The Old Saxon *Heliand*: *Memoria* as Cultural Transfer

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In the past twenty years, the validity of cultural studies has become a major subject of debate, which evolved from the humanities feeling obliged to defend themselves vis-à-vis the natural sciences, and also from an identity crisis within philology that raised questions about its legitimacy.[1] In his defence of cultural studies, Gerhard Neumann emphasizes four aspects — ethnology, cultural semiotics, memory studies, and New Historicism — that can be transferred to literary enquiry.[2] Jan and Aleida Assmann's investigations into culture as memory and its identity-creating function, in particular, have met with considerable approval in the academic community and especially by humanists.[3] Their argument for the significance of *memoria* is relevant to medieval studies.[4]

Memory and remembrance are central elements in medieval culture, because they are constitutive for the Christian religion and have a clearly defined function. An

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1 For discussion of cultural studies and the humanities, see Neumann, "Literaturwissenschaft"; Haug, "Literaturwissenschaft als Kulturwissenschaft"; Benthien and Velten, eds., *Germanistik als Kulturwissenschaft*; Nünning and Nünning, eds., *Konzepte der Kulturwissenschaften*; Oesterle, ed., *Erinnerung*; Peters, *Text und Kontext*; and Böhme et al., *Orientierung Kulturwissenschaft*.

2 See Neumann, "Literaturwissenschaft."

3 See J. Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*; and A. Assmann, "Gedächtnis."

4 For memory as technique for constructing knowledge, see Yates, *The Art of Memory*; Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*; and Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*. For *memoria* as a cultural phenomenon, see K. Schmid and Wollasch, eds., *Memoria*; Oexle, "Memoria als Kultur," 9-13; Geuenich, "Gebetsgedenken"; Johanek, "Historiographie," 88-89; and Ohly, "Bemerkungen," 12.

investigation of this phenomenon may increase our knowledge of medieval culture and open new perspectives on reading medieval literature.[5] Above all, medieval texts have to be examined in this context because, as reservoirs of specific discourses and as media of memory, they are themselves major components of cultural memory. As Ulrich Ernst points out, poetry is a means of producing and preserving such memory.[6] Poetry contains various discourses and is bound to specific contexts which are not only preserved in poetic texts but also constructed out of them. Literature as a medium, however, not only provides the opportunity to explore the complexity of culture but brings together different cultures of memory in the broadest sense, and is symptomatic of collective traumas and points to the construction of memory itself.

An examination of medieval literature from this perspective calls for several aspects of *memoria* to be taken into account: rhetoric, history, and theology are equally relevant, as only a sensitivity to the complexity of this concept allows for a more detailed understanding of that era with regard to the history of ideas. These three aspects of medieval *memoria* dominate current research in this field. With its origin in classical rhetoric, *memoria* is first of all seen as *ars memoriae*[7] serving as a technique to structure and memorize large amounts of information and knowledge.[8] Secondly, as Otto Gerhard Oexle points out, one form of *memoria* consists of "Erinnerung an das Vergangene, Gewesene, das man 'Geschichte' nennt, die historische Erinnerung" (the memory of the past, of that which is called 'history,' the historical memory).[9] In pointing to the conceptual difference contained in Aristotle's definition of *μνήμη* and *αναμνῄσις*, Paul Ricoeur emphasizes memory as an "active search," as *anamnesis*, as recollection, rediscovery, recognition.[10] But because memory itself is an image of the mind, the focus of the debate is on the gulf between memory and history. Memory, in fact, refers more to giving that which is recalled a quasi-physical presence in the mind, which, of course, is individually constituted.

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5 For further details on the close connection between memory and literature in the early Middle Ages, see Mierke, *Memoria als Kulturtransfer*, 281-344.

6 See Ernst, "*Ars memorativa*," 73.

7 See Yates, *The Art of Memory*; and A. Assmann, *Erinnerungsräume*, 27-32.

8 See Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 8.

9 Oexle, "Die Gegenwart," 74. Current debates about historical research are tied to this definition. In these debates, the task of the historian and the creation of knowledge through historical research are again questioned. See Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*; Jarausch, "Zeitgeschichte"; and Fried, *Der Schleier der Erinnerung*.

10 See Ricoeur, *Memory, History, and Forgetting*, 17.

Any examination of the Old Saxon *Heliand* from the point of view of memory must take into account that this poem is a religious text and thus is strongly affected by the liturgical, metaphysical dimension of *memoria*, which is here understood as the recollection of past events within the boundaries of a specific community. The third aspect of *memoria* is recollection as a form of remembrance, which deliberately recalls the lives of people now deceased. This act of memory helps to establish a sense of community. Oexle refers to this form of *memoria* as social *memoria*.[11] Both definitions — *memoria* as the recollection of history and *memoria* as remembrance of the dead — involve the sphere of conscious imagination and representation which is indispensable for the Christian view of *memoria*. On the threshold of the cultural transfer from antiquity to the Middle Ages, the Christian dimension of *memoria* connects these three aspects insofar as ancient mnemonics of rhetoric create a space for the practice of *memoria*. Furthermore, the Christian understanding of *memoria* extends into the sphere of transcendence,[12] as is apparent in the constant remembrance and visualization of the life of Jesus, a process establishing, in addition, community, identity, and frames of meaning.[13] This is constitutive for medieval literature in general, but there are additional levels which offer new perspectives for understanding pre-modern vernacular texts like the *Heliand*.

Because the remembrance of God's work of salvation is the religious centre of Christianity, *memoria* itself becomes a constituent event, in which the community of the faithful is formed through memory that is grounded on Christ's words at the Last Supper: "τοῦτο ποιεῖτε [. . .], ὁσάκις ἂν πίνητε, εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν" (this do [. . .] as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of me).[14] *Memoria* is, therefore, of central importance, as recollection, remembrance, and oblivion are constituent moments for both Jews and Christians.[15] The basic constant of religious life, as well

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11 See Oexle, "Die Gegenwart," 75.

12 John 14:26; Acts 20:35.

13 See Quast, *Vom Kult zur Kunst*, 9.

14 1 Cor 11:24-25.

15 Meier describes this process as follows: "Der Mensch — häufig Gottes Volk — erinnert sich Gottes. Er wird von Gott oder seinem Propheten aufgefordert und ermahnt, sich Gottes zu erinnern; er wird getadelt und angeklagt, ihn vergessen zu haben. Er verspricht, Gott nicht zu vergessen, ihn und alles, was zu ihm gehört, ständig im Gedächtnis zu behalten. Dennoch vergißt Gottes Volk Gott [. . .]; es wird deshalb ermahnt, seines Schöpfers zu gedenken, seinen und seiner Vorfahren Retter und Befreier im Gedächtnis zu haben. [. . .] Die Wirkung des Erinnerns ist Stärkung oder Buße. Daß der Mensch Gott vergißt, folgt aus Ungehorsam, Überhebung und Götzendienst; es verursacht Strafe und Not. [. . .] Gottes Vergessen ist Strafe, Verderben; Gottes Erinnern bedeutet Hilfe,

as the major motive for prayer, is anxiety about God's *memoria*.[16] Correspondingly, monastic meditation and reading are understood as the physical memorization of God's word. By reflecting upon *memoria*, the mind finds, in its entire depth, a way towards the divine. In the Christian liturgy, the celebration of memory becomes a representative element of the ritual. God's word and Christ's existence, remembered by the community of the faithful, create a space within the liturgical act that links all three aspects of *memoria*. Through its transcendental and spiritual nature, this act is at the same time tied to divine truth and, as such, is a Christian transformation of the ancient character of *memoria*.

