

**Missionaries and Changing Views of the Other
from the Ninth to the Eleventh Centuries**

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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'Difference and variety are what is right with the world.'

G. K. Chesterton.

To the many people who have supported me before, during and after this thesis, thank you. I would not have been able to begin the project without the support of Julia Smith, Stuart Airlie, Rosamond McKitterick and Ian Wood. The whole process was made far more pleasant and intellectually stimulating by the company of Leeds' early medievalists and the CMRP and T&I groups, as well as a very gracious examination by Julia Barrow and Stuart Airlie. Many errors still remain and, while I am uncertain whether I can be held wholly responsible for all of them, they certainly do not belong to any of these fine people.

Abstract

This thesis explores the varying ways in which otherness was imagined and constructed in two clusters of medieval missionary texts: Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii* and Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, from the archdiocese of Hamburg-Bremen; and Bruno of Querfurt's *Passio Sancti Adalberti episcopi et martyris, Vita vel passio Benedicti et Iohannis sociorumque suorum* and *Epistola ad Heinricum Regem*.

Missionaries and the authors who described their work were uniquely concerned with those who lay beyond the geographical, political and spiritual boundaries of Christendom. Accordingly, they provide our principal sources for understanding how such groups were represented. In the first instance, this thesis is concerned with descriptions of groups physically located outside the Carolingian, Ottonian, and Salian Empires, particularly in the Scandinavian and Slavic worlds. But given the fluidity and interconnectedness of early medieval identities, it also encompasses representations of marginalised groups within Christendom such as slaves, women, heretics, Jews and political enemies.

Following a brief introduction, the thesis begins by setting out the theoretical foundations of an understanding of otherness based on the expectation of variety. This forms a response to the totalising claims of many recent discussions of otherness. This is followed by a close analysis of each text, beginning with the Hamburg-Bremen material, before moving on to Bruno of Querfurt's works. The aim is to reflect the peculiar dynamics of each work and, consequently, discussions of these authors' literary and exegetical concerns form a substantial part of this study. Their presentation of groups within Christendom has also been emphasised; sometimes the other was closer to home. The thesis concludes by emphasising the conceptual variety revealed in each work. Key themes can be identified, but the presentation of otherness in all of these texts is far more diverse and conceptually fragmented than is usually appreciated in existing scholarship.

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1. Introduction.

Throughout the ninth to eleventh centuries, few Christian authors showed much interest in what lay beyond the borders of Christendom. This was certainly true within the Carolingian, Ottonian, and Salian empires, with which this thesis is concerned. This near-silence was not a question of relevance. Groups like the Northmen, Hungarians and Wends were real military threats; they were hard to ignore. Outsiders, often pagan outsiders, had a significant political, economic and cultural impact on these empires.¹ Their relevance only increased as many of these outside groups were steadily Christianised during this period.² Nor was this silence a question of ignorance. Contact with the Slavic and Scandinavian lands was constant and varied, and on the few occasions when an author sought detailed information about the outside world, they were able to find it.³

In part, the issue was the (perceived) paganism and barbarism of the northern world. Pagans were felt not to be worth talking about beyond their immediate impact on the empire. There was also the question of literary norms. There was little room in existing literary traditions for anthropological, historical or geographical descriptions of pagan peoples. When all history was fundamentally salvation history, the peculiarities of a *gens* only really became consequential after its conversion. Paganism was only ever a prelude.

¹ For instance, see: *Central Europe in the High Middle Ages Bohemia, Hungary and Poland, c.900–c.1300*, ed. by Nora Berend, Przemysław Urbańczyk and Przemysław Wiszewski (Cambridge: CUP, 2013); Dirk Meier, *Seafarers, Merchants and Pirates in the Middle Ages* (Boydell Press: Woodbridge, 2006); *Christianization and the rise of Christian Monarchy: Scandinavia, Central Europe and Rus' c. 900-1200*, ed. by Nora Berend (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); *Franks, Northmen, and Slavs: Identities and State Formation in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. by Ildar H. Garipzanov, Patrick Geary and Przemysław Urbańczyk (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008); *Trade and Communication Networks of the First Millennium AD in the northern part of Central Europe: Central Places, Beach Markets, Landing Places and Trading Centres*, ed. by Babette Ludowici and others (Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss, 2010).

² For instance, see: Anders Winroth, *The Conversion of Scandinavia: Vikings, Merchants and Missionaries in the Remaking of Northern Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012); Richard A. Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe: from Paganism to Christianity, 371-1386* (London: HarperCollins, 1997); *The Cross goes North: Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe, AD 300-1300*, ed. by Martin Carver (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2003); *The Christianization of Scandinavia: report of a symposium held at Kungälv, Sweden, 4-9 August 1985*, ed. by Birgit Sawyer, Peter Sawyer and Ian Wood (Alingsås: Viktoria Bokförlag, 1987); Ian Wood, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe, 400-1050* (Harlow: Longman, 2001).

³ See especially: *Wulfstan's voyage: the Baltic Sea region in the early Viking age as seen from shipboard*, ed. by Anton Englert and Athena Trakadas (Roskilde: Oxbow, 2008); *Ohthere's voyages: a late 9th-century account of voyages along the coasts of Norway and Denmark and its cultural context*, ed. by Anton Englert and Janet Bately (Roskilde: Viking Ship Museum 2007); *Descriptio civitatum et regionum ad septentrionalem plagam Danubii*, in *Slawisch-germanische Beziehungen im südostdeutschen Raum von der Spätantike bis zum Ungarnsturm* ed. by Erwin Herrmann (München: R. Lerche, 1965), pp. 212-221; Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum*, in *Quellen des 9. und 11. Jahrhunderts zur Geschichte der hamburgischen Kirche und des Reiches*, ed. by Werner Trillmich and Rudolf Buchner (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1961). Abbreviated to: Adam. The Arabic numerals refer to the book number; the lower-case Roman numerals correspond to the chapters in Schmeidler's text; the bracketed Arabic numerals to the chapters in the Weiland-Waitz edition.

Geographical and ethnological literature was generally archaising and self-referencing; it was simply not intended to convey new information about current realities. Pagans and barbarians tended to appear in literature as useful caricatures and rhetorical devices, echoing the tropes of ancient and patristic authors. Both fulfilled a wide range of roles within medieval literature, but literal, historical description was rarely a priority, and more often a hindrance.

One of the few groups with a sustained interest in trying to understand the world beyond the Carolingian, Ottonian and Salian empires were missionaries and those who described their lives and work. Of the small number of texts which can be seen as trying to move beyond *topoi* in their descriptions of the northern world, a large proportion can be associated with missionaries and their institutions.⁴ Not that missionaries were a clearly defined or homogeneous group in this period. Their aims, methods and motivations varied, and there were no formal institutional structures or ideologies to unify the disparate missionary efforts. Christ had instructed his disciples to ‘go and make disciples of all nations,’⁵ but there was little agreement about how to do so, or when. The vast majority of Christendom does not appear to have been especially concerned with saving the heathen.⁶ Christianity is a missionary religion, but most Christians were not.

Mission was often short-term and relatively modest in its aims and methods, and the few groups, institutions and individuals who did engage in missionary work generally did so as an extension of their other activities. Mission was undertaken by churches, monasteries, priests, monks and bishops, not by a distinct class or organisation. When medieval authors imagined missionary work, they tended to describe dramatic encounters with pagan priests and kings. This may have some basis in reality, not least as many missionaries appear to have read and internalised such imagery. Yet a more representative image would be of small groups of clergy, living out the rhythms of ecclesiastical life – preaching, fasting, taking

⁴ For instance, see: *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum*, ed. by Herwig Wolfram (Vienna: Böhlh, 1979); Ratramnus of Corbie, *Epistolae*, ed. by Ernst Dümmler, MGH Epp. VI, Karolini Aevi 4 (Berlin: 1925); Rimbart, *Vita Anskarii*, ed. by Georg Waitz, MGH SRG, 55; Adam; Aethicus Ister, *Cosmographia*, ed. by Otto Prinz, MGH Quellen zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 14 (Munich: MGH, 1993); Ian N. Wood, ‘Aethicus Ister: An exercise in difference’, in *Grenze und Differenz im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. by Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000), pp. 197-208; Ian N. Wood, ‘Categorising the cynocephali’, in *Ego Trouble: authors and their identities in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Richard Corradini and others (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010), pp. 125-36.

⁵ Matthew 28. 19.

⁶ Richard A. Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe: from Paganism to Christianity, 371-1386* (London: HarperCollins, 1997), pp. 1-6; Ian N. Wood, ‘What is a Mission?’ unpublished NUI Galway lecture, May 2013; Ian N. Wood, ‘“The Ends of the Earth”. The Bible, Bibles and the Other in Early Medieval Europe’, in *The Calling of the Nations: Exegesis, Ethnography, and Empire in a Biblical-Historical Present*, ed. by Mark Vessey and others (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), pp. 200-16 (p. 200).

mass, observing the saints' days, 'revolv[ing] the sense of the psalms in the hidden mind'⁷ – amongst peoples who were only partly Christianised, and likely already included at least a small community of Christians, including foreigners.⁸

Nonetheless, all medieval missionaries shared the problem of how to make sense of the position of the Christian placed within pagan society; how to understand this '*alter mundus*' – this other world – which they encountered.⁹ Many of the tropes and divisions used to describe pagans and barbarians inside the empire made less sense when outside it. Missionaries and those who sought to describe their work were often forced to rework, extend or reimagine existing forms of thought and literature to make sense of such encounters with the pagan world, whether real or imagined. Yet their works remained firmly embedded in the thought-world of their societies. All of the texts considered here tell us far more about their authors and their societies than the distant peoples and places they describe. Yet all are unusual in their concern to understand and describe pagans, barbarians and other inhabitants of outlying regions.

This thesis presents a close analysis of two clusters of missionary texts. The first is centred on the Church of Hamburg-Bremen, focusing on Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii* and Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*.¹⁰ Hamburg-Bremen's authority and identity were closely bound up with the mission to the North, a loosely defined area encompassing the Scandinavian and Baltic worlds, and expanding into the North Sea and Atlantic. These institutional concerns fostered the production of two of the most important narrative sources for Scandinavian history. Rimbert himself had worked as a missionary in Scandinavia, whilst Adam's sources were vast and diverse, and included one Danish king.¹¹ The second cluster is centred on the works of Bruno of Querfurt; the *Passio Sancti Adalberti episcopi et martyris*, *Vita vel passio Benedicti et Iohannis sociorumque suorum* and his *Epistola ad Heinricum Regem*.¹² Bruno dedicated the last decade of his life to working as a missionary

⁷ Bruno of Querfurt, *S. Adalberti Pragensis episcopi et martyris vita altera*, ed. by Jadwiga Karwasinśka, MPH s.n 4/2 (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawn Naukowe, 1969), 26. Abbreviated as *Passio Adalberti*, distinguishing between the *longior* and *brevior* versions where these vary significantly.

⁸ Ian N. Wood, 'What is a Mission?'; Anders Winroth, pp. 105-112; Alexandra Sanmark *Power and Conversion: a Comparative study of Christianization in Scandinavia* (Uppsala: OPIA, 2004), pp. 91-107; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe, 400-1050* (Harlow: Longman, 2001), pp. 247-248, 256-266.

⁹ Adam, 4. xxi (21).

¹⁰ Adam; Rimbert.

¹¹ Svein Estrithson. See Adam, 2. xliii (41), 2. xlvi (50), 3. liv (53), 4. xxi (21).

¹² Bruno, *Vita Adalberti*; Bruno of Querfurt, *Vita quinque fratrum eremitarum [seu] vita vel passio Benedicti et Iohannis sociorumque suorum*, ed. by Jadwiga Karwasinśka, MPH s.n 4/3 (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawn. Naukowe, 1973), pp. 27-84. Abbreviated to: *Vita Quinque*; Bruno of Querfurt, *Epistola ad Henricum regem*, ed. by

amongst the Petchenegs, Black Hungarians, Poles and Prussians. His works are deeply personal and reflective, bringing us closer to the psychological realities of mission than any others from the early Middle Ages. Each of these texts will be considered in turn, and analysed in terms of their presentation of otherness.

Otherness is a loose and ill-defined concept, at least amongst historians. It is a modern term, that brings together the sense of moralised difference and antagonism which unites otherwise disparate groups. Heretics, lepers, Jews and sexual deviants had little in common and yet, as historians such as Bob Moore have shown, they were nonetheless connected in the medieval mind.¹³ All of them were felt to be other. Those described as pagans and barbarians were similarly distinguished by a sense of otherness which united the innumerable peoples, places, customs, traits and times labelled in such a way. Otherness indicates a way of viewing the world, an intensively moralised division between ‘us’ and ‘them’. It is a useful place to begin.

The starting point for this study is descriptions of those who were geographically located outside the author’s own region, particularly in areas regarded as pagan or barbarian; Danes, Swedes, Slavs, Petchenegs and Prussians. But such descriptions rarely make sense in isolation. Adam of Bremen’s descriptions of paganism were closely connected with his Church’s claims to ecclesiastical authority over the North, and his description of Christians within the empire often drew on the vocabulary associated with those outside of it; thus the Frisians were barbarous, the Saxons steeped in the pagan delusions, and Archbishop Adalbert was rumoured to have taken up divination and sorcery.¹⁴ Authors had a tendency to connect the various groups they felt to be somehow outcast, unclean, stigmatised, hostile and different. The language of otherness provides us with a vocabulary to describe this unifying sentiment. Ideas about difference were (and are) interconnected, and a study focused exclusively on ethnic or religious difference would risk missing much of the wider framework within which these ideas operated. Thus although this study is, in the first instance, concerned with descriptions of distant foreigners – in essence, pagans and barbarians – it encompasses attitudes towards women, slaves, sorcerers, witches, heretics, apostates, recalcitrant Christians, delusional archbishops, clerical wives, the vainglorious rich and dishevelled poor.

Jadwiga Karwasinska, MPH n.s. IV.3 (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawn. Naukowe, 1973), pp. 97-106. Abbreviated to: Bruno, *Epistola*.

¹³ Robert I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe, 950-1250*, 2nd edn. (Malden: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 32, 62-65, 89.

¹⁴ Adam, 3. xlii (41), 2. lvi (55), 3. lxii (61), 3. lxiii (62).

Identifying and analysing the peculiarities of each text has been a major concern. Otherness is just a starting point; it provides a point of reference, a framework. It delineates the subject-matter from amongst innumerable other possibilities. But to describe a group as ‘other’ is not an end in itself. Nor is it wholly satisfying to search for an answer to what it meant to be ‘other’ in the Middle Ages. This would be to study details while constrained by the outlines of a broader picture. Our general theories about the Middle Ages should *not* find support in the close reading of any medieval work. They should be complicated, qualified, localised; made peculiar to the individual text. General(ising) theories are not rejected, but recognised as qualitatively different.

Many themes can be identified across all of these works: an intense concern for literary norms; a tension between an idealised, polemical image of paganism, and a more mundane, human understanding; a concern for episcopal authority; and an intensification of rhetoric when dealing with issues closer to home. However, what has been emphasised in this thesis is the peculiarity of each text, expressed in terms of conceptual variety.

