to readers of Beowulf. The poet’s translation incorporates a series of traditional stylistic features such as “repetition and variation” and kennings, as well as distinctly Anglo-Saxon heroic imagery. In the Old English, the saint’s conflicts are characterized in martial terms—Juliana becomes something of a warrior of Christ, enduring the slings and arrows of her persecutors. Rather than a Roman proconsul, the antagonist Heliseus is characterized as an Anglo-Saxon gerefa (Mod. Eng. “reeve”), guarding his city’s gold-hoard. In addition to its heroic tone, other, more mundane details from Anglo-Saxon society can be perceived in the poem, including the characterization of the marriage suit at the center of the plot and the traditional “weapontake” described in the meeting between Heliseus and Affricanus, as well as the language surrounding Juliana’s mund, an elusive legal concept referring to her legal guardianship. In short, Juliana offers a glimpse of the way an early vernacular poet turned Latin religious literature into a form that would have been familiar to his or her audience.

Note on the Translation

I have endeavored to translate Juliana as clearly and directly as possible while also maintaining the lineation that readers will find in Old English editions of the poem. At times I have rearranged clauses in order to reflect modern syntax.
So. We have heard of what the warriors discuss, judging as brave deeds what happened in the days of Maximian, that merciless king, the heathen general who mounted a persecution across middle-earth, killed Christian men, the righteous ones, threw down churches, and watered the grass with the holy blood of God’s worshipers; his realm was broad, wide and mighty over the nations— almost over the entire world. The wicked warlords went around to the cities as he had commanded them to. Often they raised up strife with perverted deeds, those who hated God’s law, sinful by their crimes. They bred atrocity; put up false idols; destroyed the holy; crushed the literate; burned the chosen ones; tormented the soldiers of God with spear and fire.

There was a certain wealthy man of noble birth, the reeve of the realm. He ran a walled city— always guarded the courtyard of that borough, Nicomedia, and held the gold-hoard. Often, ignoring the word of God, he would miserably seek heathen idols when he was in need. His given name was Heliseus; he had a local reign that was both great and famous. One day his heart began to lust after a girl, Juliana— sinful curiosity wracked him! She bore in her heart the holy truth and was zealously determined that she would cleanly hold her maidenhood away from every man for the love of Christ. Nevertheless, according to her father’s wishes she was betrothed to the rich man. Fate did not fully know, how she, youthful in mind and spirit, was set against the match. For her, the fear of God was greater in mind than all of the treasure that was in the control of that nobleman.
Then the wealthy one, the gold-savvy man, 
was eager in his mind for the company of a wife, 
so that maiden was promptly prepared for him, 
a bride for the home. She was firmly set against 
that man’s love, even though he owned 
treasure, countless gems on the earth, 
bound under hoard-locks. She rejected all of that 
and said these words to the company of men: 

“I can say that you need not 
trouble yourself so greatly. If you would 
love and worship the true God, and sing his praises, 
if you would recognize the Protector of souls, then I would immediately, 
unhesitatingly submit to your will. 

However, I say to you, if you 
put your faith in a lesser god with demonic sacrifice, 
or call to heathen-worship, you will not have me 
nor force me to commit sin. 
Never will you, with violent hatefulness, 
prepare a harsh enough torture for me that 
would cause me to forsake these words.”

Then the prince became swollen with rage, 
stained with wicked deeds, when he heard the maiden’s words. 
Rough and blind to thought, he commanded a 
swift messenger to summon the saint’s father 
to a negotiation. Their voices rose up 
when they leaned their spears together, 
these great warriors. They were both heathens, 
sick with sin, the father-in-law and the son-in-law. 
Then the guardian of the kingdom spoke 
with the father of the maiden, vicious in his mind, 
brandishing a spear: “Your daughter has 
shown me disrespect. She said to me that 
she does not care for my husbandly love, 
my intimate ‘friendship.’ These insults are 
the greatest burdens on my mind, 
because she showed me such disdain 
in front of the folk. She demanded that 
I worship with words, enrich with wealth,
and praise in my mind some foreign God before all the others, a God that was unknown before, or else I will not possess her.”