The Old Saxon *Heliand*

At almost 6,000 lines, the Old Saxon *Heliand*, which, along with Otfrid's *Liber evangeliorum*, is one of the two great poetic Bible adaptations of the ninth century, stands out from the early medieval vernacular tradition of literary texts. Due to its uncertain provenance and date, but also with regard to the question of the author's educational background, this Old Saxon narration of the life of Christ is still the subject of academic controversy. The unknown author reminds the audience in several passages of the essential need for the remembrance of God's commandments and the performance of Christian *imitatio*. The author thus joins the line of the Evangelists. He names his authorities in order to follow them and to show that the vernacular is equal in status to the three holy languages:

> Manega uuâron,   the sia iro môd gespôn,
> . . . .,   that sia *bigunnun uuord godes*,
> *reckean* that girûni,   that *thie* rîceo Crist

Rettung, Erbarmen, Lohn." (Human beings — frequently God's people — become aware again of God. God or his prophet demands of them to remember their God; they are reprimanded and accused of having forgotten their God. They promise not to forget God, him and all that belongs to him, to keep him in memory. Nonetheless, God's people forget God [. . .]; they are therefore reminded to remember their creator, to preserve the memory of their own and their ancestors' saviour and liberator. [. . .] The effect of memory is refreshment or atonement. That human beings forget their God follows from their disobedience, arrogance, and idolatry; it causes punishment and distress. [. . .] To forget God is punishment, perdition; to remember God means assistance, salvation, mercy, reward); Meier, "Vergessen," 146.

16 See Ohly, "Bemerkungen," 13.

undar mancunnea   mâriða gifrumida
mid uuordun endi mid uuercun.

. . . .
                           Than uuârun thoh sia fiori te thiu
under thera menigo,   thia habdon maht godes,
helpa fan himila,   hêlagna gêst,
craft fan *Criste*, —   sia uurðun gicorana te thio,

. . . .
Matheus endi Marcus, — sô uuârun thia man hêtana —
Lucas endi Iohannes.[17]

[There were many whose hearts told them that they should begin to tell the secret runes, the word of God, the famous feats that the powerful Christ accomplished in words and in deeds among human beings. [. . .] Among all these, however, there were only four who had the power of God, help from heaven, the Holy Spirit, the strength from Christ to do it. They were chosen. [. . .] Matthew and Mark, Luke and John were their names.]

Although the gesture of *memoria* is implicit in the entire text, the author explicitly repeats the exhortation to remembrance and prayer in *fitte* 3, 7, 12, and 21. As the first part of the *Heliand* deals with the introduction to and compliance with Christ's teachings, the author points to the importance of memory in order to make a deep impression on the recipient's mind and to warn against oblivion. After the Prologue, he uses the story of Zachary as an admonitory *exemplum* to emphasize the remembrance of God:

Iohannes namon
uuîslîco giuurêt   endi *ôc* aftar mid is uuordu gisprac
suîðo spâhlîco: habda im eft is sprâca giuuald,
giuuitteas endi *uuîsun*.   That uuîti uuas thô agangan,
hard harmscare,   *the* im hêlag god
mahtig *macode*,   that he *an* is môdseƀon
godes ni forgâti,   than he im eft sendi is iungron tô.
                        (*Heliand* 236-42)

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17 *Heliand*, ed. Behaghel and Taeger, lines 1-19; hereafter, line references are provided parenthetically in the text above. Translation from *The Heliand*, trans. Murphy, 3-4; page references for *Heliand* passages in translation are hereafter provided parenthetically in the text above.

[He [Zachary] wisely carved the name John, and immediately thereafter began speaking in his own words. He regained his power of speech and spoke with intelligence and wisdom. The affliction had left him, the hard punishment which holy God had powerfully inflicted upon him so that Zachary's memory would not forget Him, should He ever again send him one of His followers. (11)]

In *fitte* 12, the author deals with John's baptizing Jesus in the river Jordan. While the baptism itself is the central event here, its iconographic arrangement is crucial. As John baptizes Jesus with his hands, the gates of heaven open and the dove symbolizing the Holy Spirit and God's word descends on John. The threshold of Christian recognition is passed with the baptism. John describes this moment as a memory of the word of God, who had announced the coming of his Son:

> Hie dôpean scal
> an thana hêlagan gêst   endi hêlean managa
> manno mêndâdi.   He haƀad *maht* for gode,
> that he alâtan mag   liudeo gihuuilicun
> saca endi sundea.
>
> (*Heliand* 1005-1009)

[He will immerse people in the Holy Spirit and heal the evil deeds of many men.
He has the power of God to take away the sinful crimes of any person. (35)]

Similarly, in the Sermon on the Mount, Christ reminds his listeners of the need for constant remembrance and prayer:

> Ôc scal ic iu seggean noh
> far thesumu uuerode allun   uuârlîc biliði,
> that alloro liudeo sô huilic,   sô thesa mîna lêra uuili
> gehaldan an is herton   endi uuil iro an is hugi *athenkean*,
> lêstean sea an thesumu lande,   the gilîco duot
> uuîsumu manne,   the giuuit haƀad,
> horsca hugiskefti,   endi hûsstedi kiusid
> an fastoro foldun.
>
> (*Heliand* 1801-1808)

[I will also tell you a true picture to give to all these people. Whoever wants to keep My teachings in his heart, and wants to think about them in

> his mind, and carry them out in this land, is doing the same thing as a wise man of knowledge and clear intelligence who chooses very solid earth as the site for his home. (62)]

The opening of the monologue in this scene is especially meaningful because Jesus as speaker concentrates all attention on his subsequent words:

> Thô umbi thana *neriendon* Krist   nâhor gengun
> sulike gesîðs,   sô he im selƀo gecôs,
> uualdand undar them uuerode.   Stôdun uuîsa man,
> gumon umbi thana godes sunu   gerno suuîðo,
> uueros an uuilleon: uuas im thero uuordo *niud*,
> thâhtun endi thagodun,   huuat im *thero* thiodo drohtin,
> uueldi uualdand self   uuordun cûðien
> thesum liudiun te *lioƀe*.   Than sat im the landes hirdi
> geginuuard for them gumun,   godes êgan barn:
> *uuelda* mid is sprâcun   spâhuuord manag
> lêrean thea liudi,   *huuô* sie lof gode
> an thesum uueroldrîkea   uuirkean scoldin.
> Sat im thô endi suuîgoda   endi sah sie an lango,
> uuas im hold an is hugi   hêlag drohtin,
> mildi an is môde.
>
> (*Heliand* 1279-93)

> [Then the warrior-companions whom He chose from among the people gathered closer around Christ, the Ruler and Rescuer. Wise men were very eager and willing to stand around God's Son, intent on His words. They thought and kept silent and wondered what the Chieftain of Peoples, the Ruler Himself, would want to say out of love for these people.
>
> Then the Land's Herdsman, God's own Son, sat down in front of the men. He wanted with His talk to teach the people many wise sayings, how they could perform the praise of God in this worldkingdom. The holy Chieftain sat there in silence and looked at them for a long time with tender feelings for them in His mind and generosity toward them in His heart. (44-45)]

Jesus is, in accordance with the ancient ideal of the *vir bonus*, the best speaker. The audience's attention is focused on him and his words only.