It is possible to present a general scheme of the medieval understanding of paganism based on an amalgamation of all of these texts. This has often been attempted, generally convincingly.¹⁵ The same is true of many of the other prominent outsider groups in medieval thought.¹⁶ Yet it is also possible to insist on the peculiarity of each text. Thus Adam’s pagans were not quite the same as Rimbert’s pagans, who had actually lived amongst them. We might go even further and suggest that Adam was not even consistent in his own view of pagans: sometimes he presents pagans as virtuous proto-Christians; elsewhere as irredeemable anti-Christians; he shapes his presentation around issues of ecclesiastical authority, literary style, and the testimony of conflicting sources; he describes pagans to imitate literary authority, to conceal his lack of literary authorities, to praise and condemn pagans, to praise and condemn Christians; to cultivate a sense of similarity and

¹⁵ For instance, Hans-Werner Goetz, ‘Heiden aus Schicksal - Heiden aus Schuld? Zum Heidenbegriff in frühmittelalterlichen Missionskontexten’, *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch*, 48 (2013), 355-368; *Von Sarazenen und Juden, Heiden und Häretikern. Die christlich-abendländischen Vorstellungen von Andersgläubigen im Früh- und Hochmittelalter in vergleichender Perspektive*, ed. by Norman Bade and Beate Freudenberg, (Bochum: Winkler, 2013); Anthony Perron ‘The Face of the “Pagan”: Portraits of Religious Deviance on the Medieval Periphery’, *The Journal of The Historical Society*, 9 (2009) 467-492.

¹⁶ For instance, David Fraesdorff, *Der Barbarische Norden: Vorstellungen und Fremdkategorien bei Rimbert, Thietmar von Merseburg, Adam von Bremen und Helmold von Bosau* (Berlin: Akad.-Verlag, 2005); Nora Berend, *At the Gate of Christendom: Jews, Muslims, and “Pagans” in Medieval Hungary, c. 1000–1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Debra H. Strickland, *Saracens, Demons, & Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003); Robert Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales: A Voice of the Middle Ages*, 2nd edn. (Stroud: Tempus, 2006). See especially chapter six, ‘the Face of the Barbarian’, pp. 131-146; Linda Kaljundi, ‘Waiting for the Barbarians: Reconstruction of Otherness in the Saxon Missionary and Crusading Chronicles, 11th–13th Centuries’, in *The Medieval Chronicle*, 5, ed. by Erik Kooper (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2008), pp. 113–27.

difference, hostility and kinship. Such variety cannot be adequately summarised in terms of a general attitude towards paganism, or otherness. We must begin with such generalisations, but end by teasing out the intricacies of each moment within each text. This is an end in itself. It is not justified by taking its place within a more generalising approach, to which it is qualitatively different.

The thesis begins with a short methodological overview, which attempts to (re) introduce a sense of paradox into our understanding of otherness. The totalizing tendencies of discussions of otherness by scholars such as Edward Said and Stephen Greenblatt are juxtaposed with the essentially mystic understanding of Otherness of authors such as Martin Buber, Emmanuel Levinas and Søren Kierkegaard. The other approached as known, described and describable is contrasted with the Other as unknown and incomprehensible. Two approaches to otherness are highlighted, with the intention of outlining the methodological underpinnings of an approach to otherness based on the expectation of variety.

The main body of the thesis is structured around the two clusters of primary sources. Each is discussed in turn, with Bruno's works being approached thematically where appropriate. Although the thesis is oriented around issues of otherness and identity, it is not intended to be a comprehensive study of the ethnological, political or geographical groupings described in these works. Many such studies already exist, particularly for the Hamburg-Bremen material.

Instead, the peculiarities of each text have been explored in depth, with an emphasis on those factors which encouraged conceptual variety. Rimbert's various aims and literary models led him to present the Northmen as both barbarous destroyers and semi-Christianised pagans. Adam's work fragmented around his conflicting aims and sources, as well as an understanding of literature which did little to encourage consistency. Indeed, there are reasons to suspect that Adam actively cultivated the contradictions in his work, using paradox as a tool to better understand his subject. Bruno's writings are similarly fragmented, but while his aims and understanding of literary norms played a role in this, his own personality was unusually prominent for a medieval author, and many of contradictions in his work reflect the tensions in his own thought. All of these authors sought to describe and understand difference. Their works are rich, complex and varied. There are many different ways of framing and analysing their works. This thesis presents just one perspective, approaching these authors' representations of otherness with an expectation of variety.

2. Approaches.

‘The simplification of anything is always sensational.’¹

2.i. Theory, history and pagans.

Why theory? More generally, because we use theory whether we choose to or not. Our prejudices, assumptions, intuitions and insights all constitute what historians intrepidly gather under the rubric of ‘theory’; merely unlabelled, unembellished and under-acknowledged. Anonymous, but no less formative than more explicitly defined systems of thought. Such ideas are not innately better or worse than more clearly explicated systems, simply less accessible, less readily available for scrutiny and conscious change.

Why theory? More specifically, because this study departs from existing scholarship most fundamentally on issues which are commonly regarded as theoretical by historians; questions of otherness and identity, of what it means to classify, label and think; and, crucially, the limits of what we are able to think and say. The focus of this thesis is historical, but its methodological underpinnings are key to understanding the conclusions it presents, and the origins of its disagreements with much current scholarship. These disagreements stem from fundamental convictions about what the world is like, and our capacity to understand it. This chapter sets out the theoretical underpinnings for an approach in which the world is inextricably Other, and our knowledge about it is characterised by variety, contradictions and change. It relies heavily on works of anthropology, sociology and theology, but it is important to note that many other sources and disciplines could have been used to present much the same arguments. The world is complex and our capacity to understand it is limited; innumerable variations on this theme can be found from Socrates and Qoheleth onwards. The choice of sources reflects my own interests and expertise, and the overall argument reflects my prejudices and intuitions; no amount of evidence will convince me that the world is otherwise.

Scholarly discussions of paganism can usefully be used to illustrate the historiographical context and justification for the following methodological argument. Much of this thesis is concerned with pagans. Generally the focus is on Christian ideas

¹ Gilbert K. Chesterton, *Varied Types* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1903), p. 126.

about pagans, although this should not be taken to imply that pagans were nothing more than a Christian fantasy during this period. Paganism was likely a very real and dynamic force in medieval Europe, but our sources provide an extremely limited, fragmented and distorting view of pagan beliefs and practices. This presents a significant obstacle for scholars attempting to describe medieval paganism; the sources are too limited in number, perspective and kind.

But the question itself is limited too. This is a more fundamental problem, because it is often overlooked. Attempting to describe the beliefs and practices of non-Christians throughout the Middle Ages is a not simply a gargantuan task, but an impossible one. No description of paganism can adequately reflect the sheer variety of beliefs and practices, groups and interactions which were, at one time or another, condemned as pagan by the handful of Christian authors whose comments on the matter now survive. The question is a scholarly artifice, and one which is heavily dependent on the ideology and terminology of medieval Christian authors; for dividing the world into Christian and pagan was only self-evident to some. Yet such artifice is not a problem so long as it is recognised for what it is. Shifting the debate to medieval representations of paganism better reflects the nature of the surviving sources, but may encourage an even more detached understanding of what is actually being attempted by the historian, for the answers to the question appear more attainable.

It is essential that we remember that the questions that we ask are our own creations. At best, they provide the necessary focus and impetus to explore and better understand the past. Problems arise when we confuse definitive answers to our questions, which are perfectly possible, with definitive representations of the past, which are not; when the answer to a good question is presented as an unmediated description of the past. This misconception has had a pronounced effect on how scholars have conceived of their own role, shaping their research aims and methods, and their presentation of the past. A single description and explanation is sought for each phenomena, resulting in totalising visions of the past: paganism is indexed and described; the 'image of the pagan' across the Middle Ages is dissected; medieval attitudes towards the other, 'die Heiden', 'das fremde', 'der barbarische Norden' are tidied into neat definitions; the Carolingian pagan is summarised in a sentence.² Much of this scholarship is excellent and unequivocally worthwhile, but the aim is crooked, and the theoretical underpinnings of these efforts must be reconsidered.

² The literature is vast. Reflections on paganism itself include: Ken Dowden, *European Paganism: the Realities of Cult from Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (London : Routledge, 2000); *The Pagan Middle Ages*, ed. by Ludo J.R.

2.ii. Otherness and identity.

Identity matters. It is also stubbornly difficult to define. Our identities define how we think about ourselves and each other, shaping our actions and intruding on almost every aspect of our lives. They are able to do so, to a great extent, because we wear them with great confidence. We know what they are. Yet as soon as we examine the issue of identity closely, either on a general level or on the level of individual identities, such confidence is shown to be misplaced. Our identities are confused, fragmented and constantly changing. We do not know what they are, and yet we know that we do. Like Augustine reflecting on time, we know what it is, until we try to explain it:

What then is time? If no one asks me, I know what it is. If I wish to explain it to him who asks, I do not know.³

This paradox underlies the approach taken in this thesis. Various approaches to otherness and identity are drawn upon, but none are presented as definitive. Insofar as they are useful, they are used. In part, this approach reflects the great range and variety of conceptual tools available. Identity continues to be a subject of great interest across the humanities and social sciences, and the relevant literature is immense. But it also reflects the belief that each of these approaches represents a limitation of a subject which is, ultimately, unlimited. The subject is vast, changing and undefinable; our tools are not.

The texts considered here have been approached with the expectation of variety. This has been immensely rewarding. Themes, tendencies and connections have been identified and analysed, but there has been little attempt to discover a comprehensive

Milis, trans. by Tanis Guest (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1998); Bernadette Filotas, *Pagan Survivals, Superstitions and Popular Cultures in Early Medieval Pastoral Literature* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2005). Examples of studies focusing on the idea of paganism include: David Fraesdorff, 'The Power of Imagination: The Christianitas and the Pagan North during Conversion to Christianity (800-1200)', *The Medieval History Journal*, 5 (2002), 309-332; James Palmer, 'Defining Paganism in the Carolingian World' *Early Medieval Europe*, 15 (2007), 402-425 (p. 425); Hans-Werner Goetz, 'Heiden aus Schicksal - Heiden aus Schuld?'; Anthony Perron 'The Face of the "Pagan": Portraits of Religious Deviance on the Medieval Periphery', *The Journal of The Historical Society*, 9 (2009) 467-492; David Fraesdorff, *Der Barbarische Norden*; Linda Kaljundi, 'Waiting for the Barbarians'; *Paganism in the Middle Ages: Threat and Fascination*, ed. by Carlos Steel, John Marenbon and Werner Verbeke (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2013); Volker Scior, *Das Eigene und das Fremde: Identität und Fremdheit in den Chroniken Adams von Bremen, Helmolds von Bosau und Arnolds von Lübeck* (Berlin: Akademie, 2002).

³ Augustine, *Confessions*, in *Confessions and Enchiridion*, trans. and ed. by Albert C. Outler (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1955), 11. xiv, 17.

narrative to represent or explain the whole. Narratives are essential to thought; thinking entails making connections. Yet there is the constant temptation to attribute to our thoughts a status which they do not merit, to present our theories as definitive, comprehensive, and final. All systems of knowledge suffer from this delusion, because they are necessarily built on it. Discussions of identity and otherness have been especially prone to these totalizing tendencies in recent years. This may reflect the untouchable certainties which underpin our own sense of self; discussions of identity stray a little too close to home. Yet the medieval authors considered here often approached issues of identity quite differently, and this may suggest that there is peculiarly modern tendency to search for single, definitive answers. Monomania is not a modern disease, but we may be particularly susceptible to it.

This chapter will briefly introduce the key concepts underpinning the approaches adopted in this thesis, considering the biological and cultural foundations of classification which give us the confidence to think, before juxtaposing these with our fundamental inability to see the world as it is. Historians tend to associate otherness with questions of identity, but the language of otherness has often been used to reflect on epistemological issues. These two understandings can be usefully brought together. Thus this section proposes an approach to otherness centred on an Other/other paradox, where the Other as unknown and unknowable is juxtaposed with the other as known, described, and limited. Within this framework conceptual variety and change are expected, together with the confidence which nurtures and conceals them.

2.iii. The confidence to think: innate tendencies.

Thought rests on our ability to categorise, and make connections between categories. Categorisation enables thought and is therefore an end in itself. The ability to categorise does not guarantee any degree of accuracy. Indeed, all categorisations are necessarily (de)limitations and are therefore, to a greater or lesser extent, inaccurate and incompatible with the vast majority of the other possible categorisations. Nonetheless, classification is essential to thought. Thus all rational thought rests on an irrational belief in the permanence and validity of our classifications; our ability to think rests on our confidence in our ability to do so.

Classification is intuitive. We have an innate disposition to classify; to learn certain kinds of things, to organise them in a particular way, and to ignore everything else. Some thoughts come naturally. Historians tend to shy away from issues of biology and human

nature.⁴ For how does one incorporate such universalising claims into the history of a particular time and place? However, it is important to highlight the foundational role which our innate intuitions play in classification and, in doing so, indicate just some the implications which this has for the study of otherness and identity.

Crucially, the capacity and desire to classify is innate. It is something we are born with, and which develops over time according to pre-established patterns. The desire to classify is not, in the first instance, a response to the world around us, but a response to an inborn expectation that the world can, and should, be classified. Furthermore, it has become increasingly clear that this desire to classify is accompanied by the expectation that the world should be classified in certain ways. The way we learn language, perceive colour, or expect the physical world to behave is rooted in and shaped by predispositions to think about these things in a particular fashion.⁵

Numerous other tendencies have been identified as being, in some sense, innate, with varying degrees of credibility.⁶ Many of these are relevant to the study of identity. For instance, we may all have a natural inclination towards essentialism, intuiting the existence of idealised qualities for things, despite the evidence of our day-to-day experiences.⁷ We may also have an innate tendency to dichotomize or make binary discriminations.⁸ These traits have a direct bearing on a substantial part of the literature concerning identity in the humanities, but how such factors might be incorporated into the writing of history is not yet clear. Nonetheless, an awareness of such issues serves as a warning against privileging the forms of analysis with which we are more familiar.

⁴ With some exceptions, such as: Donald Brown, 'Human Nature and History', *History and Theory*, 38 (1999), 138-157; Donald Brown, 'Human Universals, Human Nature & Human Culture', *Daedalus*, 133, 4 (2004), 47-54; *The Return of Science: Evolution, History, and Theory*, ed. by Philip Pomper and David G. Shaw (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002); *Theorizing Religions Past: Archaeology, History, and Cognition*, ed. by Harvey Whitehouse and Luther H. Martin (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2004).

⁵ Shelia Kennison, *Introduction to Language Development* (Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2013), pp. 27-57; Barbara Saunders and Jaap van Brakel, 'The Trajectory of Color', *Perspectives on Science*, 10 (2002), 302-355; Barry Smith and Roberto Casati, 'Naive Physics: An Essay in Ontology', *Philosophical Psychology*, 7 (1994), 225-244.

⁶ The literature is immense. See, for instance: *Mapping the Mind: Domain Specificity in Cognition and Culture* ed. by Lawrence A. Hirschfeld and Susan A. Gelman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) and especially the introduction 'Towards a topography of the mind: An introduction to domain specificity' by Susan Gelman and Lawrence Hirschfeld, pp. 3-36; Annette Karmiloff-Smith, *Beyond Modularity: A Developmental Perspective on Cognitive Science* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995); *The Debated Mind: Evolutionary Psychology versus Ethnography*, ed. by Harvey Whitehouse (Oxford: Berg, 2001); *Grounding Social Sciences in Cognitive Sciences* ed. by Ron Sun (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2012).