After these words, the violent father-in-law darkened, the father of the virgin, and opened his word-hoard:

“I swear by the true gods
from whom I have always found favor,
and, my lord, by the grace that I have had
in your wine-hall, if these words are true,
my dear man, that you have said to me,
then I will not spare her, but rather give her into your control,
famed prince, for her destruction.
Judge her to death, if you think it fitting,
or grant her life, however, if it is more pleasing to you.”

He went boldly to speak to the virgin,
obstinate and perverted by rage, bulging with wrath,
to where he knew the pleasant-minded young woman kept her home. He then said words:

“You are my daughter, the dearest
and the sweetest in my heart,
my only daughter on the earth, the light of my eye,
Juliana. You have in foolishness
and through your hostility taken an unprofitable path
against the judgment of wise men.
According to your own council, you too violently reject
your bridegroom, who is your better,
nobler on the earth, wealthier
in treasure. He would be good to have as a ‘friend.’
Therefore, it is better that you be this man’s lady,
an eternal beloved, and not reject him.”

Then the blessed Juliana gave him
this answer, (she had firmly established
her “friendship” with God):

“I will never suffer that prince’s ‘husbandly love,’ unless he more eagerly
honor the God of men than he has done so far,
worship Him with offerings who created the light,
the heavens and earth, the circuit of the sea,
and the orbit of the universe. He will not otherwise bring me
to his bed. He will need to look for another woman for his ‘bride-love’
with his money—he won’t get any here.”
Fiend-like, her father gave her an answer through his ire; he was not at all offering her a gift:
“As long as I live, I will see to it that
if you do not first give up this foolish plan,
and if you continue to worship this foreign God
and abandon our gods, who are dearer to us
and who have stood as an aid to our people,
then you, wicked, will promptly
suffer death by the claws of wild animals,
if you will not consent to the marriage suit,
a union with the brave Heliseus. Grave is that enterprise
and dangerous for the likes of you,
if you show contempt for our lord.”
The saint gave him an answer,
wise and dear to God, Juliana:
“I will speak the truth to you;
so long as I live, I will not tell a lie.
I will never be afraid of your judgments.
Your hard torments and violent attacks,
with which you fiercely and in sin threaten me,
are not a burden for me,
nor will you ever succeed through your idolatry
in turning me from the praise of Christ.”
Then he was crazed with anger, ire, and rage,
dangerous and grim in heart, the father with the daughter.
He ordered that she be flogged, threatened her with torture,
lay on torments, and said these words:
“Change your thoughts and reverse the words
that you foolishly spoke before,
when you disrespected the worship of our gods.”
Juliana fearlessly gave him an answer
with a spiritual mind:
“You will never convince me with lies to promise
tribute to dumb and deaf idols,
to the enemies of souls,
to the worst thanes of torments.
Instead I will worship the Father of Glory,
of middle-earth and of majesty,
and to Him alone I entrust everything,
so that He will be my guardian,
my helper and a savior against the ravagers of hell.”
Then through anger Affricanus, the father of the maiden,
gave her into the power of the enemy,
Heliseus.

In the morning, after
the coming of the first light, he commanded that she be led
before his judgment seat. The retinue was amazed
at the beauty of the virgin—all the people together there.
Then the prince initially greeted her,
her bridegroom, with kind words:
“My sweetest ray of sunlight,
Juliana! What radiance you have,
what abundant grace, the fruit of your youth!
If you would yet satisfy our gods
and put yourself into their protection, so mild,
the patronage of the holy ones, then from you will be diverted
countless and cruelly devised torments,
grim tortures, which have been readied for you,
if you will not sacrifice to our true idols.”
The noble woman gave an answer to him:
“You will never compel me with your threats
nor prepare torments with your anger
so that I would submit to your mastery
unless you abandon these false things,
these sacrifices, and instead clearly recognize
the God of glories, the Shaper of spirits,
the Measurer of men, in whose unending
power is all of creation.”

Then before the multitude, with a wicked mind,
swollen with rage, the chieftain spoke
boastful words and ordered that the sinless maiden
be stretched out naked with humiliating agony
and beaten with scourges.
Then the warrior laughed, spoke sarcastic words:

“This is the power
of our enemy? I will still grant you
life, even though earlier you spoke
many careless words,
resisted too zealously that you should
worship the true gods. Thus, for you in
this perversity, a reward of hard discipline will be given,
unless you are first reconciled with them
and, after this blasphemy,
you offer sacrifice with a contrite mind
and make peace with them. Let this dispute rest,
this spiteful strife. If you continue to
persist in this error through your rashness for long,
then needs must I, compelled by spite,
punish your most wicked sacrilege,
your filthy blasphemy, when you profanely
began to quarrel with the best of gods
and the most merciful ones known to men,
those whom this nation has long worshiped.”