In the *Heliand*, moreover, the emergence of Christian *memoria* derives from the textual arrangement of the scene of the Last Supper. The significance of this scene is implied by the narration being much more detailed than that in the New Testament:

Sunu drohtines
uuas imu *at* them gômun forð   endi is iungarun *thar*
uualdand uuîn *endi* brôd   uuîhide bêðiu,
hêlagode heƀencuning,   mid is handun brak,
gaf it undar them is iungarun   endi gode thancode,
sagde them ôlat,   *the* thar al giscôp,
uuerold endi uunnea,   endi sprak uuord manag:
'*gilôƀiot* gi thes liohto' *quað he*,   'that thit is mîn lîchamo
endi mîn blôd sô same':

(*Heliand* 4631-39)

[The Chieftain's Son remained at the feast, and there, for His followers, the holy King of Heaven, the Ruler, made both wine and bread holy. He broke it with His hands, gave it to His followers and thanked God, expressing His gratitude to the One who created everything — the world and its happiness — and He spoke many a word. "Believe Me clearly," He said, "that this is My body and also My blood." (153)]

Furthermore, the speeches — mainly monologues or dialogues, such as those in the Sermon on the Mount, the dialogues between Jesus and his disciples, and the debates between Jesus and the Jews — are a key structural element of the text. By means of these scenes, the text shows, on the one hand, which problems have been discussed among clerics and, on the other, how the special Christian contents can be imparted to younger monks.

The poem, which was written around 840 in the Fulda region and in the intellectual milieu of Hrabanus Maurus, archbishop of Mainz, most probably belongs to the intellectual context of the Carolingian *renovatio*. Within the framework of these extensive reforms, which included the political, social, and ecclesiastical domains, it was at first essential to implement the Carolingian concept of power of the *rex et sacerdos* as a binding programme, promoting a Christian ruler who works for the extension of the *populus christianus*. This concept, which was developed above all by Anglo-Saxon scholars like Alcuin and his successor Hrabanus Maurus, assumed the establishment of the Christian faith as a fundamental prerequisite, but at the same time it was based on ancient traditions which gained new prominence as a result of the 'new' religious premises. The *Heliand* was written during a time when the first great wave of innovation had already occurred and the Empire under Charlemagne's successors was struggling for preservation and continuity. The quarrels between Louis the Pious and his sons prove that the ideal of an *imperium christianum* directed by one

Christian ruler was problematic in practice. Additionally, after Charlemagne's brutal Christianization of the Saxons, the ideal of the just ruler had lost some legitimacy, as is confirmed by the criticism expressed by Alcuin, Charlemagne's closest intellectual adviser. During the military conflicts between Louis the Pious, Lothar I, and Louis the German, the 'right conduct' of the secular sovereign was again challenged, so that the criticism of the Carolingian intellectual elite (to which Hrabanus Maurus belonged) became harsher. Furthermore, the bloody wars between Charlemagne and the Saxons had left their mark on the collective memory, which was revived in 842 by the Saxon uprising of the Stellinga under Louis the Pious. The conflicts with the Saxons were incompatible with the Carolingian ideal of a Christian sovereign and occasioned some tension between Alcuin and Charlemagne as well as between Hrabanus Maurus and Louis the Pious as both Alcuin and Hrabanus reminded the respective ruler of the ideal of the *rex iustus et pacificus*. These conflicts formed one of the historical contexts of the genesis of the *Heliand*. The text tells the story of Christ's life in the Old Saxon language in order to produce a specific effect in the monastic audience. It revises the teachings of Jesus and recalls the conflicts with the Saxons in order to provide constructive impulses for the Christian mission. The scholarly consensus, supported by palaeographic evidence, is that the text was read during monastic ceremonies (such as grace and prayer) and during liturgical celebrations.[18]

This article will explore the extent to which the medieval understanding of *memoria* bears on the Carolingian idea of rule, the Franco-Saxon historical memory, and the monastic *imitatio Christi*, and the extent to which these form the context for an understanding of the Old Saxon poem. Thus, three levels of *memoria* will be examined, with the *Heliand* serving as an example: *memoria* as the art of memory and as a mechanism for the transfer of the ancient *ars memoriae*, *memoria* as recollection, and *memoria* as remembrance.

The Ancient *ars memoriae* and its Christian Transformation

The term *memoria* is derived from the Greek noun for 'memory' (*μνήμη*) and was passed down in the Western tradition as *ars memoriae*, the 'art of memory.'[19] Cicero defined *dispositio*, the second element of *memoria*, as "rerum inventarum in ordinem distributio" (arrangement is the distribution of arguments thus discovered in the

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18 See Taeger, ed., *Der Heliand: Ausgewählte Abbildungen*, xi-xvi.
19 *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, III.xvi.28-xxiv.40.

proper order)[20] — which is the basis of any form of rhetoric. The art of memory provided the orator with guidelines on how to learn a speech by heart. At the same time, *memoria* was of vital importance as a mechanism of memory within the performance act, when it was consciously used during moments of deep concentration during the speech. Quintilian and the unknown author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* developed two mnemonic techniques: one involving 'places of memory' and the other using textual segmentation. Recollection of textual segments by means of repetition is most important, but Quintilian prefers one's own memory reactivated by speech to that which depends on mere listening.[21] According to Quintilian, the successful training of memory is based upon *exercitatio* and *labor*, constant practice and effort.[22] During the Middle Ages, these techniques of memorizing are described in several tracts on rhetoric — for instance, those by Martianus Capella, Alcuin, and Notker the German — in order to make them usable for school lessons and above all for mnemonic exercises and religious meditation. As rhetoric lost its ancient relevance in judicial speeches during the transitional phase from late antiquity to the early Middle Ages, the various techniques of memorizing were only partly adapted and therefore only its rudiments were described in medieval tracts on rhetoric.[23] The practice of memorization with the help of topographical memory has become a major research topic in cultural studies and elsewhere, especially as applied to the study of the medieval period; by guiding the reader's gaze, the literary description of art or buildings can function as a technique to cultivate the imagination and memory, as has been pointed out in various studies.[24] Besides this, *memoria* was used for teaching meditative contemplation, a fundamental component of medieval culture. Recollection and repetition are central to this meditative contemplation which, together with memory which creates meaning, is required by the Eucharist and thus is located at the centre of the Christian faith. With the medieval transformation and utilization of *memoria,* the integration of the ancient *arts* into the Christian system

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20 Cicero, *De inventione*, I.vii.9.