⁷ Susan A. Gelman, *The Essential Child: Origins of Essentialism in Everyday Thought* (Oxford: OUP, 2003); Susan A. Gelman, 'Psychological Essentialism in Children', *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 8, 9 (2004), 404-409; Francisco Gil-White, 'Are Ethnic Groups Biological Species to the Human Brain? Essentialism in Our Cognition of Some Social Categories', *Current Anthropology*, 42 (2001), 515-554 (p. 551).

⁸ Donald Brown, 'Human Universals,' p. 51; Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (London: Penguin, 1959, repr. 1990), p. 135.

Many of our intuitions concern the classification of people. Humans evolved in a social environment, and we are adapted to function within this environment.⁹ A key element of this adaptation is our capacity to identify different groups and adjust our behaviour accordingly, and social existence would be unthinkable without this ability.¹⁰ At its most basic level, we intuitively distinguish between our own group, and others; the in-group and the out-group. The mere fact of dividing the world into ‘us’ and ‘them’ entails thinking about each group differently. This is automatic, affecting perception, memory, judgement and empathy.¹¹ Strikingly, these effects can still be observed when the groups are not only ephemeral, but known to be. Only when the certainty derived from dividing the world into groups is outweighed by one’s certainty in the permanent irrelevance of such divisions, will these groupings be abandoned.¹² Although there is a tendency to treat the out-group as more homogeneous and accentuate differences between the two groups, it is important to emphasise that the mere fact of classification does not necessitate hostility. One can imagine an out-group without any sense of antagonism.¹³ Crucially, the instinct to distinguish between groups is built-in. The individual’s desire to distinguish between groups, and to think about these groups in certain ways, precedes their awareness of the realities which might justify them.

We also have an intuitive grasp of different kinds of groups. Young children appear to develop a preparedness to identify family members, and treat them differently from other individuals.¹⁴ Wider groupings based on nation, ethnicity, race and caste may appeal to

⁹ Francisco Gil-White, ‘Are Ethnic Groups Biological Species’; Édouard Machery and Luc Faucher, ‘Why do we Think Racially? Culture, Evolution, and Cognition’, in *Handbook of Categorization in Cognitive Science* ed. by Henri Cohen and Claire Lefebvre (Oxford: Elsevier, 2006), pp. 1009-1033; Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), pp. 35-37, 46-69, 76.

¹⁰ Erving Goffman, pp. 15-24, 57, 60, 64-65, 78, 81, 201, 217-245; Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Penguin, 1966, repr. 1991), pp. 33-37, 43-54, 67-70, 119-121, 135-140, 186-188, 194, 195.

¹¹ Henri Tajfel, ‘Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations’, *Annual Review of Psychology*, 33 (1982), 1-39; Henri Tajfel, ‘The achievement of group differentiation’, in *Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, ed. by Henri Tajfel, (London: Academic Press, 1978), pp. 97-99; Jennifer N. Gutsell and Michael Inzlicht, ‘Empathy constrained: Prejudice predicts reduced mental simulation of actions during observation of outgroups’, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 46 (2010), 841-845; Michael A. Hogg and Graham M. Vaughan, *Social Psychology*, 5th edn. (Harlow: Prentice Hall, 2008), pp. 333-339, 350-353, 392-418, 430-434.

¹² Michael A. Hogg and Graham M. Vaughan, pp. 406, 407.

¹³ Leon Festinger, ‘A Theory of Social Comparison Processes’ *Human Relations*, 7 (1954), 117-140; Henri Tajfel, ‘Social Psychology’, pp. 1-31; Bernadette Park and Charles M. Judd, ‘Rethinking the Link Between Categorization and Prejudice Within the Social Cognition Perspective’, *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 9, 2 (2005), 108-130 (pp. 117, 118); Rui J. P. de Figueiredo and Zachary Elkins, ‘Are Patriots Bigots? An Inquiry into the Vices of In-Group Pride’, *American Journal of Political Science*, 47, 1 (2003), 171-188 (pp. 173, 180, 186).

¹⁴ Debra Lieberman, John Tooby and Leda Cosmide, ‘The Architecture of Human Kin Detection’, *Nature*, 44 (2007), 727-31.

similar intuitions. Such groups are not natural, at least how their adherents might believe. Yet they may nonetheless be rooted in a deep-seated preparedness to identify and prioritise certain forms of relation. Various scholars have explored this possibility and its evolutionary origins, but the observations of Lawrence Hirschfeld are most relevant here.¹⁵ Hirschfeld has argued for the existence of a ‘human kind’ module, a cluster of innate expectations about how the social world should be organised.¹⁶ Describing the development of racial attitudes amongst children, he writes:

Children first develop racial attitudes – relative evaluations of members of racial categories – and subsequently acquire the ability to determine who the members of these categories are. Only following this do they begin to identify their own racial identity consistently and correctly...What appears to be important is that one is set off... not what one is... That is, an ethnic group is conceptually and developmentally first and foremost something discriminable, what it is constituted of is secondary.¹⁷

Such a preparedness to think about the world in certain ways must impact on our understanding of how groups form and survive. For instance, Ernest Gellner’s famous dictum that ‘nations are not inscribed into the nature of things’ appears far less conclusive in this context.¹⁸ The biological, historical, political and cultural foundations of nationhood are deeply suspect, but the evolutionary and psychological grounds are less easy to dismiss. Of particular interest here, however, is how Hirschfeld’s approach highlights the secondary position of reality, and even concepts, in the development of identity. We begin by knowing that some groups are important, and only later find out what they are.

2.iv. The confidence to think: cultural tendencies.

Our innate confidence in our ability to classify is reinforced by the assumptions, intuitions and ideas current in our societies; that is, by culture. Discussions of culture have

¹⁵ See Édouard Machery and Luc Faucher, ‘Why do we Think Racially?’, for a critical summary of current theories on the evolutionary origins of racial ideas.

¹⁶ Lawrence A. Hirschfeld, ‘Do children have a theory of race?’, *Cognition*, 54 (1995), 219–252; Lawrence A. Hirschfeld, ‘On a Folk Theory of Society: Children, Evolution, and Mental Representations of Social Groups’, *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 5, 2 (2001), 107–117; Lawrence A. Hirschfeld, ‘On Acquiring Social Categories: Cognitive Development and Anthropological Wisdom’, *Man*, n.s. 23 (1988), 611–638; Lawrence A. Hirschfeld, *Race in the Making: Cognition, Culture, and the Child's Construction of Human Kinds* (London: MIT Press, 1998).

¹⁷ Lawrence A. Hirschfeld, ‘On Acquiring Social Categories’, pp. 622, 625, 626.

¹⁸ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), p. 68.

an unfortunate tendency towards monomania. Culture is all too easily perceived as being the *only* tool of analysis, and consequently culture is found to be everywhere and everything.¹⁹ Thus the famous anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss concluded, 'I appear to myself as the place where something is going on, but there is no "I", no "me".'²⁰ However, the concept of culture provides an excellent point of reference for analysing such totalizing tendencies in others. All our ideas are drawn from and shaped by the societies in which we live. We speak and think only within the framework of culture.²¹ Crucially, many of the ideas and intuitions which we acquire from our societies are immensely difficult to question, abandon or even identify.

Scholars from a variety of disciplines and perspectives have sought to identify and analyse the boundaries of thought in different societies, to understand which ideas are unthinkable, or can never be forgotten or denied. Many examples could be given. Thus Simone de Beauvoir described the unassailable belief in the idea of the feminine, in which 'the contrary facts are impotent against the myth.'²² Edward Said saw the same absolutism in his (in) famous study of Orientalism, claiming that,

Every European, in what he could say about the Orient, was consequently a racist, an imperialist and almost totally ethnocentric.²³

Stephen Greenblatt has described the 'fundamental inability' of European explorers to move beyond their existing ideas when confronted with the wonders of the New World:

[Europeans] do not understand, and when they do not understand, they can only continue to entrap, kidnap and project vain fantasies.²⁴

More recently, Greenblatt has attempted to extend this image of a constraining knowledge to the whole of the Middle Ages, writing:

¹⁹ Clifford Geertz, pp. 3-32.

²⁰ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Myth and meaning* (London: Routledge, 1978 repr. 2001), p. 2; c.f. Geertz's criticisms of Lévi-Strauss, Clifford Geertz, pp. 345-359; Erving Goffman, p. 253.

²¹ Clifford Geertz, pp. 3-32, 47-48, 50, 68-69, 76.

²² Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. by Howard M. Parshley (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), pp. 282, 283.

²³ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, repr. 2003), p. 204.

²⁴ Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: the Wonder of the New World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 117.

Something happened in the Renaissance, something that surged up against the constraints that centuries had constructed around curiosity, desire, individuality, sustained attention to the material world, the claims of the body.²⁵

Greenblatt's *The Swerve* is, amongst other things, a statement of faith that the modern world is qualitatively different, and better, than what came before. It is magnificently flawed.²⁶ Yet it serves to illustrate both the study of institutionalised thought, and its ongoing effects. As Émile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss wrote in their *Primitive Classification*:

The pressure exerted by the group on each of its members does not permit individuals to judge freely on the notions which society itself has elaborated and in which it has placed something of its personality. Such constructs are sacred for individuals.²⁷

Yet for Durkheim and Mauss it remained unthinkable that such constraints might apply to modern man.²⁸ Like Greenblatt, while discussing cultural limitations, they revealed something of the limits of their own thought-world.

A more recent example is provided by the work of Mary Douglas. Her work on institutions – 'legitimized conventions' – is wonderful, and has been a key point of reference throughout this thesis.²⁹ However, Douglas' work bears testimony to the same institutionalised limitations which she describes. Illustrating the limiting intuitions inherent in the 'thought style' of academic disciplines, she describes psychologists as,

Institutionally incapable of remembering that humans are social beings. As soon as they know it, they forget it.³⁰

²⁵ Stephen Greenblatt, *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern* (London: Random House, 2011), pp. 9-10.

²⁶ See especially, Jim Hinch, 'Why Stephen Greenblatt is Wrong — and Why It Matters', *Los Angeles Review of Books*, December 1st, 2012 <<http://lareviewofbooks.org/review/why-stephen-greenblatt-is-wrong-and-why-it-matters>> [last accessed: 04/08/2014].

²⁷ Émile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss, *Primitive Classification*, trans. by Rodney Needham (London: Cohen & West, 1963), p. 88.

²⁸ Mary Douglas, *How Institutions Think* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), pp. 94-99; Ian Hacking, *The Social Construction of What?* p. 60.

²⁹ Mary Douglas, *How Institutions Think*, esp., pp. 4, 46, 55-58, 65-69, 76, 92-99.

³⁰ Mary Douglas, *How Institutions Think*, p. 81.

This inhibition has remained remarkably stable over the past century.³¹ Yet Douglas herself appears incapable of describing humans as anything but social beings, freely dismissing as naïve the notion that people might classify on any basis except the social order.³²

All this is to say that culture does not merely supply us with ideas to think with, but imposes strong and sometimes insurmountable limits on what is, or is not, thinkable. Many other examples might have been given, not least from the works of Michel Foucault and Thomas Kuhn.³³

Furthermore, it is important to emphasise that accuracy is not the most important factor determining the success of an idea. The influence of power and social structure on thought has been examined extensively; ideas of gender, race and class must all, in the first instance, be understood in such terms. So too must the more fundamental questions of similarity and difference, truth, and the ‘order of things’.³⁴ We tend to judge new ideas by their compatibility with those we have already accepted. If an idea appears familiar, it is accepted; if not, it is easily forgotten.³⁵ Within the context of a paradigm shift the opposite can be true, with ideas being accepted precisely because they represent a departure from the current consensus.³⁶ In either situation, an idea’s relationship to the physical world is of secondary importance. The scientific method is, at best, skin-deep.

To make sense of the world we must classify, and do so with confidence. Both our psychologies and societies encourage us to see the world as simple and comprehensible. Rational thought, day-to-day life, and innumerable varieties of oppressive, damaging and restrictive claims require a world which is defined and definable. We have a fundamental and inescapable need to believe the world is comprehensible. It is not.

³¹ John D. Greenwood, *The Disappearance of the Social in American Social Psychology* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003).

³² Mary Douglas, *How Institutions Think*, pp. 55-61.

³³ For instance: Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: a History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. by Richard Howard (New York: Vintage Books, 1964, repr.1988); Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 4th edn. (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012); Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: an Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Routledge, 1970, repr. 2001).

³⁴ Michel Foucault, *The Order Things*, pp. xx-10. The literature is immense. A few examples will suffice: Peter C. Sederberg, *The Politics of Meaning: Power and Explanation in the Construction of Social Reality* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1984), pp. x, 2; Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume One*, trans. by Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1978), p. 93; Steven Lukes, *Power: a Radical View*, 2nd edn. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 12, 26-31, 37-40, 47, 61-68, 85-96; Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*, 2nd edn. (London: Routledge, 2003, repr. 2010), pp. xxiii, 52-53, 59-64, 78, 113, 152, 160-162; Simone de Beauvoir, pp. 16, 17, 253; Ian Hacking, ‘Making Up People’; Ian Hacking, *The Social Construction of What?* pp. 10-16, 114-117, 123.

³⁵ Mary Douglas, *How Institutions Think*, pp. 4, 47, 55, 58, 60, 65, 92; Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols*, pp. 74-76, 161; Erving Goffman, p. 35.

³⁶ Thomas Kuhn, pp. 144-147, 151-159.

2.v. The world as Other.

The world is Other. It is unknown and unknowable. This Otherness can be expressed in a variety of ways. We might say that each moment, person, or thought is fundamentally unique. We might draw on sociological terminology to describe the social construction of order in the face of chaos, the ‘virtually infinite number of discriminably different stimuli’ with which we are confronted.³⁷ Thus social constructionism has become the tool of choice for those wishing to reject the inevitability of any reviled norm; nothing is inevitable, because everything is socially constructed.³⁸ Expressed mathematically, we might say that any plausible mathematical theory will either be inconsistent or incomplete.³⁹ No single formula can encompass the universe.

In Emmanuel Levinas’ philosophy of ethics and Martin Buber’s mystic philosophy, reality is fundamentally Other. For Levinas there was an unbridgeable gulf separating us from the world around us, which provided the basis for all ethics.⁴⁰ Sartre, Hegel, Husserl and many others would agree.⁴¹ Buber was more optimistic. He assumed that most of life operated within the realm of I-it, in which the world is defined, described and known, where people are classified and understood via the self. Yet Buber also conceived of a relation in which Otherness could be encountered without being diminished. He described this as I-Thou. For Buber this was a fundamentally non-rational, mystic form of relation; it operated outside of the world of reason, language and the describable, although it might influence it.⁴² Buber’s work remains influential amongst psychiatrists and psychologists, but finds its closest parallels in theological works.⁴³ Kierkegaard’s conception of faith and the Absurd,⁴⁴

³⁷ Eleanor Rosch ‘Principles of categorization’, in *Cognition and Categorization*, ed. by Eleanor Rosch and Barbara B. Lloyd (Hillsdale: Erlbaum, 1978), pp. 27-48 (p. 382).