To him that noble-minded woman fearlessly answered:

“Your judgments don’t frighten me,
accursed evil-doer, nor your hateful punishments.
I have the Guardian of heaven as my hope,
the mild Protector, the Lord of men,
who shields me from your delusion,
from grip of the fierce ones, which you consider gods.
Those things are bereft of anything good,
idle, worthless, unprofitable,
nor do men find any help there,
true peace, even though they seek friendship
from them. A man does not find
honorable company among devils. I firmly pledge
my spirit to the Lord, who has eternally
ruled over each power,
over each glory. That is the true King.”

When it appeared that the servile warlord
was not able to change the heart of the maiden,
or her intention, he commanded that she be hung
and heaved up by her hair onto a high beam.
There the bright woman suffered beatings,
cruel torture for six hours of the day.
And then the hateful persecutor straightaway
commanded for her to be taken down afterwards
and led to a dungeon. The love of Christ was
bound fast in her mind,
in her mild spirit, an unbreakable power.
Then the dungeon door was shut with a
bolt, the work of hammers. The saint remained
faithful therein. Unceasingly she praised the King of glories
in her heart, the God of the heavenly kingdom,
the Savior of men, within that cell
as darkness enveloped her. The Holy Spirit was
her constant companion.

Then suddenly into
that prison came the enemy of men,
expert in evils. He had the shape of an angel,
the enemy of souls skilled in tormenting.
The captive of hell spoke to the saint:
“Why, dearest and
worthiest to the King of glories,
our Lord, do you suffer? The judge
has prepared the worst of agonies for you,
endless pain, if you, wise in mind,
will not sacrifice and please his gods.
Hurry up, so that he will command that you be
led out of here. Offer up some sort of gift,
a victory-sacrifice, before death takes you,
your execution before the multitude. In this way you shall
escape the wrath of the judge, blessed maiden.”
Then she quickly asked, she was not afraid,
pleasing to Christ, where he came from.
To her the wretched demon answered:
“I am God’s angel, having journeyed from above,
a noble thane sent to you,
holy from on high. The tortures that have been ordered
are severe, wonderfully cruel, as a deadly 
punishment. God commands you, 
the Ruler of men, that you guard yourself against that.”

For a moment, the woman was afflicted with fear 
by that sudden message, which the fiend, 
the adversary of glory, had said to her with words. 
Then stalwartly she steadied her heart, 
the young and innocent woman called to God: 
“Now I will ask you, Protector of men, 
external Almighty, through that noble creation 
that you, Father of angels, established at the Genesis, 
that you do not allow me to turn my praise 
from your holy gift, as this messenger, who stands before me, 
bids me to do with this terrible revelation. 
And so I will ask you, gentle God, 
that you tell me, King of glory, 
Guardian of victories, who this thane may be, 
floating on the air, who guides me onto the rough path 
away from you.” To her a voice, 
glorious from the clouds, spoke to her with words: 
“Seize that foul creature! And hold him fast, 
until he truthfully explains his errand, 
all from the beginning and who his kin are.”

When the maiden heard this, her spirit was lifted, 
blessed with glory. She grabbed that devil 

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[A folio is missing from the manuscript at this point. In the Latin source text, Juliana forces the devil to 
reveal his name, Belial, and confess that he compelled Adam into sinning at the fall, Cain to murder 
Abel, and others to commit a variety of other crimes through the ages until the point when Judas betrays 
Christ. The poem picks up at the close of this speech.]