21 See Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, XI.ii.34-36.

22 Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, XI.ii.40-41.

23 The 'mnemonic hands' are one example of the use and transformation of memorizing techniques in the Middle Ages. Berthold von Regensburg describes this technique in his sermons; see Wenzel, *Hören und Sehen*, 72-82.

24 See Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, 16-21; Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*; and Wandhoff, *Ekphrasis*, 7-29.

of thought becomes apparent, and here the mechanisms of cultural transfer may be fruitfully examined.

As one of the main voices legitimating the ancient arts, Augustine explains the process of the Christian transformation in Book 10 of his *Confessions*. During his quest for the recognition of God, Augustine reaches a state of being immersed in his innermost mind that leads him to a deep contemplation of memory and remembrance. On the basis of ancient ideas of memory, he describes metaphysical and theological dimensions of *memoria* that go beyond terrestrial existence and include the possibility of transcendental experience. He associates memory with the incomprehensible power of the mind, the images of the objects of perceptible reality, and his specialist knowledge obtained via learning and the seven liberal arts, as well as the moods of his spirit. The complexity of his concept of memory takes him to the crucial question of his own existence.[25] In the depths of the soul and of memory, Augustine sees God's infinity; the end of contemplation is the knowledge of God within his own existence and memory.[26] Augustine's concept of memory was shaped by his religious profession. Contemplation, memory, and knowledge necessarily took him to God, whom he thought to be the source of the striving of his soul. As God is truth, so memory is bound to this truth. This causal knot describes the key argument for the transformation of the ancient art of memory. The Christian idea of *memoria* adapted the ancient system of memorizing and made it an aspect of theology, metaphysics, and depth psychology, so that the religious connection to God became tangible. From this Christian perspective, time becomes insignificant. Memory, tied to and having its source in the past, culminates in the amalgamation of the three temporal levels — past, present, and future. The experience of salvation is made present in the Eucharist, symbolizing that which is past and equally pointing towards the future. *Memoria* thus produces ritual visualization which may be experienced in any form of Christian memory, such as prayer, meditation, service, and the liturgy.

The form of memory that Oexle characterizes as social[27] was described by Augustine as a gift of *memoria*, using the funeral ceremony for his mother as an example. This Christian ceremony retains the character of funeral ceremonies in ancient cultures.[28] It made possible the remembrance of the dead, who were thus saved from transience

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25 See Augustine, *Confessiones*, X.26.
26 See Augustine, *Confessiones*, X.35.
27 Oexle, "Die Gegenwart," 78.
28 See Oexle, "Memoria als Kultur," 33-37.

and oblivion and who could transcend the limits of earthly existence through memory. Dietrich Harth has aptly observed that the extraordinarily complex concept of Christian memory blends Augustinian, rhetorical, Aristotelian, Neo-Platonist, and exegetic theorems.[29] While Augustine describes *memoria* as the remembrance of the dead, he also sees it as having its source in God and as being the mechanism which facilitates closeness to God. The constant memorialization of Christ's life provides the access to that spiritual sphere which promises communication with God.

As the *Heliand* is linked to the monastic realm and the author has a learned background,[30] one may presume that elements of memorizing used within the text had the effect of creating meaning for both the author's writing process and the reception process of a monastic audience as the learned author consciously engages the various strata of memory to foster contemplation. The meditative character of writing as Christian service and the reception of the text in the *lectio divina*, during the communal meal or within a liturgical celebration, emphasize the memorial elements of the text, as it ultimately imparts the imitation of Christ's life to a monastic audience.[31] The author of the *Heliand* has composed his text in alliterative verse, using a formulaic language and a technique of variation, as well as *Schwellvers* and *Hakenstil*.[32] The presence of these stylistic devices suggests that the author intended to fall back on oral techniques of narration.[33] A densely formulaic character, a conventional repertoire of words and images, and stereotyped stylistic features and patterns of scenes which facilitate the singer's work of freely improvised variations on a given theme for a particular audience in a specific situation have been established as typical characteristics of this kind of poetry.[34] Ursula Schaefer has dealt with the formulaic character of Old English poetry and pointed to the fact that research on vernacular poetry has examined hardly any other function of formulas than those pertaining to composition technique.[35] While formulaic expressions have a constituent function

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29 See Harth, *Das Gedächtnis der Kulturwissenschaften*, 86.

30 In contrast, Haferland argues for an oral tradition and an illiterate author; see Haferland, "War der Dichter des 'Heliand' illiterat," 22-25.

31 See Illich, "*Lectio Divina*"; Schreiner, "Lautes Lesen"; and Hauke, "Der Stellenwert."

32 *Schwellvers* 'swells,' or expands, the normal alliterative line by including numerous unstressed and non-alliterating syllables. *Hakenstil* is produced by the syntactic linking of lines.

33 See Gantert, *Akkommodation*; and Haferland, *Mündlichkeit*, 43-66.

34 See Haubrichs, *Von den Anfängen*, 1:90.

35 See Schaefer, *Vokalität*, 67. For variation, see Sahm "Wiederholungen."

within the process of textual production, they are also used for other purposes. The use of formulas within the poetic text can be seen as evidence of a certain type of poetic creation, and they may function as stylistic devices adopted in the poem's genesis in written form. If this idea is projected onto an early medieval text, whose use points to a liturgical context, it becomes apparent that aside from their function at the level of textual production, the formulas are also signs which, by their very existence, function to establish community. 'Community' here means the memory of a common body of thought in relation to a historical context, by means of the use of formulaic expressions. The process of this memory is tied to language. The formulas thus become signs which are significant within a specific communicative situation in the monastic context. The formulaic character of language is established by the community,[36] that is, the bearers of signs participated in a well-known process by which they enabled recollection and a memory of something that was known to the members of the community. In addition, the act of reciting and listening to a formulaic text in itself establishes community, in which *memoria* is formulated and transposed into the speech act.

Applying reception theory in his work on the *Heliand*, Klaus Gantert has followed the reflections of the author, who consciously took into account oral techniques of narration in order to adapt his style to his audience. As a characteristic of this procedure, Gantert gives prominence to the *thô gifragn ik* (I have heard it told) formula and the *thô giuuêt imu* (then he set out) formula as well as templates of narration and thematic structures such as descriptions of banquets or tempests at sea. He concludes that the author of the *Heliand*, working from Latin sources, endeavoured to use "traditional phraseology" and "thematic structures" with the aim of creating a work that adopts the form of oral poetry intended for aural reception, thus giving the written medium a fictitious appearance of orality.[37]

This research indicates the problems concerning the stylistic devices used in the *Heliand*, which seem to point to the oral tradition of poetry. Given the author's learned, clerical context and the fact that at the time of the genesis of the *Heliand* no larger projects of vernacular texts can be documented, it seems justifiable to assume that the text remains a vernacular experiment and that its author attempted a realization of the demands of the Carolingian reform. Yet what was most important was

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36 See Schaefer, *Vokalität*, 74.
37 Gantert, *Akkommodation*, 84-85.

the imparting of didactically worked-up knowledge to a well-educated audience. The formulas used, such as "ik mag iu gitellien" (I will tell you), "thô gifragn ik" (I have heard it told), and "ik uuêt" (I know)[38] are protestations of truth by the author, who had to justify his interventions vis-à-vis the superstructure of the Gospel tradition, though they also indicate his competence in treating the biblical tradition: he has comprehended as the Evangelists have comprehended. Without explicitly introducing himself as inspired by God, he claims as much for himself.