³⁸ Ian Hacking, *The Social Construction of What?*, pp. 6, 7, 12, 34, 49.

³⁹ Stephen C. Kleene, *Mathematical Logic* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1967), p. 250.

⁴⁰ Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being, or, Beyond Essence*, trans. by Alphonso Lingis (London: Nijhoff, 1981), pp. 9-11, 81-94, 140-165, 173-185.

⁴¹ Jean-Paul Sartre, *L’être et le néant* (Paris: Gallimard, 1949), pp. 251, 303-321; Edmund Husserl, *Formale und transzendente Logik*, ed. by Paul Janssen (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), pp. 239-245; Georg W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by Arnold V. Miller (Oxford: OUP, 1977), pp. 58-67, 104-138; Philip J. Kain, ‘Self-consciousness, the other and Hegel’s dialectic of recognition: Alternative to a postmodern subterfuge’, *Philosophy Social Criticism*, 24, 25 (1998), 105-126 (pp. 108-109, 113, 115, 119, 122-123); Simone de Beauvoir, pp. 16-21.

⁴² Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. by Ronald Gregor Smith, 2nd edn. (Edinburgh: T.& T. Clark, 1958), esp. pp. 7-11, 16-17, 29-31, 46, 48, 54-58, 62-63, 70, 75, 76, 78, 79, 82, 99, 118; Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man*, trans. by Ronald Gregor Smith (London: K. Paul, 1947), pp. 2, 4, 10, 14, 16, 20, 23, 27-28, 35, 40, 43, 48, 52, 55, 62.

⁴³ Ronald D. Laing, *The Self and Others*. (London: Tavistock Publications, 1961), pp. 98, 109; *Martin Buber and the Human Sciences*, ed. by Maurice S. Friedman (Albany: State University of New York, 1996).

⁴⁴ Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*. trans. by Alistair Hannay (London: Penguin, 1985 repr. 2005), pp. 31, 35, 39, 40-41, 51-56, 63, 64, 70, 78, 81, 84, 91, 138-140, 148.

Jean Zizioulas' communion,⁴⁵ Dietrich Bonhoeffer's being,⁴⁶ Rudolf Otto's sense of the numinous,⁴⁷ and Karl Barth's Absolute Other;⁴⁸ all are concerned with the problem of building a knowledge around what is felt to be indescribable, whether that is faith, scripture, a sense of awe, or God. The structure of thought, and the underlying problem, remains relevant and instructive.

This sense of the world as Other provides the backdrop to this thesis. This insistence on the absolute Otherness of the world – its fundamental incomprehensibility and our utter inability to understand it – is usefully juxtaposed with a world necessarily approached as describable, definable, and other. The term 'other' with a small 'o' will generally be used to indicate those groups whose status as outsiders is moralised and politicised to an unusual degree; women, Jews, heretics, pagans, barbarians. These are other like Said's Orient or de Beauvoir's feminine are other, and as most historians would use the term. But such usage is always qualified; often explicitly, but always implicitly. All classification is politicised and moralised to some extent.⁴⁹ Thus all classification might legitimately be described as 'othering'. The distinction is merely a matter of degree, or noteworthiness. The Orient and the feminine are characterised by their otherness, the baker is not. But more importantly, when juxtaposed with a sense of the absolute Other, the limitations of otherness are thrown into relief. Describing something as 'other' can never be an end in itself. Restoring a sense of paradox to the study of otherness acts to restrain the totalizing tendencies which can emerge when otherness is considered in isolation. That is, when 'otherness' is presented as an answer in itself.

Furthermore, the tension in the other/Other paradox implies an approach which more accurately describes the world in which we live. Classification is expected and necessary, but always limited. Being limited in a world which is vast and incomprehensible, a universe 'infinitely fertile in suggestions', variety and change are the norm.⁵⁰ For variety is to be expected. Conceptual variety and fluidity is an inevitable by-product of our inability to accurately see and express what confronts us on a daily basis. Some concepts are

⁴⁵ Jean Zizioulas, *Communion & Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church* (London: T & T Clark, 2007), pp. 1-13, 36-40, 43, 47, 55, 64-68.

⁴⁶ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Act and Being. Transcendental Philosophy and Ontology in Systematic Theology*, trans. by Hans-Richard Reuter (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1961 repr. 2009), pp. 30-44.

⁴⁷ Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, trans. by John. W. Harvey (London: OUP, 1924) pp. 1-4, 12-5, 19-21, 25-30.

⁴⁸ Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. from 6th edn. by Edwyn C. Hoskyns (Oxford: OUP, 1933, repr. 1968), pp. 115-125, 140-141, 229-257, 362-374; Karl Barth, *The Humanity of God*, trans. by Thomas Wieser and John. N. Thomas (Louisville: WJK, 1960), pp. 20-5, 27-31, 37-52.

⁴⁹ Mary Douglas, *Risk and Blame*, p. 5.

⁵⁰ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. by Annette Lavers (London: Vintage Classics, 2009), p. 131.

remarkably stable and enduring, and innumerable others appear so, yet are not. However, faced with an ever-elusive reality and ever-changing societies and individual circumstances, old ideas are changed or abandoned, and new ideas emerge.

The expectation of consistency is easily accounted for; we are biologically and culturally programmed to have confidence in our classifications. We must believe that our ideas are consistent, accurate and justified for them to be functional. Yet the only way we can examine whether this belief is justified is to draw upon ideas formed within the same biological and cultural constraints. Justifying our faith in the solidity and accuracy of our ideas is therefore difficult. They are useful, compelling and entrenched; but they are not, in the first instance, designed to be accurate. On the other hand, the imperfections in our ability to comprehend the world are increasingly apparent, despite a culture and a psychology which tend to blind us to the inadequacies and inconsistencies in our own thought. We perceive very little, communicate imperfectly, remember little and poorly, and begin and experience life from a standpoint which no one has or ever will experience again. Our experience of all of this is shaped by biological and cultural constraints over which we have no control. Any degree of communication or perception, however momentary or fragmented, is remarkable. How can we expect individual authors, let alone whole cultures, to display the kind of monomaniacal consistency which has been posited by Said, Greenblatt and others?

This thesis is concerned with otherness; with the groups and individuals who were regarded as being barbarous, alien, hostile, antagonistic, impure, unacceptable and other. These issues are closely tied to questions of individual identity, and the peculiar circumstances of each text. However, rather than beginning by providing a survey of the methodological issues involved in studying early medieval identity, I have attempted to consider the issue more broadly.

In part, this is a response to the totalising tendencies of many scholarly discussions of identity. The grandiose claims which too often accompany studies of otherness can and should be engaged and refuted in historical terms. Said and Greenblatt's arguments simply are not supported by the historical data. Neither are many statements about paganism, or the medieval idea of paganism. But there are broader, methodological issues at stake here as well, which stretch beyond discussions of otherness and identity. Coincidentally, it is an issue to which the vocabulary of otherness has, at times, been applied.

In setting out, in a very general fashion, the conceptual underpinnings of a paradox of Other/otherness, I have been attempting to envision a framework which cannot tolerate the kind of complete and settled answers which Said and others have produced. This stems

from the conviction that our sources, that life, is characterised by variety and change. It is far more interesting than Said and Greenblatt allow. There are, I believe, good grounds for thinking that such conceptual variety is not something peculiar to issues of identity, but stems from a more fundamental tension between how we see the world, how we *want* to see the world, and how it actually is.

Totalising models of identity are not simply flawed in their representation of historical realities, but in their aims. The goal of a complete and settled answer is misplaced and misleading. We should not approach our sources expecting to find coherent schemes and neat patterns, nor should we aspire to produce them ourselves. Rather, we should expect a more complex picture; of conceptual variety, change and fragmentation, overlaid by the confidence of both medieval and modern authors. Variety is to be expected, and this study has proceeded on this principle.

3. Introduction to Hamburg-Bremen: origins, myths and crises.

The twinned archdiocese of Hamburg-Bremen was established during the ninth century, and claimed responsibility for the mission to convert the northern peoples; the Danes, Swedes, Slavs and others who lay on the north-eastern borders of the Carolingian Empire. It produced two of the most important literary sources for the northern world in the medieval period; Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii* in the ninth century and Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum* in the eleventh.¹ The archdiocese's unparalleled interest in the northern world was bound up with its identification with the mission to the North. From the pontificate of Anskar (d. 865), the foundation of Hamburg, its unification with Bremen, its archiepiscopal status, and claim to hold ecclesiastical authority over the North, were all understood in terms of its mission to convert and guide the peoples of the North. The nature and existence of these sources cannot be understood without reference to these issues of ecclesiastical identity and authority.

3.i. The origins of Hamburg-Bremen.

The historical origins and development of Hamburg-Bremen are far less accessible than the myths and claims maintained by the clergy of the see. Our two main narrative sources are conspicuously partisan, and legitimate questions have been raised about many of the details they provide.² Other literary sources, particularly the *Annales Corbeienses* and *Vita Rimberti*, do little to resolve these issues.³ A strong tradition of forgery has been detected at Hamburg-Bremen during this period, which overshadows the relatively limited collection of charters and letters which survive.⁴

¹ Rimbert; Adam.

² For instance, Henrik Janson, *Templum nobilissimum. Adam av Bremen, Uppsalatmplet och konfliktlinjerna I Europa kring år 1075*, Avhandlingar från Historiska institutionen i Göteborg, 21 (Göteborg: Historiska institutionen i Göteborg, 1998); Eric Knibbs, *Ansgar, Rimbert and The Forged Origins of Hamburg-Bremen* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011).

³ *Annales Corbeienses*, ed. by Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS, 3; *Vita Rimberti*, ed. by Georg Waitz, MGH SRG 55.

⁴ Eric Knibbs, pp. 1-13; Wolfgang Seegrün, *Das Erzbistum Hamburg in seinen älteren Papsturkunden* (Köln: Böhlau-Verlag GmbH, 1976) pp. 63-100; Richard Drögereit, 'Ansgar. Missionsbischof, Bischof von Bremen, Missionserzbischof für Dänen und Schweden', *Jahrbuch der Gesellschaft für niedersächsische Kirchengeschichte*, 73 (1975) 9-45; Wilhelm Schroeder, 'Die falschen Urkunden des Erzstiftes Hamburg-Bremen', *Jahrbücher für die Landeskunde der Herzogtümer Schleswig, Holstein und Lauenburg*, 10 (1869), 287-304; Johann M. Lappenberg, *Hamburgisches Urkundenbuch* (Hamburg: Perthes, Besser & Mauke, 1842); Volker Scior, pp. 41-47.

The nature, dating and circumstances of the foundation of Hamburg, its unification with Bremen, its elevation to archiepiscopal rank, and its mission to the North have all been debated, and there is little sign of any consensus emerging. Eric Knibbs has recently reiterated the criticisms of Traugott Tamm, Christian Reuter and Richard Drögereit, who all rejected the account of the diocese's origins found in our narrative sources.⁵ But these debates remain unresolved, and Henrik Janson has recently responded to Knibbs's arguments by reaffirming the essential accuracy of these sources.⁶ However, although the details of these arguments do have some bearing on the issues discussed here, of far greater importance is the mythologised view of history presented and accepted by the clergy of Hamburg-Bremen, and the general dynamics of the situation which formed and maintained these myths.⁷

3.ii. The myth of Hamburg-Bremen.

The earliest narrative account of Hamburg-Bremen's history is provided by Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*.⁸ Rimbert's account of the diocese is framed in terms of Anskar's life and mission. Anskar was a monk of Corbie who joined Ebo's mission to the Danes in 826, acting as a teacher for the newly-baptised Harald Klak and his companions.⁹ Rimbert claims that the archdiocese of Hamburg was established by Louis the Pious to assist Anskar with this mission, noting that Charlemagne had also envisioned such a foundation.¹⁰ He writes that the mission ran smoothly until Hamburg was attacked and devastated by an army of Danes in 845.¹¹ This attack became central to Rimbert's narrative. With the see destroyed,

⁵ Eric Knibbs, pp. 7-10; Traugott Tamm, *Die Anfänge des Erzbistums Hamburg-Bremen* (Jena: G. Neuenhahn, 1888); Christian Reuter, 'Ebo von Reims und Ansgar', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 105 (1910), 237-84; Richard Drögereit, 'Ansgar. Missionsbischof, Bischof von Bremen, Missionserzbischof für Dänen und Schweden', *Jahrbuch der Gesellschaft für niedersächsische Kirchengeschichte*, 73 (1975), 9-45.

⁶ Henrik Janson, 'Recension av Eric Knibbs, Ansgar, Rimbert, and the Forged Foundations of Hamburg Bremen', *Kyrkohistorisk Årsskrif* (2012), 187-192; Henrik Janson, 'Ansgar und die frühe Geschichte des Erzbistums Hammaburg', in *Mythos Hammaburg Archäologische Entdeckungen zu den Anfängen Hamburgs*, ed. by Rainer-Maria Weiss und Anne Klammt (Hamburg: Archäologisches Museum Hamburg, 2014), pp. 262-268.

⁷ I have presented a far more detailed analysis of the history and historiography of Hamburg-Bremen in: Tim Barnwell, 'Power and Weakness: Hamburg-Bremen in the Ninth and Eleventh Centuries', in *Relações de Poder: da Antiguidade ao Medievo - Relations of Power: from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, ed. by Renan Marques Birro and Carlos Eduardo da Costa Campos (Vitória: DLL/UFES, 2013), pp. 421- 453.

⁸ Rimbert, *Vita Anskarii*. With the possible exception of Hamburg's foundation charter: sometimes viewed as partially or wholly forged, Henrik Janson has recently argued that it is authentic. This would pre-date the *Vita Anskarii*. cf. Johann M. Lappenberg, p. 10; Henrik Janson, 'Recension av Eric Knibbs, pp. 187-192; Eric Knibbs, pp. 89, 103, 158, 165, 183, 197-198, 209-210.

⁹ Rimbert, 7.

¹⁰ Rimbert, 12.

¹¹ Rimbert, 16.

Anskar was impoverished and the mission jeopardised.¹² This provided the justification for the unification of Hamburg with the diocese of Bremen, which had become fortuitously vacant shortly after the attack. Rimbert emphasises that the unification of Hamburg-Bremen was widely recognised as being ‘lawful because it was necessary’¹³, and claims that the mission subsequently prospered, with Anskar taking over the responsibilities of the Swedish mission from Gauzbert of Osnabrück.¹⁴

Rimbert’s narrative legitimised and explained the existence of the archdiocese of Hamburg-Bremen and by the eleventh century it had become widely accepted as fact.¹⁵ The area claimed by Hamburg’s mission had expanded significantly during the intervening years to encompass Iceland, Greenland, Norway, and much of the Baltic and North Sea worlds, but when Adam of Bremen came to write his *Gesta* in the 1070s, his understanding of Hamburg-Bremen’s origins and mission was firmly rooted in Rimbert’s *Vita Anskarii*.¹⁶ This account of Hamburg’s origins – mythologised, if not mythical – provided the backdrop to both the *Vita Anskarii* and Adam’s *Gesta*, including their understanding of the North.

3.iii. Hamburg-Bremen c.865.

Rimbert wrote his *Vita Anskarii* shortly after Anskar’s death in 865, at a time when his Church was in crisis.¹⁷ Hamburg-Bremen lacked material support and legitimacy, and the *Vita Anskarii* was written as an imaginative and ambitious response to these twin crises. Rimbert does little to disguise the troubles facing his diocese, although his account of them is painstakingly crafted, and should be handled with care.