“to sell the King of all kings to his death. 
Then I contrived so that the soldier would 
wound the Savior, the crowd saw it, 
so that both blood and water together 
sought the earth. Then yet I incited Herod 
in his mind to order that John’s 
head be cut off, when that holy man
stirred words against his lechery,  
against his sinful marriage. Also I instructed  
Simon with cunning so that he began to strive  
against Christ’s chosen thanes,  
and attack those holy men with reproach,  
with deep errors: he claimed they were druids.  
With evil tricks I dared to seduce Nero  
so that he ordered the thanes of Christ executed,  
Peter and Paul. Earlier, Pilate by my teachings  
hung the Ruler of the heavens on the rood,  
the Measurer of the mighty.  
Likewise, I also incited Ægeus so that  
he foolishly commanded Andrew  
the holy to be hung on a high beam,  
so that from the gallows he sent his soul  
into the beauty of glories. Thus I have authored  
so many hatful outrages with my brothers,  
black sins, that I cannot relate them,  
or recall fully, or know the number of  
these hard hate-thoughts.”

To him the saint, Juliana,  
spoke through the Spirit’s grace:  
“You, enemy of mankind, shall speak  
further of your mission and who sent you to me.”  
To her the monster gave this answer,  
seized with fear, bereft of comfort:  
“So, my father, the king of hell,  
sent me hither on this journey to you,  
from that narrow home. He is more eager  
for each of evils in that mournful house than I.  
When he sends us so that we change  
the minds of the faithful through error,  
turn them from salvation, we are sad in mind,  
fearful in heart. He is not a merciful lord to us,  
the fearsome ruler. If we have not accomplished  
any of these evils deeds, we do not dare to  
go before his presence.  
He sends us thanes of darkness yonder into the wide world,
commanded to stir up violence.
If we are discovered on the dirt path, 
or anywhere found out,
then devils bind us and scourge us with 
torments of fire. If the mind of the faithful 
is not changed through our meddling, 
the spirit of the holy, we then suffer 
the hardest and the worst punishments, 
through wounding blows. Now you yourself might 
know the truth in your heart 
that I was compelled by need and 
threatened by punishments so that I sought you out.”

Then still did the saint interrogate with words 
the enemy of men, the architect of strife, 
the breeder of sin: “You will tell me further, 
enemy of souls, how you gravely harm 
the faithful through the slide of sin, 
encircled with crime.” To her the fiend gave an answer, 
the lawless exile spoke with words: 
“I will reveal to you, blessed maiden, 
the beginning to the end of each evil 
that I have wrought, not at all a few times, 
wounded by sins, so that by this you yourself 
will plainly know; it is not a lie. 
I believed and considered it certain, 
(a bold thought) that by my skill alone, 
without difficulty, I might turn you 
from salvation, so that you would forsake the King of heaven, 
the Lord of victory, and bow to an inferior, 
sacrifice to the inventor of sins. Thus I 
change the minds of faithful men through various forms. 
Where I find him, his heart firmly committed 
to the will of God, I am immediately ready 
so that I can press against him 
lustful fantasies, filthy thoughts, 
horrible errors, through countless perversions. 
For him I sweeten the pleasures of sins, 
wicked desires, so that he soon
longs for vices and heeds my teaching.  
I so gravely inflame him with sin  
so that, burning, he turns away from prayer  
and parades around arrogantly; he may no longer steadfastly  
remain in the place for prayer on account  
of his love of sin. Thus I bring horrible terror to  
those whom I hate because of their lives and  
pure faith; and according his heart’s desire,  
he will learn by hearing my teaching  
to do sin. Afterwards he shall  
turn away bereft of goodness.  
If, among the storm of arrows,  
I meet any powerful or brave soldier of God  
who will not run away,  
nor bow from the battle, but bold in heart  
begins to raise a holy shield against me,  
and spiritual armor, he will not be a traitor to God,  
but he, bold in prayer, will make a stand  
firm in the army, then I shall run away  
humiliated and deprived of joy,  
into the grip of fires, into miserable lament,  
because I cannot, through my own power,  
be successful in battle. Instead, I must  
seek another, less courageous,  
weaker warrior among the hateful violence  
whom I might incite with my teachings  
and hinder at the fight. Though he might start off in a  
spiritually good way, I am immediately ready  
so that can see into his inward thoughts,  
examine how his intimate spirit might be secured,  
how his defenses are set up. I breach the gate in his wall  
through sins. The tower is penetrated,  
a hole is opened, when I initially send in  
through the flight of an arrow  
bitter thoughts to the breast’s heart,  
through various desires of the mind  
so that it seems to himself better  
to commit crimes and pleasures of the flesh  
rather than worship God. I am an eager teacher
that he might live according to my wicked custom, 410
turn openly from Christ’s law,
his mind led astray into my control—
into a pit of sin. I care more eagerly for the
destruction of that soul, the smashing of the spirit
than the body, which must remain in the grave,
in the earth as a joy to worms,
committed to the dirt.”