Even though this stylistic device originated in the oral tradition of poetry, the author consciously employs it in his written text. His assertions of truthfulness affirm the doctrinal correctness of his text and support his representation of Christ's teachings, and their claim to be true ought to be defended and has to be institutionalized among the entire *populus christianus*. The introductory words "than seggeo ic iu te uuâron" (then I tell you truly)[39] focus the audience's attention on the significance of the subsequent text. The repeated reference to the truth of the knowledge about to be imparted is linked to the holiness of the divine teachings and is based on the rhetorical ideal of the *vir bonus*.[40] Yet the conscious and skilful use of these formulas testifies to the author's knowledge of ancient rhetoric. This is especially clear in the author's repeated calls for his audience's attention: he demands that they listen carefully to absorb the contents transmitted. This is aided by the repetition of formulas at the beginning of or within stanzas as well as at the beginning of important passages of narration; he employs such formulas in order to testify, for example, to the truth and usefulness of Christ's teachings in the Sermon on the Mount.[41] Following the rhetorical conventions, the author specifically uses epic formulas to capture his audience's attention, stress his erudition, repeat contents, and emphasize their relevance.

Even if these formulas are reminiscent of an oral tradition of poetry, they are intentionally employed in support of the author's claim to truth which he makes for himself and his doctrine. The continuous repetition of these formulas in the text aids the memorization of Christ's teachings, expresses the humble attitude of his disciples, and emphasizes the importance of keeping God's order. According to this spirit of

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38 *Heliand*, "ik mag iu gitellien," 4280, with similar phrasing at 405 and 3619; "thô gifragn ik," 510 and similar phrasing at 288, 367, 630, 1020, 2621, 3036, 3347, 3780, 3883, 3964, 4065, and 4452; "ik uuêt," 4093, 5154, 5457, 5825, and 600 "ic uuêt."

39 *Heliand* 1453, with similar phrases at 1463, 1478, 1527, 1628, 1690, 1950, 2130, 3320, and 4346.

40 For the relation between the *Heliand* and ancient rhetoric, see Mierke, *Memoria*, 201-278.

41 See Gantert, *Akkommodation*, 73.

service, *meditatio* is an essential part of monastic life, of the *lectio divina*, the grace, and the liturgical celebrations. The obvious intention of the author is the constant imitation of Christ's life in a memorizing act of meditative contemplation, which is intensified by deliberately employed stylistic means.

As a further narrative technique in addition to the epic formulas, the author employs the stylistic device of variation, presenting the same idea twice but expressing it in different words, in order to repeat both contents and linguistic elements in a manner that enhances meditation.[42] Andreas Heusler, who has dealt in detail with the traditions of verse history, describes *Hakenstil* as a stylistic phenomenon that sprang from the Latin tradition of poetry,[43] with which the *Heliand* poet would have been familiar through his monastic education. Alliteration and variation are such stylistic elements, too.[44] Even in the Prologue to the *Heliand*, these stylistic devices are already present. Jesus and his disciples are wise people who speak with true words, and the fact that they are chosen because of their outstanding qualities is constantly repeated. Already in the Prologue, God is called "uualdand god" (ruling God), "mahtig drohtin" (mighty Chieftain), "drohtin god" (reigning God), and "heƀancuninge" (King of Heaven),[45] and his omnipotence is described as "maht godes, / helpa fan himila, hêlagna gêst, / craft van Criste" (the power of God, help from heaven, the Holy Spirit, the strength from Christ) and the teachings of Christ as "lêra Cristes, / hêlag uuord godas" (the teaching of Christ, the holy word of God).[46] Stressing the slight delay which is produced by such doublets and by moving the ends of sentences to the middle of lines, Harald Haferland interprets this effect as a sign of the poem's oral presentation.[47] Because these variations serve a memorizing function, they indicate that a pause is produced which, in the spirit of *memoria*, helps the repetition.

Alliteration, a further stylistic feature of the *Heliand*, is regarded as a constituent characteristic of vernacular Germanic poetry, emphasizing important words by means of homophonous initial sounds. Alliteration achieves its effect through the large number of stressed syllables and, above all, through the significance of the stressed,

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42 See Sahm, "Wiederholungen," 321.
43 For *Hakenstil*, see Heusler, *Deutsche Versgeschichte*, 1:263.
44 For alliteration and variation, see Haferland, *Mündlichkeit*, 43-66.
45 *Heliand*, "uualdand god," 20; "mahtig drohtin," 37; "drohtin god," 53; "heƀancuninge," 82.
46 *Heliand*, "maht godes, / helpa fan himila, hêlagna gêst, / craft van Criste," 10-12; "lêra Cristes, / hêlag uuord godas," 6-7.
47 See Haferland, *Mündlichkeit*, 57.

alliterative word, which in most cases is a noun. Regarding the development of alliteration, Dietrich Hofmann has spoken of a culture of memory orally passing down cultural knowledge.[48] Thus, alliteration may serve as a memorizing element, though not to remember a story in order to re-narrate it, but as an element of memory *per se* as the alliteration of particularly stressed syllables makes these words vividly memorable based on their sound. In the Christian Church, the power of language and sound is employed in a magic, ritual, and spiritual context. This particular use of language and its sounds is a gesture that effectively strengthens memory and thus produces and ensures community. At the same time, alliteration as a deliberately employed stylistic element contributes to a highly organized composition that shows skill in the variety of its rhetorical representation. Moreover, alliteration may be seen as a reference to Saxon history, which had to be remembered in the monastic community. Such a reading presupposes the author's intentional employment of the alliterative technique.[49] As alliteration can effectively work only through sound and utterance, the recitation of the Old Saxon verses becomes an act of meditation and memory which is predetermined by the content: Christ's life as a narration of the Supreme Being. The text read out aloud produces an aura and an imaginary space in which the reader/orator, the listener/recipient, and the content are merged. The memorized becomes present and vivid through uttering and listening. This *memorized* is determined in a double sense in the *Heliand*: it touches both the original Christian *memoria* of the Gospel and the history shared by Saxons and Franks that is connected to the poem.