Anskar and his diocese were destitute for much of his career. The founding endowments of the Saxon churches were very meagre and the local aristocracy was only beginning to actively support the Saxon churches towards the end of Anskar’s life.¹⁸ It is unclear whether Hamburg had ever been canonically founded, and therefore whether it had any founding endowments, yet the little evidence we have suggests that Hamburg was

¹² Rimbert, 17.

¹³ Rimbert, 21-23.

¹⁴ Rimbert, 24-30.

¹⁵ *Vita Rimberti*, 1-5; Johann M. Lappenberg, pp. 34, 43, 58, 60, 64, 66, 71, 74,77, 82, 84, 85, 95,99; Adam, 1. xiv (15) -xvii (19), xx (22)-xxxiii (35).

¹⁶ c.f. Rimbert, 21- 23; *Vita Rimberti*, 1; Johann M. Lappenberg, pp. 31, 32, 38, 39, 58, 66, 71, 74, 77, 95, 99; Adam, 1. xv (17), 3. lxxiii – lxxviii, 4. i (1) - xliii (41).

¹⁷ Ian Wood, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe, 400-1050* (Harlow: Longman, 2001), pp. 125-127.

¹⁸ Christopher Carroll, ‘The Bishoprics of Saxony in the First Century after Christianization’, *Early Medieval Europe*, 8 (1999), 219- 246 (p. 229); Ingrid Rembold, *The Politics of Christianization in Carolingian Saxony* (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 2014), pp. 167-218.

significantly poorer than Bremen, which had been (canonically) established in 787.¹⁹ With the division of the realm in 843 Anskar lost access to the monastery of Turnhout, which had provided crucial support for his mission to the Danes, and this loss was compounded in 845 with the destruction of Hamburg by the retreating Danish army.²⁰ Although Rimbart focused on the more dramatic destruction of Hamburg when explaining his Church's poverty, he also acknowledged that Anskar's mission had effectively already been ended with the loss of Turnhout. Writing to the monks of Corbie concerning the events of 843 he stated:

Thus it came about that your brethren who were with him here at that time returned to your society and many others also left him on the grounds of poverty. He, however, continued to live as best he could with the few who remained with him; and though he was very poor, he would not abandon the task that had been assigned to him.²¹

The unification of Hamburg and Bremen was explicitly justified by Hamburg's dire need for material support, but there is little reason to believe that Bremen's resources were particularly extensive. Rimbart's appeals for aid from the monks of Corbie, and for restitution for the monastery of Turnhout, may suggest that they were not.²² These appeals were closely tied to the perceived legitimacy of his Church and mission.

The *Vita Anskarii* provided a vision of the world which legitimised and glorified the Church and mission of Hamburg-Bremen. But Rimbart's account was by no means the most obvious way of understanding events at the time, and traces of other, competing, views can be found. Hamburg's continued survival was dependent on wider recognition of its status

¹⁹ Rimbart, 20, 21, 23; Adam, 1. xviii (20); Ingrid Rembold, pp. 127-130, 181, 182, 185, 186, 187, 192, 216, 223, 224; Knibbs, p. 133; Christopher Carroll, pp. 220, 223, 233, 237, 239, 240; Hedwig Röckelein, ' "Pervenimus mirificum ad sancti Medardi oraculum". Der Anteil westfränkischer Zellen am Aufbau sächsischer Missionszentren', in *Am Vorabend der Kaiserkrönung: Das Epos 'Karolus Magnus et Leo Papa' und der Papstbesuch in Paderborn 799*, ed. by Peter Godman, Jörg Jarnut and Peter Johanek (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2002) pp. 145-162; Uwe Lobbedey, 'Northern Germany', in *European towns: their archaeology and early history* ed. by Maurice Barley (London: Academic Press, 1977), pp. 127-158 (pp. 127-130); Ralf Busch, 'Stadtarchäologie in Hamburg – Eine Bilanz im Jahre 1995', in *Lübecker Kolloquium zur Stadtarchäologie im Hanseraum, 1: Stand, Aufgaben und Perspektiven*, ed. by Manfred Gläser (Lübeck: Schmidt-Römhild, 1997), pp. 171-180; Manfred Rech, 'Stand, Aufgaben und Perspektiven der Mittelalterarchäologie in Bremen', in *Lübecker Kolloquium zur Stadtarchäologie im Hanseraum, 1: Stand, Aufgaben und Perspektiven*, ed. by Manfred Gläser (Lübeck: Schmidt-Römhild, 1997), pp. 123-134. Dating the foundation of any of the Saxon bishoprics is problematic. See Ingrid Rembold, pp. 167-171.

²⁰ Rimbart, 7, 12, 15, 16, 21, 23.

²¹ Rimbart, 21. See Ingrid Rembold, pp. 182-187, on the loss of Turnhout.

²² Rimbart, 1, 3, 5, 6, 12, 15, 21, 23, 36; James Palmer, 'Rimbart's *Vita Anskarii*', pp. 242-246. See p. 16 fn. 18.

and claims, yet these could be disputed. Hamburg had been established within the former territory of two neighbouring bishoprics, Bremen and Verden, which led to conflict with both of these.²³ Anskar had been forced to compensate bishop Waldgar of Verden with territory from the diocese of Bremen in order to retain Hamburg's possessions, including Hamburg itself, and ownership of the monastery of Ramesloh would be disputed for over a century.²⁴ The archbishops of Mainz and Cologne were both able to treat Bremen as a suffragan for much of the Anskar's pontificate, and Cologne would continue to claim Bremen as a suffragan for decades to come, undermining its independence and the unification of the two sees.²⁵ Sections of Bremen's clergy appear to have resisted both Anskar and Rimbert's rule, although their reasons for doing so are now lost.²⁶ Despite Hamburg's claims, the monastery of Turnhout was not returned from its new (and legitimate) owner, Raginar, nor did the Church receive any restitution for its loss, the likely intent of Rimbert's complaints.²⁷ Rimbert's vision of Hamburg's past could be disputed by the inhabitants of Hamburg itself, whose memory of events was probably quite different; only the fortified sections of the town were destroyed, the Danes' plunder and captives were swiftly returned, and the town was quickly re-occupied and rebuilt.²⁸ Rimbert's description of the northern mission could also be contested. Anskar's claims to the Swedish mission are particularly suspect, and those with memories of the mission under Ebo of Reims or Gauzbert of Osnabrück are unlikely to have recognised their diminished roles in the *Vita Anskarii*.²⁹

All this is to say that the early years of Hamburg-Bremen were extremely troubled, and that, like so much other early medieval literature, the *Vita Anskarii* was formed against a backdrop of crisis.³⁰

²³ Rimbert, 12, 22; Adam, 1. xxiii (25).

²⁴ Rimbert 22; Adam, 1. xxiii (25), 1. xxx (32), 2. Schol. 23 (24), 2. xlv (43); Johann M. Lappenberg, pp. 16, 25, 40, 41, 42, 49, 61; Eric Knibbs, pp. 5, 154.

²⁵ Rimbert, 23; Adam, 1. xlix (51), 2. vi (5); Johann M. Lappenberg, pp. 30,34, 36, 47; Eric Knibbs, pp. 2, 9, 11, 12, 116, 134, 137, 154, 163, 166, 170, 181, 186, 206, 212, 219, 231; Bremen was a *de facto* suffragan of Mainz for much Anskar's pontificate and this is reflected in a number of charters. Louis the German may, at times, have wished to permanently detach Bremen from Cologne. Eric Knibbs, p. 69, 129-133, 178.

²⁶ Rimbert, 36; Adam, 1. xxiii (25).

²⁷ Rimbert, 12, 15, 21, 23, 36; Adam, 1. xvi (18), xvii (19), xx (22), xxii (24), Schol. 5 (6).

²⁸ Rimbert, 23, 24; Heiric of Auxerre, *Miracula sancti Germani*, PL 124, cols. 1258-66, 14-15; Uwe Lobbedey, pp. 127-130; Ralf Busch, pp. 171-180; Eric Knibbs, pp. 11, 119, 127, 200.

²⁹ Rimbert, 12, 13, 14, 17, 20, 25, 28, 33, 34; Knibbs pp. 12, 68, 134, 135, 168, 205; Christian Reuter, pp. 237-84; James Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*', pp. 235-236, 251-254.

³⁰ Hans-Werner Goetz, 'Constructing the Past', p. 39.

3.iv. Hamburg-Bremen c.1075.

By the eleventh century Hamburg-Bremen was far richer and more powerful than it had been in the time of Anskar. Tracing Hamburg-Bremen's development in any detail is difficult given the limited and often problematic nature of our sources. Yet the archaeological evidence from Hamburg and Bremen, together with charters, letters and Adam of Bremen's *Gesta*, suggest a Church and diocese which were growing wealthier, not least through the donations of kings, nobles and the archbishops themselves.³¹

Hamburg-Bremen's power peaked during the pontificate of Archbishop Adalbert (1043-1072). A close advisor to both Henry III and Henry IV, Adalbert's intense loyalty had allowed him to acquire increasing wealth and power for his archbishopric. As well as a steady stream of royal grants of land, he claimed secular lordship over most of the counties in his diocese, and was able to acquire possession of the great monasteries of Lorsch and Corvey, although the monks there resisted his rule.³²

Adalbert also made a concerted effort to turn Hamburg-Bremen's claims over the North into a reality. The myth of Hamburg's mission to the North was well-established, but the extent to which this translated into missionary activity is unclear. Even Adam of Bremen, who had access to many sources of information which are now lost, could only hypothesize that missionary work continued throughout the tenth century.³³ Adalbert attempted to establish direct control over the ecclesiastical affairs of the North: consecrating bishops; denouncing opponents; alternately feasting and rebuking the northern kings; and making plans for a reforming synod for the North and a great archiepiscopal journey across the region.³⁴ In all of this he was usually able to gain the support of the pope and king.³⁵ Adalbert also made plans to elevate Hamburg into a Patriarchate and, although this did not

³¹ Adam, 1. xxiv (26), 2. xv (14), 2. xxix (27), 2. xlvi (45), 2. xlix (47), 2. l (48), 2. lvii (55), 2. lviii (56), 2. lxxvii (65), 2. Schol. 47 (48), 2. lxxv (73), 2. lxxx (76), 3. i (1), 3. ii (2), 3. iii (3), 3. iv (4), 3. v (5), 3. ix (9), 3. xx (19), 3. xxvii (26), 3. xxviii (27), 3. xxxiii (32), 3. xxxvi (35), 3. xxxviii (37), 3. xlv (43), 3. xiv (44), 3. xlvi (45), 3. xlix (48), 3. lix (58), 3. lx (59), 3. lxix (68); Johann M. Lappenberg, pp. 76-99; Bruno of Merseburg, *De Bello Saxonico*, ed. by Oswald Holder-Egger, MGH SRG, 5, 3, 4; *Imperial Lives and Letters of the Eleventh Century*, trans. by Theodor E. Mommsen and Karl F. Morrison (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), pp. 139-141.

³² See fn. 33, below.

³³ Adam, 1. xxxvi (38), 1. xlvi (48), 1. xlvii (49), 1. li (53); Anders Winroth, *The Conversion of Scandinavia: Vikings, Merchants and Missionaries in the Remaking of Northern Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), pp. 110-111; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 136.

³⁴ Adam, 3. li (2), 3. v (5), 3. viii (8), 3. ix (9), 3. xi (10), 3. (11), 3. xv (14), 3. xvi (15), 3. xvii (16), 3. schol. 68 (69), 3. xviii (17), 3. xxi (20), 3. xxiv (23), 3. xxv (25), 3. lxxviii (67), 3. lxx (68), 3. lxxii, 3. lxxiii, 3. lxxiv, 3. lxxv, 3. lxxvi, 3. lxxvii, 3. lxxviii, 4. xxxvi (35).

³⁵ Adam, 3. i (1), 3. schol. 69 (70), 3. xviii (17), 3. xxix (28), 3. xxxi (30), 3. xxxiii (32), 3. xiv (44), 3. lix (58), 3. lx (59), 3. lxi (60), 3. lxxv, 3. lxxviii; Johann M. Lappenberg, pp. 71, 72, 73, 74, 73, 77, 84, 90, 91, 99; Theodor E. Mommsen and Karl F. Morrison, pp. 139-141.

come to fruition, during his lifetime it appears to have been regarded as a real possibility, to the point where Adalbert began taking practical steps towards establishing it.³⁶

However, Adam of Bremen presented Adalbert's pontificate as disastrous for Hamburg-Bremen. He introduced his account of Adalbert's life by writing:

My desire is to give a sympathetic account of the misfortunes by which the noble and wealthy cities of the diocese of Hamburg and Bremen were devastated, the one by pagans, the other by pseudo-Christians.³⁷

Within this context Adalbert's power and success became tragic elements in a pontificate ultimately characterised by failure. Adam complains that Adalbert bankrupted his diocese with corrupt officials, squandering its wealth to buy political favour, which proved to be ephemeral.³⁸ For although Adalbert was widely recognised as one of the most powerful and ambitious men of his day, he was also widely loathed.³⁹ The enmity of the Saxon princes was particularly destructive, undermining Adalbert's authority in his own diocese, and resulting in the destruction or occupation of many of the Church's properties.⁴⁰ Adam also blamed the Saxon princes for the rebellion of the Polabian Slavs in 1066, which destroyed much of the diocese of Hamburg, including Hamburg itself, and removed a substantial population from the Church's ecclesiastical authority.⁴¹ For Adam, Adalbert's pontificate was a period of crisis from which his Church was only beginning to emerge. Like Rimbert, he was writing in response to a crisis, and his approach to difference was shaped by this.

³⁶ Adam, 3. xxxiii (32), 3. xxxix (38), 3. lix (58); *Triumphus S. Remacli*, ed. by Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS, 11 (Hanover: Hahn, 1854), pp. 433-461 (3, p. 439); Helmold of Bosau, *Helmoldi presbyteri Bozoviensis Cronica Slavorum*, ed. by Johann M. Lappenberg, rev. by Bernhard Schmeidler, MGH SRG, 32, 3rd edn., i. 22; Horst Fuhrmann, 'Provincia constat duodecim episcopatus. Zum Patriarchatsplan Erzbischof Adalberts von Hamburg-Bremen', *Studia Gratiana*, 11 (1967), 389-404 (pp. 403, 404.); Edgar. N. Johnson, 'Adalbert of Hamburg-Bremen: A Politician of the Eleventh Century', *Speculum*, 9, 2 (1934), 147-179 (pp. 157-161, esp. p. 159 fn. 3); Richard Müller, *Erzbischof Adalbert von Hamburg-Bremen und die Idee des nordischen Patriarchats* (Stade: Pockwitz 1885), pp. 16-17.

³⁷ Adam, 3. i (1); *The History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*, trans. by Francis Joseph Tschan and Timothy Reuter (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 115.

³⁸ Adam, 3. x (10), 3. xxxvi (35), 3. xxxvii (36), 3. xxxviii (37), 3. xxxix (38), 3. xl (39), 3. xliii (42), 3. xliiv (43), 3. xlii (44), 3. xlvi (45), 3. xlvii (46), 3. lv (54), 3. lvii (56), 3. lviii (57), 3. lix (58), 3. lxii (61), 3. lxvi (65), 3. lxvii (66).