Then again the woman spoke:
“Explain, wretched fiend, unclean spirit,
how you insert yourself, ruler of darkness,
in the midst of the more pure. You, faithless,
contended against Christ in the past and brought about strife,
plots against the holy. The pit of hell was
dug down for you, where, plagued by torments and
on account of your pride, you sought a home.
I think that you should have been more cautious
in such an encounter with a faithful person
and less bold, with one who has often withstood
your will through the King of glories.”
The accursed then addressed her,
the wretched monster: “First you tell me
how you, boldly and through a deep mind,
became thus the bravest in battle among woman kind
so that you thus bound me fast in fetters,
made me completely defenseless. You have made steadfast
your trust in the eternal God
dwelling in glory, the Measurer of mankind,
just as I put my hope in my father, the king of hell.
When I am sent against the faithful
so that I might change his spirit with sinful works,
the mind from salvation, at times my will is
hindered by his defenses,
my hope hindered by the holy, as it has happened for me
on this unpleasant journey. This I realized much
too late. Now must I, committing sin,
suffer shame on account of this.
Therefore I entreat you through the might of the Highest,
the grace of the King of heaven, who suffered on
the rood tree, the Lord of victory,
that you have mercy on me in my neediness,
450
so that I don’t completely perish in misery,
even though I in rashness and foolishness
went on this journey, when I earlier
did not expect such a miserable time as this.”
Then the bright candle of splendor
said words to that devil:
455
“You must confess more evil deeds,
low spirit of hell, before you might depart,
what great sinful deeds you
have accomplished against the children of men
through dark errors.” To her that devil said:
460
“Now that I hear through your speech
that I, constrained by hatred, need to
lay bare my heart, as you request,
I must comply. This distressful moment is very intense
and the punishment excessive. I must suffer and endure
465
each part of your judgment,
to reveal my dark deeds which I long
plotted in blackness. Often I deprived sight,
blinded countless numbers of the children of men
with evil thoughts; covered in mist I snatched away
470
with a poison arrow the light of the eye
with a black cloud. I broke the feet of some
with a wicked snare. Some I sent into fire,
into the embrace of flame, so the last of his tracks
were to be seen. Also I attacked some
475
so that blood spewed out of their bone-locks,
so that they suddenly gave up their lives
through the whelm of poison. Some were on voyages;
on the way I sunk them in the waters,
by my craft, into the ocean’s flood,
480
under the gloomy stream. Some I committed to crucifixion
so that they gave up their lives covered in gore
on the high gallows. Some I incited with my teaching
to make strife so that they with sudden violence
renewed ancient grudges
485
drunk with beer. I offered them
strife in a cup so that in the wine-hall,
through the sword grip, they shed their souls
from the fleshy body, hastened forth, fated to die,
seeking wounds. Some, when I find them
without the sign of God, heedless,
unblessed, then I boldly
and cunningly murder them with my hands
by various methods. I cannot even relate,
though I sit all the length of a summer’s day,
all the suffering which I, ancient and recent,
have committed with hatred, since the heavens were
first set up and the track of the stars,
and the earth established and the first of mankind created,
Adam and Eve, from whom I snatched away life
and whom I taught to forsake
the worship of God and eternal grace
and their bright home, so that both of them would be
forever in misery, and their offspring as well,
the blackest of wicked deeds. What can I relate more
of endless evil? I bring forth all
the hateful hostilities across the nations of men,
those which occurred far and wide
from the ends of the earth to the children of men,
the nobles on the earth. There have not been any of them
who dared to touch me with his hands
as you boldly and holy do now;
there were no brave men on the earth
through spiritual might, none of the holy fathers
nor wise men. Even though the God of the hosts,
the King of glories, and the Spirit of wisdom decreed
there be boundless grace, nevertheless I am permitted to
approach people on the highways. Before this, none of them
has so boldly laid bonds on me,
tormented me with misery as you do now,
as when you overcame my great strength
that my father, the enemy of mankind, gave me
and seized me fast, when he, the lord of darkness,
commanded me to journey so that I should
sweeten sins. There sorrow befell me,
a heavy fistfight. I have no need for laughter
among my kinsmen after this punishing
journey, when I, sorrowful, must
render my tribute
in that gloomy house."