Repetition is produced and *memoria* put into practice through the stylistic devices mentioned: variation, alliteration, and formulas. Through the constantly repeated naming of God, his Son, and the disciples as well as their teachings, both the contents of the text and Christian values were memorized. Alliteration and variation are, from this perspective, mnemonics supporting *memoria*. Aleida and Jan Assmann have emphasized the various forms of repetition such as rhyme, metre, and formulaic phrases as mnemonics that assist in the process of remembering.[50] The aural reception of the text in the monastery and the process of writing are seen as a religious Christian service and as *imitatio*, so that a visualization of the message of salvation is made

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48 See Hofmann, *Die Versstrukturen*, 38.
49 See Haferland, *Mündlichkeit*, 59-60.
50 See Assmann and Assmann, "Nachwort," in A. Assmann et al., eds., *Schrift und Gedächtnis*, 270.

possible. The assumption that the *Heliand* was composed for monastic reading and for the *meditatio* linked to it is, above all, supported by the connection of acoustic and visual perception during the reading process. The sound of words becomes increasingly important through reading them aloud, which accentuates the spirituality of this procedure. According to Benedictine ideas, the *lectio divina* provides access to a deeper understanding of the Holy Scriptures by opening all senses for the communication with God. Correspondingly, chapters 38 and 48 of the *Regula Benedicti* indicate the function of grace within monastic life.[51] The meditative and didactic character of the lesson can be inferred from the monastic idea that reading is a work occupying the human being entirely, moving all senses. For this reason, Benedict counts reading among the good works during Lent, as it is suitable for the atonement for all carelessness.[52] A meditative reading of the *Heliand* thus becomes much more conceivable, because all monks came together and followed the word of God for the purpose of edification.

Reading and listening played a crucial role in monastic life, because they offered moments of meditation while also imparting knowledge. The focus of monastic life on God's omnipotence in the present and on the constant struggle for one's own salvation is evident in the continuous repetition of the Christian dogma. Thus, chapter 48 of the *Regula Benedicti* stresses that idleness is the enemy of the soul, harming the person, and that monks should therefore either do manual labour or read the lesson.[53] Together with reading the Holy Scriptures, writing texts is among the monastic tasks. The *Heliand*'s use of alliteration, variation, and repetition confirms the author's intention of inducing meditative moments in the course of these activities. Within the speeches and dialogues structuring the text, repetitions of content and form are used as well. These ancient mnemonics again function to aid memory when transposed to the field of Christian literature. Since the good speaker is also the *vir bonus*, who is understood to speak the truth, competence in memorizing was highly significant for the monastic way of life.

In his fictitious dialogue with Charlemagne, the *Dialogus de rhetorica et virtutibus*, Alcuin draws attention to the benefits of *memoria* and stresses the essence of texts like the *Heliand*: he describes *memoria* as necessary for learning by heart and for writing.[54]

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51   See *Regula Benedicti*, chap. 38, p. 210.
52   See *Regula Benedicti*, chap. 49, p. 245.
53   See *Regula Benedicti*, chap. 48, pp. 235-36.
54   See Alcuin, *Dialogus*, PL 101:328C. col. 941.

According to ancient tradition, the training of memory belongs to the elementary competences of clerical education and thus had to be practised in the monastic context because, as Alcuin says, Christian knowledge should be stored. He emphasizes the relevance of this requirement, because the Christian elementary educational practice he intended to establish had to be preserved for future generations and, therefore, had to be constantly repeated.

The production of the vernacular text and its transformation into the medium of script may be regarded as another moment of memorizing, as Alcuin points out and as is suggested by the *Regula Benedicti*'s comment that *otiositas inimical est animae* (idleness is harmful for the soul). The author not only performs *officium* for himself, but the gesture of writing God's word functions as *meditatio* as well. It thus becomes clear why the author in the Prologue to the *Heliand* focuses in detail on the act of writing as a central theme:

> That uuolda thô uuîsara filo
> liudo barno loƀon, lêra Cristes,
> hêlag uuord godas, endi mid iro handon scrîƀan
> *berehtlîco* an buok, huô sia scoldin is *gibodscipi*
> frummian, firiho barn.
>
> . . . .
> sia uurðun gicorana te thio,
> that sie than êuangelium *ênan scoldun*
> an buok scrîƀan endi *sô* manag gibod godes,
> hêlag himilisc uuord.
>
> (*Heliand* 5-15)

> [There were many of the wise who wanted to praise the teaching of Christ, the holy Word of God, and wanted to write a bright-shining book with their own hands, telling how the sons of men should carry out His commands. […] They alone were to write down the evangelium in a book, and to write down the commands of God, the holy heavenly word. (3)]

The ability to write is emphasized as a special competence, which is then related to the Evangelists who were particularly chosen in this respect, too. The author mentions this in order to point to the meditative character of writing. He also specifically claims this ability for himself.

Memoria as Recollection in the Old Saxon *Heliand*

The second aspect of *memoria* necessary for an examination of the *Heliand* from the perspective of memory is what Paul Ricoeur defines as active recollection, *αναμνήσις*, and what Otto Gerhard Oexle has described as a form of visualization which reminds readers of the past, that is, 'history.'[55] Thus, in the Old Saxon *Heliand*, historical events are remembered which were closely connected to the collective memory of the Saxons and the Franks. According to Maurice Halbwachs, this form of memory may be regarded as bound to a political community constituted through the recollection of actual experiences of individuals or groups and through the oral transmission of such recollections.[56] The only extant medieval sources that suggest such a process of passing down experiences are written texts, and the actions of Charlemagne did find their way into several textual sources, including the *Annales regni francorum*, Einhard's *Vita*, and Alcuin's exhortation. Both the felling of Irminsul, which was intended to demonstrate the truthfulness of the Christian God, and the cruelty of the forced conversion of the Saxons to Christianity were treated in written texts, indicating that contemporaries were preoccupied with these events. Among them were those intellectuals who, like Alcuin, had a strong interest in the concept of a Christian programme of rule. The forced Christianization of the Saxons may be seen as a crisis, a trauma which was deeply embedded in the collective memory.

The measures that Charlemagne took to impose Christianity on the Saxons left a lasting impression on his contemporaries and on subsequent generations, as is unequivocally evidenced by the sources mentioned above. On the one hand, Alcuin had to criticize Charlemagne's actions from the Christian perspective, but, on the other, he also had to emphasize the necessary realization of a universal Christian programme and system of rule, with an exemplary Christian ruler at its helm. Here one has to consider not only Alcuin's criticism of the forced measures but also his tireless efforts to promote this conception of rule. The brutality of the conversion violated the notion of the *rex iustus et pacificus*, so that after the first violent events, the conversion of the Saxons had to be strategically planned. Nevertheless, the memories of past atrocities remained vivid, particularly in the intellectual circles of Carolingian scholars such as Alcuin and Hrabanus Maurus, because they were drafting a programme of rule focused on the Christian ideal, combining religion and politics in an appropriate educational agenda. The recollection of these events became important

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55   See Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 17; and Oexle, "Die Gegenwart," 74.
56   See Halbwachs, *Les cadres sociaux*.

when the fratricidal wars broke out among Charlemagne's heirs, who again disturbed Alcuin's ideal of a unified Christian empire. Under Louis the Pious, Lothar I, and especially Louis the German, Hrabanus Maurus was still advancing this ideal, which is underlined by his efforts regarding Church doctrines and imperial politics; the violent suppression of the Stellinga revolt under Louis the Pious, reminiscent of Charlemagne's earlier wars with the Saxons, therefore provoked Hrabanus's criticism. The connection of the *Heliand* with the Hrabanian circle also points to the author's contact with those conflicts. The author's interest in the Carolingian ideal of a Christian concept of rule and the establishment of an educational programme supporting this ideal explain the *Heliand*'s discourses dealing with the debate between Christian and ancient educational systems as well as the development of an *exemplum* of the ideal of a Christian society. This again has to be considered in the context of social and political reality, reflected in the concrete actions of rulers like Charlemagne and Louis, who challenged the constant instruction and exhortation by an intellectual and moral elite. From this perspective, the *Heliand*, with its advocacy of Christian ideals, is a tool of mediation and exhortation as well as edification.