³⁹ Adam ii (2); Lambert of Hersfeld, *Annales*, ed. by Oswald Holger-Egger, MGH SRG, 38, pp. 1-304 (an. 1072); Bruno of Merseburg, 2-4.

⁴⁰ Adam, 3. v (5), 3. viii (8), 3. ix (9), 3. xxvi (25), 3. xxvii (26), 3. xli (40), 3. xlii (41), 3. xliii (42), 3. xliiv (43), 3. xlii (44), 3. xlviii (47), 3. xlix (48), 3. lx (59).

⁴¹ Adam, 3. xxii (21), 3. xxiii (22).

4. Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*.

4.i. Introduction.

This chapter is concerned with the depiction of the North in Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*. It is not intended to be an ethnological survey, either of the realities of ninth-century Scandinavia, or Rimbert's understanding of them. Such issues have been discussed at length elsewhere.¹ Instead, this chapter is centred on the question of *how* Rimbert thought about the North; the models he used to understand it, the ideas he intuitively associated with it, and those he avoided or was unable to think at all.

The *Vita Anskarii* has been analysed primarily in terms of Rimbert's institutional aims and literary models, which have been recognised as being particularly rewarding tools for understanding Rimbert's work.² Consequently, both are presented as significant factors shaping Rimbert's description of the North and its inhabitants. This is largely in keeping with the tone of current scholarship. However, the variety of Rimbert's ideas about the North, and his freedom to abandon the dominant tropes and stereotypes of the time has also been emphasised. This forms a response to a number of recent studies which have concluded that the dominant themes in Rimbert's account of the North represented the limits of what he was able to think about it. Such a conclusion is problematic, as will be shown.

This chapter begins by introducing Rimbert's works, his institutional aims, and the hagiographical context of the *Vita Anskarii*, using the *Vita Rimberti* as a useful point of reference. It then considers Rimbert's concept of peoples, pagans and barbarians; his use of the Bible as an interpretive model for understanding events in the North; and his efforts to balance his various aims, his audience's expectations, and his own experiences of the North.

¹ For instance, Fredrik Svanberg, *Decolonizing the Viking Age 1* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2003); *Ohthere's Voyages: a late 9th-century Account of Voyages along the Coasts of Norway and Denmark and its Cultural Context*, ed. by Anton Englert and Janet Bately (Roskilde: Viking Ship Museum 2007); *Wulfstan's Voyage: the Baltic Sea Region in the early Viking Age as seen from Shipboard*, ed. by Anton Englert and Athena Trakadas (Roskilde: Oxbow, 2008); Shane McLeod, 'Know thine enemy: Scandinavian identity in the Viking Age', in *Vikings and their enemies, Proceedings of a symposium held in Melbourne*, ed. by Katrina L Burge (Melbourne: Viking Research Network, 2008), pp. 3-17.

² James Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*', pp. 238-239; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 125-131; Eric Knibbs, pp. 175-207.

4.ii. The *Vita Anskarii*.

Much of what we can say about ninth-century Scandinavian society and the Carolingian mission to convert it comes from a single work, the *Vita Anskarii*. The *Vita Anskarii* was written shortly after Anskar's death in 865, by his successor to the archbishopric of Hamburg-Bremen, Rimbert (d.888).³ The oldest surviving manuscript of the work, surviving in *Codex Stuttgardiensis* G.32, originated in the tenth century.⁴ Despite a strong tradition of forgery and revision at Hamburg-Bremen, there have been no serious questions raised about the authenticity of the text itself.⁵ Rimbert refers to Anskar's death as a recent event, and the author of his own life, the *Vita Rimberti*, was clearly aware of the text.⁶ However, the fragmentary nature of the work, combined with the murkiness of Hamburg's early years, should not be entirely forgotten. The earliest manuscript, together with the first allusions to its narrative from outside the diocese, appears decades after its initial composition.⁷ Furthermore, it is not certain that Rimbert was the sole, or even primary, author of the work. The *Vita Anskarii* is presented anonymously and, while the author of the *Vita Rimberti* affirms Rimbert's authorship, she may also refer to a co-author.⁸ It is generally, and very plausibly, accepted that Rimbert took a lead role in the composition of the *Vita Anskarii*, yet there are reasons to be cautious, and we must wonder whether the desire to identify a single author is wholly helpful for understanding a text in which the author deliberately obscured their own role. Nonetheless, pending further investigation, the *Vita Anskarii* as it exists today is accepted as being, on the whole, representative of the work composed by Rimbert shortly after Anskar's death in 865.

Rimbert's account of the mission to the Danes and Swedes is remarkable for its sensitivity to the realities of the mission. He does little to gloss over the religious situation in the North; paganism was dominant, Christianity was dependent on the sympathy of pagan rulers, and the Christian community was largely comprised of traders, slaves, and others who had been converted elsewhere. There is little suggestion of the dramatic encounters or mass conversions common in other hagiographical texts. Most of the more dramatic confrontations between Christians and pagans are centred on local Christian

³ Rimbert, 1; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 125-127; Eric Knibbs, pp. 183-185.

⁴ Georg Waitz, *Vita Anskarii auctore Rimberto: Accedit Vita Rimberti*, MGH SRG, 55, p. 7.

⁵ Eric Knibbs, 4-8, 184; Georg Waitz, *Vita Anskarii*, pp. 6-11.

⁶ *Vita Rimberti*, 5, 6, 9, 12, 15, 21.

⁷ Georg Waitz, *Vita Anskarii*, pp. 7-9; Eric Knibbs, pp. 184-187, 218-220.

⁸ *Vita Rimberti*, 9; Eric Knibbs, p. 185. The author of the *Vita Rimberti* was almost certainly closely connected to Hamburg-Bremen's ecclesiastical network, and may have been the niece of Bishop Liuthard of Paderborn, a nun of Nienheerse. Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 134, 135.

figures, not missionaries. Indeed, much of the work is focused on small groups of Christians trying to survive with little ecclesiastical support, negotiating a tumultuous relationship with their pagan neighbours, and celebrating any small increase in the status of Christianity. The role of the missionary in this setting was a modest one; performing the divine mysteries, founding churches, training new priests, and struggling to secure good relations with the pagan majority. The dangers, however, were very real. Rimbert emphasises the physical and psychological costs of mission; fearful journeys, attacks by pirates, and a high risk of destitution, or death. Some of the details in Rimbert's account are suspect, and we must be careful not to mistake hagiography for history. Nonetheless, the *Vita Anskarii* was rooted in the realities of the northern mission, and provides a unique glimpse into the thought-world of the early medieval missionary.⁹

The structure of the *Vita* is curiously fragmented.¹⁰ As one might expect in a work of medieval hagiography, the *Vita Anskarii* provides a comprehensive defence of the sanctity of its subject. Rimbert claims that Anskar's exceptional virtue had been visible from a young age; that he was appointed to the mission for his remarkable zeal and bravery; that his archiepiscopal rank was recognised by abbots, kings and popes; that he was an ideal bishop, worked miracles and died, in some sense, as a martyr.¹¹ But intermingled with this hagiographical narrative are a number of other narrative strands which can be usefully distinguished. Much of the work is concerned with events in Scandinavia, and Rimbert also dedicated a substantial section of the *Vita* to describing the foundation of Hamburg, and the events which precipitated, and later confirmed, its unification with Bremen. These narratives are structured around descriptions of Anskar's visionary experiences, which Anskar had begun recording during his lifetime.¹²

The contorted and occasionally confused structure of the *Vita Anskarii* reflects the variety and complexity of Rimbert's aims. Rimbert's overall intent remained remarkably consistent throughout; he was writing to defend Hamburg's rights and status, and most passages in the *Vita Anskarii* can be understood in such terms. Yet Hamburg's needs were too diverse to elicit a single, coherent narrative. Rimbert sought to establish Anskar's sanctity, to defend the legitimacy of Hamburg's institutional and missionary claims, and

⁹ Rimbert, 7, 10-15, 18-20, 24-28, 30-33. cf. Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 131.

¹⁰ Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 125-127; Eric Knibbs, pp. 183-185.

¹¹ Rimbert, 2, 7, 23, 37, 40-42.

¹² Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 127-129; Walther Lammers, 'Ansgar, visionäre Erlebnisformen und Missionsauftrag', in *Speculum historiale: Geschichte im Spiegel von Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsdeutung*, ed. by Johannes Spörl, Laetitia Boehm and Max Müller (München: Alber, 1965), pp. 541-558 (p. 554).

acquire support for both.¹³ These aims were interconnected, and perhaps inseparable in Rimbert's own mind. But as Rimbert addressed different aspects of Hamburg's situation, his perspective on the events he described shifted accordingly

4.iii. Rimbert, the *Vita Rimberti* and hagiographical norms.

We know very little about Rimbert himself; he was Anskar's successor and probably a close companion before he died, he was the primary author of the *Vita Anskarii*, and it is likely that he travelled to Scandinavia on mission at least once in his life.¹⁴ He also corresponded with Ratramnus of Corbie, apparently concerned about the possibility of encountering *cynocephali* in his travels to the North.¹⁵ We can say little more than this with any certainty. This relative obscurity is due, in part, to Rimbert's decision to remain anonymous in the *Vita Anskarii*. Although it is tempting to associate Rimbert with some of the figures in the work, Rimbert is never clear enough for us to be certain of such identifications.¹⁶ Rimbert's own biographer identified Rimbert with Anskar's close companion in the *Vita Anskarii*, and claimed that Rimbert had deliberately obscured his own role in Anskar's life out of humility, a practice which the author chose to emulate.¹⁷

The lack of reliable information about Rimbert can also be connected with the nature of the *Vita Rimberti*. The work was written shortly after Rimbert's death in 888, during the pontificate of Archbishop Adalgar (d. 909). However, the surviving manuscripts all contain a number of later interpolations, which backdate some of Hamburg's subsequent territorial claims.¹⁸ Like Rimbert, the author of the *Vita Rimbertii* chose to remain anonymous, and commented on the virtues of doing so.¹⁹

¹³ Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 125-127; Eric Knibbs, pp. 185-187; James Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*', pp. 238-241, 255-256.

¹⁴ *Vita Rimberti*, 3, 5, 9, 16-18; Rimbert, 33; Andreas Röpcke, 'Pro memoria Remberti', in *Rimbert der Nachfolger Ansgars*, ed. by Andreas Röpcke and others (Hamburg: EB-Verlag, 2000), pp. 30-56; James Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*', pp. 237, 238; Anders Winroth, pp. 110, 111; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 132-135; Eric Knibbs, pp. 177-185, 206.

¹⁵ Ratramnus of Corbie, *Epistola*, ed. by Ernst Dümmler, MGH Epp. VI, Karolini Aevi 4 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1925), pp. 155-7; Andreas Röpcke, pp. 34-6; Ian N. Wood, 'Categorising the cynocephali', in *Ego Trouble: Authors and their Identities in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Richard Corradini and others (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010), pp. 125-36 (pp. 131-136); Scott G. Bruce, 'Hagiography as Monstrous Ethnography: A Note on Ratramnus of Corbie's Letter Concerning the Conversion of the Cynocephali', in *Insignis Sophiae Arcator: Medieval Latin Studies in Honour of Michael Herren on his 65th Birthday*, ed. by Gernot R. Wieland and others (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), pp. 45-56.

¹⁶ Rimbert, 33, 35, 40, 41.

¹⁷ *Vita Rimberti*, 9; Rimbert, 41; Eric Knibbs, p. 185; Andreas Röpcke, pp. 36, 48, 49.

¹⁸ *Vita Rimberti*, 1; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 134, 135; James Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*', pp. 237, 238; Georg Waitz, *Vita Anskarii*, pp. 80, 81.

¹⁹ *Vita Rimberti*, 9, 15; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 135.

The *Vita Rimberti* is usually considered alongside the *Vita Anskarii*, generally unfavourably. Certainly Rimbart and his biographer have generated far less attention than Anskar, and few have disagreed with Röpcke's assessment of the piece as having 'the art and listless production of a commissioned work'.²⁰ Such criticism is not wholly unjustified, but rather than relating this disparity simply to the literary skill of the authors – for both reflect the existence of very high levels of learning on the edge of the empire – we can perhaps relate it to their aims.²¹ Under the guise of a familiar genre Rimbart was dealing with some very unusual themes, which led him to approach his subject-matter in unusual ways, including literal, historical descriptions of subjects commonly ignored in hagiographical texts. Rimbart's descriptions of the northern mission, in particular, are extraordinary.²² In contrast, although the author of the *Vita Rimberti* explicitly associates her work with Rimbart's, she had little reason to stray beyond the bounds of hagiographical convention. Instead, she concentrates on themes which, whilst present in the *Vita Anskarii*, are far from unique to it; she defends the rights of the Church, praises the sanctity of her subject and associates Adalgar, the current archbishop and her patron, with this saintly figure.²³ Only two chapters are dedicated to Rimbart's missionary work, and these are far more concerned with associating Rimbart with archetypal missionary figures and underlining his piety, than with the realities of the northern mission.²⁴

What she produces is less a biography and more an approximately chronological series of points demonstrating that Rimbart was everything that a saint was expected to be: he was humble; he performed physical and spiritual miracles; he suffered patiently; he had visions; he freed captives; he gave constantly to the poor; he accepted promotion reluctantly; he died gracefully and continued to perform miracles after his death.²⁵ Throughout the *Vita Rimberti* the author accentuates Rimbart's piety by associating him with Anskar, showing how they were 'one heart, one soul, one spirit, one faith.'²⁶ The work reads like a collection of *topoi* because that is precisely what it is meant to be. The author's primary concern when describing events was to locate Rimbart within existing models of sainthood, not historical

²⁰ Andreas Röpcke, p. 48. c.f. James Palmer, 'Rimbart's *Vita Anskarii*', p. 237; Anders Winroth, p. 110.

²¹ Andreas Röpcke, pp. 33-36; Walther Lammers, pp. 541-558 (554, 555); Eva Odelman, 'Ansgar's Life - a Piece of Carolingian Hagiography', in *Hortus troporum: florilegium in honorem Gunillae Iversen*, ed. by Alexander Andrée and Erika Kihlman (Stockholm: Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, 2008), 290-296 (pp. 294, 295).

²² Rimbart, 11, 18, 19, 20, 24-34.

²³ *Vita Rimberti*, 1-3, 10, 15, 22-23.

²⁴ Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 135; *Vita Rimberti*, 16, 17.

²⁵ *Vita Rimberti*, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17.