The reeve,
that cruel-minded man, ordered that Juliana,
holy in mind, be led out
of that narrow house before his judgment seat
to speak to the heathens. She dragged that devil,
the saint inspired in her breast,
the heathen, bound in fetters.
He lamented his journey, wailed sorely,
bemoaned his fate, and said with words:
“I beg of you, my lady
Juliana, by the grace of God,
that you no longer work these insults on me,
disgrace me before the nobles, as you did before
when you overcame the wisest, the king of hell,
within the darkness of the prison,
in the fortress of the enemy; that is our father
the lord of murder. Oh! How you punish me
with painful blows! I know too well
that I never met any woman like you
on earlier journeys in the world,
none bolder in thoughts nor tougher
of all mankind. It is clear to me
that you have become in all things unashamed
and wise in heart.” Then she allowed him,
after his time of suffering, to seek the darkness,
the black depths, the enemy of souls,
into the pain of torture. He knew for sure,
the messenger of sin, the enemy of souls, to tell his kinsmen,
thaness of torments, what happened on his journey.

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[Another folio is missing from the manuscript here (cf. line 288 above). The corresponding passage from the Latin has Juliana explain to Eleusius that she is able to withstand his torture with the aid of an angel and warns the prefect about the torments that he will face in his future. Eleusius then orders her to be tortured on a bladed and flaming wheel. An angel appears, however, and frees her. After giving thanks to God, a portion of the heathen onlookers are converted and later executed by order of Maximian, the Emperor. Eleusius then resolves to have Juliana burned to death. In response, Juliana offers another prayer.]

Then came the angel of God,
shining with treasure and shoved away that fire,
liberated and protected the faultless one,
sinless, and scattered the flame,
the ravenous fire, away from where the saint,
the bolder maiden stood unharmed in their midst.
That was an outrage for the rich man to endure—
for the world, he would change it if he were able.
Stained with sin, he thought of how, with the most painful
and worst tortures, he might
find a method to kill her. The enemy was not slow—
he instructed him to order an earthen vat
be constructed by wondrous skill,
and by the groans of warriors, wood to be piled around it,
wooden beams. Then the hard one commanded
that men fill the earthen vat with lead
and then ordered that the biggest bonfire,
a pyre, be kindled. It was surrounded by
flames on all sides—the bath welled with heat.
Then, swollen with rage, he straightaway ordered
the sinless one be shoved without protection
into the boiling lead. Then the flame became
dispersed and shattered. The lead sprung out widely,
hot and ravenous. The warriors became terrified
and were overtaken by the rushing lead. There were 175
of the heathen band incinerated in the
fire's blast. Then still the saint stood
beautiful and unharmed. Neither the hem of her garment,
nor her robe, nor hair, nor skin were damaged by the fire,
nor her body, nor her limbs. She stood in the flames
completely sound and gave thanks to
the Lord of lords.

Then the judge became
enraged in his grim mind. He began to tear his robe,
and also snarled and gnashed his teeth;
he was maddened in his wits like a wild animal,
raging and fierce minded. He cursed his gods,
because they were not able to withstand the maiden’s might,
the will of the woman. The virgin of glory
was single minded and unafraid, mindful of strength
and the Lord’s will. The sorrow-minded judge
ordered that the holy at heart should be executed
through the bite of the sword; the chosen of Christ
would be deprived of a head. The murder was not profitable to him—
that he would find out later.
Then the hope of the saint was renewed
and the spirit of the maiden greatly rejoiced
when she heard the warrior decide
his wicked plan, that the end
of days of suffering should conclude for her—
the loss of life. The sinful one then commanded
that the clean and chosen be led to slaughter,
sinless. Then came also
the low spirit of hell singing a harm-song,
wretched and hateful, the one she bound earlier
and beat with torments. Accursed,
he chanted a foul dirge before the multitude:
“Now repay her with pain, for she has despised
the might of our gods and completely
degraded me, so that I became a traitor.
Let her have a hateful payment
through the wound of a weapon. Avenge the earlier insult,
sought in sin. I recall that sorrow
how one night, in tight bonds, I suffered countless afflictions, hardships, excessive evils.” Then the blessed Juliana looked toward the angry one, she heard the harm-song of the devil from hell. The enemy of mankind began then to take to flight, to seek out torments and say these words: “Woe is me, I’m undone! Now I surely expect that she will humiliate me again with miseries and recriminations, as she did to me earlier!”