Memoria as Christian Remembrance

The third aspect of the semantic horizon of medieval *memoria* is based on religious understanding and can be regarded as a synthesis of the previous two aspects. Christ's words at the Last Supper and the subsequent commandment calling for perpetual remembrance make the event of the Eucharist the focal point of the dimensions of *memoria*. The temporal levels of past, present, and future come together in the act of visualization, which points to the *imitatio Christi* and shows the truthfulness of the Christian faith. The act itself takes place beyond the utterable and is performed on the spiritual, transcendental level of *meditatio*. Augustine describes in his *Confessions* the four dimensions of *memoria*, combining theological, philosophical, metaphysical, and psychological aspects. Accordingly, *memoria* is an awareness which is focused on the self-directed mind in its most profound form and which, at the same time, strives beyond the limitations of the human mind to attain the divine sphere. Through the remembrance of Christ's life, *memoria* is a conscious imitation of that life, reaching beyond the liturgical context to the social sphere, where it is developed further. In this liturgical act, the memory of individuals was preserved beyond death through strong bonds of remembrance. Oexle defines this social form of memory as the memory of individuals and groups, not referring to their history but to people with whom

the individual or group has established a bond of kinship, friendship, or love — even if they are separated in space or time as a result of distance or death.[57] In order to prepare earthly existence for salvation in the hereafter, the responsibility for each other, in practical charity, is added to the aspect of remembrance. This responsibility is reflected in the memory establishing community. Thus, *memoria* found its way into the Middle Ages. Commemorative books, necrologies, *libri vitae*, prayer fellowships and the like constitute the main evidence for this.[58]

As Oexle has noted, *memoria* is manifested as prayer and intercession. Oexle characterizes prayer both as an expression of the community spirit of a group, constituted by remembrance, and as a present or gift of members of a community to other members.[59] Giving and taking not only formed a basic element of the Christian congregation but also produced social ties in the relatively unstructured world of the early Middle Ages. The creation of these social bonds began in the early Middle Ages through the establishment of monasteries. Thus, communities developed that existed in one place, while others extended over large geographical areas. These brotherhoods had an obligation to pray for the living, the sick, and the dead of each community.[60] As the aspect of remembrance within the brotherhood was linked to the aim of overcoming earthly existence, there was a great fear of prayer ceasing, so that those contacts had to be constantly kept alive.[61] Since the time of the Church Fathers such as Augustine and Gregory the Great, it was believed that the souls of the dead could be brought to their purification by prayer and intercession. As Mary Carruthers points out, "In the early Middle Ages, *memoria* is discussed most often not in the context of rhetoric but rather in writings on meditation and prayer, in which a diagram-like 'picture' is created mentally which serves as the site for a meditational *collatio*, the 'gathering' into one 'place' of the various strands of a meditational composition."[62]

Above all, the vernacular texts written in the monastic context lay claim to being forms of commemorative prayer. Otfrid von Weißenburg dedicated his *Liber evangeliorum* to the monks Hartmut and Werinbert of St. Gallen, who were close friends of the Weißenburg monastery. In the final prayer of his work, he asks for

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57 See Oexle, "Die Gegenwart," 74.
58 See K. Schmid, *Gebetsgedenken*; and Oexle, "Memoria and Memorialüberlieferung," 70.
59 See Oexle, "Memoria and Memorialüberlieferung," 87.
60 See Oexle, "Memoria and Memorialüberlieferung," 88-89.
61 See K. Schmid, "Mönchtum," 121.
62 Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 123.

their brotherly memory in prayer and intercession.[63] In the dedication to Liutbert preceding the text, Otfrid says that the imagination of the Gospels alone, in the sense of constant memorizing repetitions, is able to liberate the mind from corruption — which recalls Augustine's reference to the spiritual power of *memoria*.[64] A similar claim is made by the unknown author of the *Muspilli*. This text, which deals with *eschaton* and the Last Judgement, was included in the ninth-century Regensburg Codex dedicated to Louis the German.[65] Here again, the establishment of a Christian memory is at the centre of interest: since, as the author says, the worst fate for a person is not to be heard by God, one has to endeavour to stay in God's memory:

> uue demo in vinstri scal   sino virina stuen,
> prinnan in p‹e›hhe: daz ist rehto paluuic dink,
> daz der man haret ze gote   enti imo hilfa ni quimit.
> uuanit sih kinada   diu uuenac sela.
> ni ist in kihuctin   himiliskin gote,
> uuanta hiar in uuerolti   aftar ni uuerkota.
>
> (*Muspilli* 25-30)[66]

> [Woe betide anyone who has to atone for his sins in darkness,
> And has to burn in pitch: that is an awful fate for a man
> Trusting in God, but there is no help.
> The unfortunate soul hopes for Grace.
> But she is not in the memory of the heavenly God,
> Because she behaved on earth in the wrong way.]

Furthermore, with its extensive description of the Last Judgement, the text underlines the relevance of justice within the divine plan of salvation,[67] which may be understood as a remembrance of the great Christians. Louis the German, as Charlemagne's heir, took up the idea of a Christian empire, yet his age was characterized by an increasing decay of order. Against this background, Christian ideas and, especially, the state of affairs in the Empire are reflected in this text, just as they are in the *Heliand*. The author of the *Heliand* is concerned with commemorative prayer, even though, unlike

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63 See Otfrid von Weißenburg, *Evangelienbuch*, Dedication to Liutbert, lines 5-10 & 50-55.
64 See Otfrid von Weißenburg, *Evangelienbuch*, Dedication to Liutbert, lines 20-25.
65 See Geuenich, "Dem himmlischen Gott," 27; and Haug, "Das 'Muspilli.'"
66 *Muspilli*, ed. Haug and Vollmann, lines 25-30. Translation mine.
67 See Haug, "Das 'Muspilli,'" 77.