²⁶ *Vita Rimberti*, 9 (p. 88), '*cor unum et anima una, unus spiritus et una fides erat semper in eis.*'

precision.²⁷ Within this framework, it was no contradiction to claim that Rimbart could calm stormy seas with a prayer and yet also suffer shipwreck, for both provided proof of Rimbart's sainthood, and had clear biblical precedents.²⁸

This deliberate repetition of *topoi* and attempt to fit the subject into pre-existing models is something that both Rimbart and his biographer engaged in, and was an integral part of the genre. Saints' lives were written to reveal the essential, platonic truth of their subjects; what they were *really* like. The simplest way to describe a king or a saint was to reiterate the characteristics expected of kings and saints. The more closely they adhered to recognised models, the more truthful the description. Thus a monk in Whitby described the miracles of Gregory the Great, noting that although they might not have happened, they were nonetheless true.²⁹ Similarly, Gregory of Tours felt able to write of a single life of the fathers, because although they were many, they participated in a single Christian life. 'Since there is a diversity of virtues and merits amongst them, but the one life of the body sustains them in this world.'³⁰

To write a saint's life meant engaging with the genre along with all of its conventions, and medieval authors seem to have recognised this. So it seems unfair to criticise the author of the *Vita Rimbarti* too far, for she merely stayed comfortably within the expectations of the genre, using its conventions to communicate and reinforce the picture of sanctity she set out to create. Tellingly, when Adam of Bremen came to abridge the *Lives* of Anskar and Rimbart for his *Gesta*, he seems to have had far fewer problems dealing with *Vita Rimbarti*. The *Vita Rimbarti* appears to have fitted his expectations rather more closely than the *Vita Anskarii*, to which he felt compelled to make extensive changes to both meaning and length, something he was generally reluctant to do.³¹ This provides an important reminder that medieval tastes varied significantly from our own; the *Vita Rimbarti* may well have appeared to be the superior work to a medieval audience. But it also reflects the extent to which Rimbart strayed from the norms of the genre, and his audience's expectations. His vision of sanctity is modest, unmiraculous and full of suffering, and the pagans and barbarians which he describes are remarkably human, almost Christian. Both authors were manoeuvring within and around established discourses. Much of the time they

²⁷ See *Vita Rimbarti*, 18.

²⁸ *Vita Rimbarti*, 16-18; Acts 27.1-44; II Corinthians 11.25; Matthew 8.23-27; Luke 8.22-25; Psalm 107.29.

²⁹ *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, ed. and trans. by Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge: CUP, 1985), 3, 32.

³⁰ Gregory of Tours, *Vita patrum*, ed. by Bruno Krusch, MGH SRM, 1.2, pp. 211-294 (preface).

³¹ Adam, 1. xvi (18), 1. xx (22), 1. xxi (23), 1. xxii (24), 1. xxiv (26), 1. xxv (27), 1. xxvi (28), 1. xxvii (29), 1. xxviii (30), 1. xxxi (33), 1. lxi (63). c.f. *Vita Anskarii*, 7, 8, 10-12, 14-18, 31, 32, 35, 36; *Vita Rimbarti*, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10-12, 14, 15, 17, 19, 21, 24; Judith Jesch, *Women in the Viking Age* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1991), pp. 89-91; Ian N. Wood, 'Christians and Pagans', p. 57.

stuck closely to long-established *topoi* surrounding pagans, barbarians and Northmen, and in doing so they were able to harness the familiarity and acceptability of this imagery for their own aims and ideals. The author of the *Vita Rimberti* had little reason to go beyond such *topoi*. However, there are moments in the *Vita Anskarii* when we can see Rimbart forfeiting the benefits of such imagery to provide a perspective which was different and sometimes opposed to the established view of the North.

4.iv.a. The medieval North.

In the first instance this thesis is concerned with otherness, rather than any particular geographical or ethnological category. The advantages of this approach should become apparent, especially during the chapters on Bruno of Querfurt and Adam of Bremen where a broader perspective serves to clarify their understanding of particular groups. Nonetheless, the North is a recurring theme in the sources discussed here, and it is therefore useful to briefly describe what is meant by it.

No term is absolutely fixed and focused in its meaning, and medieval references to the North are particularly vague and varied in their intent. This ensured that the North was discussed in a wide variety of contexts, but also that its precise meaning was often left unclear without implicit or explicit clarification. In the first instance, references to the North within this thesis usually refer to the medieval idea of the North, rather than a specific area. Something of the ambiguity of the medieval concept is therefore reflected in the terminology and focus of this thesis. This seems preferable to imposing a more rigid, and potentially anachronistic, definition on the term. It is often far easier to say what a medieval author thought about the North, than where precisely they were referring to. This in itself is indicative of the nature of the concept.

The early medieval concept of the North combined moral, spiritual, literary, geographical, theological and ethnic aspects, amongst others.³² Geographically, at least from the standpoint of German authors, it denoted the Scandinavian and Baltic worlds, as well as the less well-known parts of the Atlantic. It therefore included more than what was simply north of the Carolingian empire and its successor states, encompassing Iceland, Greenland and America in the west, and modern-day Poland and the Baltic States, as well as

³² This overview is largely based on David Fraesdorff's work. David Fraesdorff, *Der Barbarische Norden*; David Fraesdorff 'The Power of Imagination'. But cf. Robert Rix, *The Barbarian North in Medieval Imagination: Ethnicity, Legend, and Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2014); Linda Kaljundi, 'Waiting for the Barbarians'.

parts of Germany, in the east.³³ Its boundaries were rarely explicitly defined, but when they were, its non-geographical aspects become apparent. It delimited those regions and peoples which were regarded as pagan or barbarian. Thus it encompassed the Elbe Slavs, but not their Christian neighbours in Hamburg; the Orkney and Faroe Isles, but not Ireland or the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.³⁴ A nominally geographical concept thus overlapped with cultural, ethnic, political, linguistic and religious ideas. This moralised blurring of boundaries echoed established literary traditions about the North, and distant places more generally. Ancient and late antique authors had developed the sense of geographical distance and cultural difference surrounding the North into a sense of radical alterity; the North was not simply distant, but monstrous and inhuman.³⁵ The North was not always presented negatively – it could even be presented as being utopian – but there was a tendency to emphasise non-geographical ways of understanding it. Exegetes adopted a similar approach, prioritising non-literal readings of the North of their own day, and literary references to the north. The negative, destructive and eschatological connotations of the North in particular were emphasised, and it became common to associate the geographical ends of the earth with the end of time.³⁶ The idea of the North could, at times, be used to reflect on real political, economic, cultural, linguistic, climatic and religious differences. But such notions were obscured by its associations with more abstract concerns.

David Fraesdorff has undertaken an extensive study of medieval attitudes towards the North, exploring how they gradually evolved to reflect new information about an increasingly Christianised North.³⁷ Fraesdorff's study is comprehensive and generally convincing. There is no attempt to replicate his work here, and the details of his argument are only addressed on those rare occasions when there is a need to scrutinize them, both here and in the following chapter on Adam of Bremen.

³³ c.f. Rimbart, 21- 23; *Vita Rimbarti*, 1; Johann M. Lappenberg, pp. 31, 32, 38, 39, 58, 66, 71, 74, 77, 95, 99; Adam, 1. xv (17), 3. lxxiii – lxxviii, 4. i (1) - xliii (41).

³⁴ *Eadem*.

³⁵ For instance, Solinus, *Collectanea rerum memorabilium*, ed. by Theodore Mommsen (Zurich: Weidmann, 1895 edn., repr. 1999), 25; Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia*, ed. and trans. by Harris Rackham, *Natural History*, vol. 1 (London: Heinemann, 1938-1963), iv. 76-105, vii. 10-12; Martianus Capella, *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, ed. by Adolf Dick (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1969), vi. 664, 693; Jordanes, 1-6.

³⁶ James Palmer, 'The Vita Anskarii', pp. 243-256; Ian N. Wood, 'The Ends of the Earth', pp. 200-216, (pp. 201-210).

³⁷ David Fraesdorff, *Der Barbarische Norden*; David Fraesdorff 'The Power of Imagination'.

4.iv.b. Danes and Swedes.

The *Vita Anskarii* is one of the few early medieval sources to provide a detailed, and generally plausible, account of events in Scandinavia.³⁸ However, the extent to which it can be understood to reflect the realities of ninth-century Scandinavia has been questioned. A number of scholars have argued that Rimbert was fundamentally unable to move beyond the simplistic tropes and stereotypes which dominated representations of the North in this period, and saw only what he expected to see. The capacity of modern historiography to move beyond a limited, colonial discourse of the Viking Age has been similarly questioned. These debates have highlighted important issues, but there has been an unfortunate tendency in recent scholarship to settle on totalising solutions to these problems.

4.iv.c. Danes and Swedes in modern historiography.

The risk of anachronism is always acute when dealing with the issue of peoples, particularly those who have been claimed by modern, European nations. Discussing Swedes and Danes in the context of early medieval Europe is not wholly anachronistic; it loosely reflects the terminology of our sources, and has a passing resemblance to the realities of ninth-century Scandinavia. It is a useful place to begin. However, there is a far greater danger of conflating the medieval Danes and Swedes with their modern namesakes than is the case with, say, the Amazons or *Heruli*. The issue is not so much one of language, but of political identities; modern nations require legitimising histories.³⁹ This need encourages a view of the past shaped around anachronistic concepts and connections; the political and ethnic divisions and development of medieval Scandinavia are understood in relation to the present, and the sense of linear development implicit in this approach justifies the use of later material, especially the sagas, to ‘fill in’ details of earlier events.

These problems are well-established within current historiographical debates, and few historians would now deliberately conflate the Danes and Swedes populating the *Vita Anskarii* with their modern namesakes. Nonetheless, the comfortable familiarity of these terms can be misleading, and the process of ‘detoxification’ is far from complete.⁴⁰ Fredrik

³⁸ Rimbert, 7, 10-15, 18-20, 24- 28, 30-33.

³⁹ For instance, Patrick Geary, *The Myth of Nations: the Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), pp. 1-40; Fredrik Svanberg, pp. 11-29; Clare Downham, ‘Viking Ethnicities: A historiographic overview’, *History Compass*, 10, 1 (2012), 1-12.

⁴⁰ Patrick Geary, pp. 15-40.

Svanberg has been particularly vehement in criticising the preponderance of these labels in Scandinavian historiography, arguing that their predominance props up nationalist myths while obscuring the more complex realities of the past.⁴¹ For him, the ‘Viking Age’ and its inhabitants are a fiction, reflecting a ‘colonisation’ of the past by the nations and nationalisms of the present.⁴²

Aspects of Svanberg’s criticism are important, and his efforts to write an ethnographic account of ninth-century Scandinavia which does not give undue prominence to the Danes and Swedes is admirable, and generally convincing.⁴³ However, his analysis is problematic on both methodological and historiographical levels. Svanberg draws on the language and methodologies of postcolonial studies to describe the ‘Viking Age’ as a colonising system of knowledge.⁴⁴ In doing so he absorbs something of its totalizing tendencies, thus claiming that, ‘representation is always “an act of violence”, since it reduces the represented’, and that the ‘the making of the Viking Age has been objectively homogeneous to a high degree.’⁴⁵ This approach reflects the Foucauldine ancestry of postcolonialism; if power is omnipresent, its effects should be broad, interconnected and comprehensive. However, although Michel Foucault stressed the ubiquity of power, this is not the same as claiming that power is the *only* legitimate form of analysis.⁴⁶ The immense ambition of postcolonial studies too often encourages this assumption, leading to damaging generalisations and totalizing narratives.⁴⁷ Thus Svanberg is far too quick to dismiss large sections of the existing historiography as nothing more than participants in an essentially modern, nation-centred caricature of the past.⁴⁸ The phenomenon which he analyses is of great significance, but it is not – and could never be – the sole dynamic in any work. Indeed, many of the works which he criticises are essentially introductory accounts of the period, in which some anachronisms and simplifications are harder to avoid.⁴⁹ His critique is valid, but uncompromising. Furthermore, Svanberg barely acknowledges the extent to which the problems which he addresses in great detail had already begun to permeate

⁴¹ Fredrik Svanberg, esp., pp. 11, 14, 21, 39-40. For a more balanced discussion of the Vikings as a modern other, see Janet L. Nelson, ‘England and the Continent in the ninth century: II, the Vikings and others’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 13 (2003), 1-28 (pp. 1-9).

⁴² Fredrik Svanberg, pp. 11, 40-51.

⁴³ Fredrik Svanberg, pp. 130-186; See also, Shane McLeod, pp. 3-17, whose literary approach compliments Svanberg’s archaeological focus.

⁴⁴ Fredrik Svanberg, pp. 27-29, 39-40.

⁴⁵ Fredrik Svanberg, pp. 40, 106.

⁴⁶ Michel Foucault, *Society must be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76*, trans. by David Macey (London: Penguin, 2004), pp. 9-50; Steven Lukes, pp. 91-107.

⁴⁷ Edward W. Said, p. 204; Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 100-101; John McLeod, *Beginning postcolonialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000) pp. 28-48.

⁴⁸ Fredrik Svanberg, pp. 18-39, 100.

⁴⁹ Fredrik Svanberg, pp. 66-95.

historiographical debates at the time he was writing.⁵⁰ The distorting influence of nationalism and anachronism had been recognised, and has since become an integral part of scholarly discussions of medieval identity.⁵¹ As Svanberg's own study has demonstrated, it is possible to recognise and move beyond modern ideas of race and nationalism in discussions of medieval identity, even if such a move can only ever be partial.

4.iv.d. Danes and Swedes in early Middle Ages.

There are also difficulties establishing what Rimbert had in mind when he described the *gens Danorum* and *gens Sueorum*. There has been a tendency in recent scholarship to suggest that not only did these terms have very little to do with the realities of the North, but that they reflected a way of thinking about peoples which prevented Rimbert from seeing anything except a *gens Danorum* and a *gens Sueorum*. Variations of this argument have been presented by a number of historians.⁵² Thus James Palmer writes,

Whatever divisions existed between different groups in Scandinavia, Anskar and Rimbert saw more simply a *gens Danorum* and a *gens Sueorum*, derived from existing imagined geographies of the North.⁵³

Palmer developed his argument from a rather more polemical article by Johannes Fried, in which Fried argued that the Franks' understanding of peoples led them to expect all *gentes*

⁵⁰ For instance, Andrew Wawn, *The Vikings and the Victorians: Inventing the Old North in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2000); Venke Olsen, 'Northern Scandinavia – A Multi-Ethnic Society Seen From an Ethnological Point-of-View', *Northern Studies*, 23 (1986), 31-74; Piergiorgio Parroni, 'Surviving Sources of the Classical Geographers Through Late Antiquity and the Medieval Period', *Artic*, 37 (1984), 352-358; Janet L. Nelson, 'England and the Continent... II'; *Cultures in Contact: Scandinavian Settlement in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, ed. by Dawn M. Hadley and Julian D. Richards (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), especially Simon Trafford, 'Ethnicity, Migration Theory, and the Historiography of the Scandinavian Settlement of England', pp. 17- 39. This is made possible, in part, by Svanberg's curious decision to ignore the voyages of Ohthere and Wulfstan in his study. c.f. Shane McLeod, p. 5 fn. 16 and Fredrik Svanberg, pp. 95, 156. *The Old English Orosius*, ed. by Janet Bately (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980); Anton Englert and Janet Bately; Anton Englert and Athena Trakadas. See also, Richard Hodges, *Goodbye to the Vikings? Re-Reading Early Medieval Archaeology* (London: Duckworth, 2006); Clare Downham.

⁵¹ For instance, Clare Downham; Ildar H. Garipzanov, 'Frontier Identities: Carolingian Frontier and the *gens Danorum*', in *Franks, Northmen, and Slavs: Identities and State Formation in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. by Ildar H. Garipzanov, Patrick Geary, and Przemyslaw Urbańczyk (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008).