Then she was led to a nearby borderland and to the place where, with hard hearts and through hateful violence, they intended to kill her. She began to teach and encourage the folk to worship, to reject sin and promise them comfort, a way to glory, and said these words: “Be mindful of the Joy of warriors and the Splendor of Glory, the Hope of the holy, the God of heavenly angels! He is so worthy that the nations of men and all the kin of angels up in heaven praise him—the Supreme power, where help comes from, eternal life to those who will have it. Therefore, dear people, I will teach you the fulfillment of the law, so that you can firmly establish your house, lest in a sudden blast the winds blow it down. The strong wall should be firm to withstand the showers of a storm, the temptation of sin. You with the worship of peace, the pure belief, resolutely affix your foundation to the Living Stone. Hold the true faith and peace with you in your heart, the holy mystery through the desire of your spirit. Then the almighty Father will give you mercy, and there you will have comfort from the power of God, the greatest help after a troublesome time. Because you yourself cannot know the departure from here, the end of life, it seems prudent to me to be vigilant.
against the terror of foes,
to be on guard, lest enemies
bar you from the path to the city of glory.
Beg that the Son of God, the Prince of angels,
the Measurer of mankind, the Giver of victory
have mercy on me. Peace be with you,
and always the true love.” Then her soul
was led out of the body to everlasting joy
through the cut of a sword.

Afterwards Heliseus
the ravager, sick in his mind,
with a host of enemies sought the sea-stream in a ship;
for a long time they rolled over the ocean-flood,
on the swan’s-road. Death took all of
that band of warriors, and he himself with them,
before they had sailed to land,
through severe misery. There, thirty
and four of the kinsmen of warriors were
deprived of life through the whelming of the waves,
the lowly with the lord, separated from comfort;
hopeless they sought hell.
There was no need for those thanes in that dark home,
the band of retainers in that deep pit,
to look toward their war-leader for the allotted
riches, that they, in the wine hall
over beer benches, should receive—rings and
appled-gold.

In an opposite manner, the body
of the holy woman was led with songs of praise
and great honor to the earthen grave,
as a great multitude brought it
within the city. There afterwards,
in the course of a year, the praise of God was heaved up
in great splendor until this very day
in fellowship.
[Epilogue]

There is great need for
the saint to give me help
when the dearest of all things are departed from me,
when the two brothers dissolve their kinship,
with great affection. My soul shall journey
from the body—I myself know not where—
into unknown lands. I must seek this
other place with all my past deeds,
journey with my life’s work. Mournful,
mankind (ᚣᚦ/sys [CYN]) will depart. The King will be strict,
the Giver of glory, when stained with sin
the sheep (ᚴᚽ/sys [EWU]) await, frightened,
for how he will judge their deeds,
as the reward for their lives. The sea-floods (ᚪᚴ/sys [LF]) will tremble,
and recede sorrowfully. I remember all the pain,
the wound of sin, which I recently and long ago
worked in the world. For that I, mournful, must
weep with tears. It was too late of a time
when I was finally ashamed for my evil deeds,
while the spirit and body traveled together
unharmed upon the earth. When I need mercy,
may that the holy woman intercede for me
with the highest King. The great sorrow of my heart
reminds me of this need. I pray that everyone
of the race of men, who recites this poem,
will, earnest and mindful, remember me
by my name, and pray that God,
the Protector of heaven, give me help,
the Lord of might, on the great day,
Father, Spirit of life, in that dreaded moment,
Judger of deeds, and the dear Son,
when the Trinity, sitting in majesty
and unity, will assign a reward for each person,
the children of men, according to their deeds,
throughout creation. Forgive us, God of might,
so that we might mildly meet, Joy of nobles,
your face on that glorious day.
Amen.