Otfrid, he does not indicate his intentions in a dedication of the work to a monastic community. Nevertheless, the context and the intellectual and spiritual environment of this poem suggest that *memoria* can be performed as remembrance and prayer or intercession. It is conceivable that prayer fellowships and brotherhoods of the kind which in the eighth and ninth centuries extended in a complex network over large areas of the Empire may also have existed in the Saxon territories.[68] The *Heliand* connects elements of memory from several perspectives that underline the meditative character of this text. Lastly, the problematic history shared by Saxons and Franks is remembered via the Old Saxon language. Therefore, a reading of the text was most probably included in rituals connected with meals, such as the monastic grace, and would thus presuppose a frame for the performance and reception of the text, allowing for *ruminatio* by an audience listening to the meditative text during communal meals. This also implies that through this conscious memory of the forced Christianization and of the deceased, a commemorative prayer for the dead was performed and a spiritual unity with both the Saxons and the Franks established via reading the text. Collective violence — René Girard has extensively described this for the Christian ritual of sacrifice — was sublimated through the text and its mimetic quality.[69] The poet of the *Heliand* practises memory and 'cathartic purification' first through the subject matter he intends to impart and, secondly, through the use of the Old Saxon language, which thus takes the place of naming within the commemorative scene produced by the text. The visualization of the dead is central to this effort, as is the attempt, based on the wish to establish a unified *populus christianus*, to create a spiritual unity of Saxons and Franks through common prayer. With his performance of the Christian message, the author demands that the Christian norms be followed and reminds the audience of the crimes committed by rulers. Through common prayer, a spiritual and political integration is realized on the level of transcendence, which unites people in the *orbis christianus* and re-establishes the ideal of a Christian concept of rule based on the model of an exemplary Christian society. It is, therefore, easily conceivable that a Saxon monk from a Franconian monastery sent this text to his brothers in Saxony as a sign of the prayer fellowship.

In the medieval context, *memoria* has semantic levels that are based on rhetorical tradition, historical recollection, and religious experience. Thus, the metaphysical

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68   See Geuenich, "Gebetsgedenken," 102-105.
69   See Girard, *Le bouc èmissaire*.

quality of *memoria*, as Augustine describes it in his *Confessions* and as it is lived within the Christian faith through the constant imitation of Christ's life, underwent a significant extension in the Middle Ages.

Conclusion

The horizon of understanding for medieval *memoria*, as exemplified in the Old Saxon *Heliand*, can be outlined as follows:

First, in narrating Christ's life, the text offers an opportunity for continuous repetition in the form of *ruminatio* and *meditatio*. The arrangement of the text in speeches, dialogues, and narration, together with the use of stylistic devices such as alliteration and variation, enables the audience to use several methods of learning. By means of such techniques, which had their origins in ancient mnemonics, the reader's memory could be trained, such training being the basis of all clerical education. Additionally, through the meditative function of the text, the recipient is guided, via memorizing, to a dedication to Christian existence, to the quest for communication with God, and to a readiness to deepen his faith. Here, the ancient art of memory was both preserved and transformed by being adapted to the Christian context where it became a means to a dialogue with God.

Secondly, on the metaphysical level, *memoria* unites two dimensions that Oexle has described: the memory of the past and Christian remembrance that establishes community. These two forms are present in the *Heliand* as the memory of historical events, such as the forced conversion of the Saxons, and as prayer striving for a unification of Saxons and Franks, ultimately realizing the idea of a united *populus christianus*. The fact that at the time of the creation of the *Heliand* the vernacular in written form was still in its infancy confirms that the text has to be seen as literature which, in an artistically sophisticated form, is devoted to the communication with God. Insofar as it functions as Christian meditation, the *Heliand* fulfils its task of providing a poetic spiritual space in a text written by a learned author for the praise of God but also for the Christian union of spirit and the deepening of faith. This strongly supports Raphaela Gasser's argument that German poetry originates in the humble religiosity of the clergy, and that vernacular poetry, rather than presenting simply a renaissance of ancient literature, originates in Christian spirituality and inspiration, in the constant imitation and imparting of God's word.[70]

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70   See Gasser, "Propter lamentabilem vocem hominis," 82.

Third, the complex meaning of *memoria* in the Christian context combines three elements: the Christian 'keeping-in-mind' (which includes the *imitatio Christi*), the imagination of past traumas of Saxon history and their overcoming through common prayer, and the model of a unified Christian empire.

Fourth, the author considers his work a service to God, that is, a meditation, and thus he performs for himself an *imitatio Christi*. The creation of the text under the stipulation of *humilitas* opens the way to God, so that the author may, by writing and meditating, focus his mind on Christian memory.

Fifth, the surviving manuscripts demonstrate that the forms of *memoria* are integral to the context of the reception of the Old Saxon *Heliand*.[71] The partial addition of neumes in the *Heliand* Manuscript M points to its practical context of musical performance in meditative chanting, supporting the assumption of its use during monastic grace. This is strong evidence for the memorializing character of the poem. Manuscript C, from the tenth century, also hints at a liturgical use of the text. The careful design of the Old Saxon poem suggests a deliberate commemoration of the Anglo-Saxon conversion, which was led by Boniface in Fulda, while the process of copying hints at the possibility of prayer fellowships and at connections with parishes on the Continent with whom the originary communities in England were united in meditative memory and commemorative prayer. Furthermore, it is possible that the text was read aloud in the context of the translation of relics to Saxony.[72] Through its language, the text calls to mind the atrocities of the past and makes Christ's sacrifice present; the past is symbolically atoned for, and the potential for future conflict is sublimated. The text thus creates a bond uniting Franks and Saxons. Understanding the purpose of the *Heliand* from this perspective underlines what Girard has described as the function of sacrifice in the Christian religion.[73] Girard points out in his mimetic theory that the potential of collective violence could be sublimated by sacrifice. This

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71 There are six extant manuscripts of the Old Saxon *Heliand*, two of which have survived in almost complete form and another four are fragments: Manuscript M (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, cgm 25), Manuscript C (London, British Library, Cotton Caligula A.viii), Excerpt V (Rome, Bibliotheca Vaticana, Cod. Vat. Lat. 1447), Fragment P (Berlin, Deutsches Historisches Museum, R 56/2537), Fragment S (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, cgm 8840), and Fragment L (Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, Thomas 4073(Ms)). On the recent discovery of an additional *Heliand* fragment, see H. Schmid, ed., "Ein neues 'Heliand'-Fragment" (translated and re-issued as "A New *Heliand* Fragment").

72 See Röckelein, *Reliquientranslationen*, 25-29, 325-65.

73 See Girard, *Je vois Satan tomber comme l'éclair*; and Palaver, *René Girards mimetische Theorie*.

process is the basis of Christianity, because the central ritual — the crucifixion of Jesus Christ — is repeated over and over again in each divine service. The effect is that in Christian society, order becomes more stable. This can be achieved by reading the Old Saxon poem, in which Christian rules and traumatic memories of the Saxon mission were repeated. The mimetic effect is that negative potentials were sublimated, and as a result a Christian union between Saxon and Frankish monks was generated in their minds.

In its medieval religious form, *memoria* describes the basic motivation of Christian action. It establishes community and identity, above all in the monastic context and, therefore, in any form of literary writing that originated in that environment. The concept of *memoria* had been handed down since Augustine and unites Christian remembrance, memory, history, and prayer in the Old Saxon *Heliand*.

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