⁵² Johannes Fried, 'Gens et Regnum', in *Sozialer Wandel im Mittelalter: Wahrnehmungsformen, Erklärungsmuster, Regelungsmechanismen*, ed. by Jürgen Miethke and Klaus Schreiner (Sigmaringen: J. Thorbecke, 1994), pp. 73-104 (pp. 78-88); James Palmer, 'Anskar's Imagined Communities', in *Saints and their Lives on the Periphery*, ed. by Haki Antonsson and Ildar H. Garipzanov (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2010), pp. 171-188 (pp. 182-184); Anton Englert and Athena Trakadas, p. 60; David Fraesdorff, 'The Power of Imagination', pp. 309-332; Ildar H. Garipzanov, 'Frontier Identities', pp. 113-122.

⁵³ James Palmer, 'Anskar's Imagined Communities', p. 182.

to be fundamentally unchanging, and ruled by kings of a set type. This, he claimed, blinded them to the realities of Scandinavian society, so that even Rimbert, who lived amongst Scandinavians, was unable to understand them. He expected to find two homogeneous peoples ruled by kings, like those described in the Bible, Virgil or Bede, and therefore he found them.⁵⁴

There are certainly many reasons to be sceptical about Carolingian authors' understanding of the realities of the North. The terms most commonly used to describe the inhabitants of the North – 'Dane', 'Swede', 'pagan' and 'Northmen' – captured little of the complexity of Scandinavian society, although all of them can be legitimately used to describe certain circumstances.⁵⁵ We can also be confident that Rimbert's education and society will have had a profound influence on how he perceived the North. Even when faced with radically different cultures, our accepted intuitions and assumptions can be remarkably robust.⁵⁶ Furthermore, Carolingian authors often appear woefully ignorant about the situation in Scandinavia. For example, at the end of his reign Charlemagne appears to have badly misjudged the nature of the Danish threat by focusing all of his attentions on the Danish king, whose control over the situation was, in fact, limited.⁵⁷

Yet such misunderstandings and simplifications were not limited to Scandinavian matters. For instance, Janet Nelson argues that 'Aquitaine' was a similarly artificial label in this period, and that Carolingian authors consistently ignored or misrepresented the complexities of this region.⁵⁸ In part, this was a product of the classicizing norms of geographical and ethnological description at the time, but it likely also reflects genuine ignorance about places which seemed distant from the authors, which would include most of

⁵⁴ Johannes Fried, 'Gens et Regnum', pp. 78-92.

⁵⁵ Fredrick Svanberg, p. 186; Ildar H. Garipzanov, 'Frontier Identities', pp. 123-125, 142; David Fraesdorff, 'The Power of the Imagination', p. 314.

⁵⁶ For instance, Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, pp. 7, 86-90, 93, 95-96; Robert I. Moore, esp. pp. 176, 177; Carlo Ginzburg, *The Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, trans. by Anne Tedeschi and John Tedeschi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), esp. pp. 9-13; Clifford Geertz, pp. 346-358.

⁵⁷ Johannes Fried, 'Gens et Regnum', pp. 83-85. Although at other times this expectation that kings ought to be able to control raids seems to have been justified; Charlemagne's grandson Louis the German was successful in coercing the Danish king Horik into doing so. He was able to do this by maintaining Horik's rivals at his court, suggesting he had a better grasp of the dynamics of Danish politics than Fried allows. See Eric J. Goldberg, *Struggle for Empire: Kingship and Conflict under Louis the German, 817-876* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), pp. 134, 135. See also Niels Lund 'Scandinavia 700-1066' in *The New Cambridge Medieval History. Vol. 2, c.700-c.900*, ed. by Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), pp. 202-27 (pp. 207, 212) who also suggests that we should give more credit to Charlemagne and his successors in their dealings with the Danes.

⁵⁸ Janet L. Nelson, *Charles the Bald* (London: Longman, 1992), pp. 2, 3, 102, 111, 119, 172-173, 211.

the empire.⁵⁹ When Lothar was invited to divide up the empire in 839, he claimed that he was unable to do so because of his ignorance of the land.⁶⁰ Three years later, Charles and Louis made the same complaint to Lothar.⁶¹ This may simply have been a convenient excuse to disguise political wrangling, but it was sufficiently plausible to be used.

We must recognise the literary concerns of authors before we conclude that they were blinded by a hegemonic theory of peoples. If a chronicler understood their subject-matter to be the deeds of peoples and kings, then rendering history into such terms was primarily a reflection of that author's engagement with the genre. Similarly, when the vast majority of literature concerning the Northmen was prompted by essentially internal concerns – to describe the miracles of a saint, defend the rights of a church or monastery, condemn or praise a king – we should not be surprised that most authors drew on a limited stock of stereotypes when describing them.⁶² There was very little incentive to move beyond established *topoi*. Why would an early medieval author reflect on the intricacies of Scandinavian identity, when crude caricatures were both expected and more effective? A tendency to describe events within a narrow framework of kings, peoples and *topoi* does not immediately translate into an inability to think outside of such terms, although it might encourage the habit of thinking in them. Likewise, being able to show that Carolingian authors were ignorant of many things is not in itself evidence that they could not be otherwise.

Early medieval people seem to have been able to look beyond the *topoi* in their literature when it suited it them. Almost as soon as they appeared, groups of Northmen who had come to raid the empire were incorporated into its great political game, despite the intensification of age-old prejudices against pagans and Northmen in the literature of the time.⁶³ In the East Frankish kingdom, Louis the German commissioned a survey of the Slavs living along his borders, and his very practical concerns in doing so are reflected in its

⁵⁹ Natalia Lozovsky, 'Roman Geography and Ethnography in the Carolingian Empire', *Speculum*, 81 (2006), 325-364; Natalia Lozovsky, *The Earth is our Book: Geographical Knowledge in the Latin West ca. 400-1000* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), pp. 103-138; Pierre Riché, *Daily Life in the World of Charlemagne*, trans. by Jo Ann McNamara (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978), pp. 3-11.

⁶⁰ Nithard, *Historiarum libri quattuor*, ed. by Philippe Lauer, *Histoire des fils de Louis le pieux* (Paris: H. Champion, 1926), i. 7.

⁶¹ Nithard, iv. 5; Janet L. Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, pp. 100, 126.

⁶² Simon Coupland, 'The Rod of God's Wrath or the People of God's Wrath? The Carolingian Theology of the Viking Invasions', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 42 (1991), 535-554; Daniel C. DeSelm, *Unwilling Pilgrimage: Vikings, Relics, and the Politics of Exile during the Carolingian Era (c.830- 940)* (unpublished Ph.D Thesis, University of Michigan, 2009), pp. 25-56.

⁶³ Simon Coupland, 'From Poachers to Gamekeepers: Scandinavian Warlords and Carolingian Kings', *Early Medieval Europe*, 7 (1998), 85-114; Janet L. Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, pp. 30, 33, 39, 151-154, 187-188, 193-194, 202, 205-207, 213; Simon Coupland, 'The Rod of God's Wrath'.

title, *A Catalogue of Fortresses*.⁶⁴ Similarly, our most detailed information about the local identities of ninth-century Scandinavia comes from the Anglo-Saxon additions to Orosius' *History* found in the *Old English Orosius*. It is no coincidence that at least some of this information was collated at the court of King Alfred, who spent much of his life fighting Scandinavians.⁶⁵

There is enough evidence in the *Vita Anskarii* to suggest that Rimbert was able to think beyond a model of ethnicity in which peoples were inevitably homogeneous and unchanging, and ruled by a king conforming to a single model. Firstly, despite claims to the contrary, he does use plural forms of *gens* to describe the Danes and Swedes. At times he writes of the 'peoples of the Danes' and 'peoples of the Swedes', suggesting that he recognised some degree of heterogeneity within these homogenizing terms.⁶⁶

Secondly, Rimbert was able to present a more nuanced picture of northern identities when it suited his purposes. For instance, in the thirtieth chapter he writes about the inhabitants of Courland (Kurland), the *Cori*. Rimbert writes that they had formerly been ruled by the Swedes, and describes the efforts of the Danes and Swedes to subjugate them, culminating in a miraculous victory for the Swedes.⁶⁷ The account is primarily one of the successes of the Christian mission and proof of the efficacy of the Christian God in the North, but it also reflects something of the fluidity and complexity of political identities around the Baltic. This picture is supported by an increasing wealth of archaeological evidence from the region, particularly from the settlement at Grobina, and references to Courland in *Egil's Saga*.⁶⁸ It is reasonable to believe that Rimbert could have produced many more such stories had it suited his purposes.

⁶⁴ Eric J. Goldberg, pp. 136, 137.

⁶⁵ Anton Englert and Athena Trakadas, pp. 14-17, 29-34. Othere's account is addressed to King Alfred, Wulfstan's may have been recorded as late as the 11th century.

⁶⁶ See James Palmer, 'Anskar's Imagined Communities', pp. 182, 183, who suggests that only Radbertus Paschasius considered the possibility of there being peoples within the designations of 'Danes' and 'Swedes'. While Rimbert does at times write of people in the singular (Rimbert, pp. 36, 43, 53, 60, 65) in most of the work his language is ambiguous, i.e the plural could refer to a number of familiar peoples (Danes, Swedes etc), or suggest divisions within them. (Rimbert, pp. 28, 31, 33, 35, 49, 50, 51, 60, 66, 75, 76, 77, 78.) But occasionally it is clear that he conceives of there being 'peoples of the Danes' and 'peoples of the Swedes' (Rimbert, pp. 27, 36).

⁶⁷ Rimbert, 29, 30.

⁶⁸ *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar*, ed. by Sigurður Nordal (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 1933), 78; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 129-132; Ian N. Wood, 'Christians and Pagans', pp. 39, 54; Anton Englert and Athena Trakadas, pp. 66-68; Ingrīda Līga Virse and Ritvars Ritums, 'The Grobiņa Complex of Dwelling Locations and Burial Sites, and Related Questions', *Archaeologia Baltica*, 17 (2012), 34-42; Mateusz Bogucki, 'Grobina – a Sign of the Future. Early Ports of Trade in the Balt Lands', in *Transformatio mundi – the transition from the Late Migration Period to the Early Viking Age in the East Baltic*, ed. by Mindaugas Bertasius (Kaunas: Kaunas University, 2006), pp. 93-10; Angus A. Somerville and R. Andrew McDonald, *The Vikings and Their Age* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), p. 33.

Thirdly, although the *Vita Anskarii* is oriented around the northern kings, its presentation of these kings is often quite unusual, and it does not wholly adhere to Fried's model. For instance, Rimbert revealed that the Swedish king cooperated with local councils, or *Things*, rather than commanding them. This allowed Rimbert the opportunity to illustrate the divine favour enjoyed by the mission, and provided a framework in which he could explore pagan ideas about Christianity, and the rhetorical strategies which might lead to conversions.⁶⁹ It also tells us something about the realities of the North in Anskar's day. Rimbert's description was not disinterested, but neither was it entirely conditioned by existing models. Much else about Rimbert's depiction of kings was unusual, and will be discussed shortly.

Crucially, the vision of Scandinavian society in the *Vita Anskarii* should not be confused with how Rimbert himself perceived it. Something of Rimbert's own personality is doubtless present in the *Vita Anskarii*, although our ability to detect and analyse it should not be overestimated. However, a more rewarding and justifiable approach to Rimbert's descriptions of events in Scandinavia is to view them as part of his attempt to reconcile the pursuit of his aims as closely possible to his audience's expectations. Sometimes it was rewarding to stray from these expectations a little and introduce ideas unusual to the genre; new peoples, different forms of kingship. But most of the time it was more effective to stick closely to his audience's expectations, or at least appear to. Rimbert was attempting to write good hagiography, not accurate ethnology, biography or geography. A passage in Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* makes this point explicitly. Willibald writes:

After bravely hazarding the perils of the river, the sea and the wide expanse of the ocean, he passed through dangerous places without fear of danger, and visited the pagan Frisians, whose land is divided into many territories and districts by intersecting canals. These territories, though bearing different names, are, nevertheless, the property of one nation. But since it would prove tedious to give a list of these districts one after the other, we will merely mention one or two of them by name to prove the veracity and add to the continuity of our narrative.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Rimbert, 19, 26, 27.

⁷⁰ Willibald, *Vita Bonifatii*, ed. by Wilhelm Levison, *Vitae sancti Bonifatii archiepiscopi Moguntini*, MGH SRG, 57, 8; *The Anglo-Saxon missionaries in Germany: being the Lives of SS. Willibrord, Boniface, Sturm, Leoba, and Lebuin, together with the Hodoeporicon of St. Willibald and a Selection from the Correspondence of St. Boniface*, trans. by Charles H. Talbot (London: Sheed and Ward, 1981), p. 55.

Willibald's concern is to demonstrate Boniface's virtues; geographical and ethnological details are included only insofar as they aid this narrative. We should regard Rimbert's use of the terms 'Dane' and 'Swede' similarly. The terms were ambiguous and often misleading, and there are hints in the *Vita Anskarii* that Rimbert may have understood this. But the terms had the advantage of seeming unproblematic and familiar, which lent his work a certain authority and acceptability. Unless these benefits were outweighed by other concerns, he had little reason to forfeit them.

4.v.a. Biblical models.

No text exists in isolation; if only through language it is linked to many others. Medieval authors acknowledged and exploited these links, and their audiences expected them to do so. To study medieval Latin is to 'pursue the separate parts of a sentence back into the quarry from which the materials they were built were taken.'⁷¹ The most important quarry for medieval literature was the Bible, and biblical models were especially important in hagiography.⁷² This pre-eminence is visible in both the *Vita Anskarii* and *Vita Rimberti*, where the Bible is referenced far more than any other work.⁷³ Both authors make extensive use of the Bible to illustrate the sanctity of their subject. Hence Rimbert is described as expressing his humility in the words of David, saying 'I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes.'⁷⁴ Similarly, the final chapter of the *Vita Anskarii* compares Anskar to Saints John the Baptist, John the Evangelist, Peter, Paul and Stephen the Protomartyr.⁷⁵

Of particular interest in the following sections are the ways in which the Bible provided an interpretive framework for the *Vita Anskarii*, acting as a tool for understanding the North. Both James Palmer and David Fraesdorff have suggested ways in which the Bible does this. Both arguments are problematic, but analysing them provides a useful context for the examination of Rimbert's use of Isaiah, which I would suggest is central to understanding his presentation of the North.

⁷¹ David Ganz, *Corbie in the Carolingian Renaissance* (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1990), p. 13.

⁷² E. Ann Matter, 'The Bible in Early Medieval Saints' Lives', in *The Study of the Bible in the Carolingian Era*, ed. by Celia M. Chazelle and Burton Van Name Edwards (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), pp. 155-166 (p. 155).

⁷³ cf. Rimbert, 3, 16, 29, 35, 36, 38, 40-42; *Vita Rimberti*, 4, 6-8, 10-11, 13-17, 19-21, 22-23.

⁷⁴ *Vita Rimberti*, 10; II Samuel 6.22.

⁷⁵ Rimbert, 42.

4.v.b. Visions.

Both the *Vita Anskarii* and the *Vita Rimberti* include a number of prophetic visions. Visions were a common element in hagiographical works, but they are unusually prominent in the *Vita Anskarii*.⁷⁶ The function of visions varied; in texts aimed at a more learned audience the very act of having a dream or vision, and especially of being able to interpret one, could act as a mark of sanctity.⁷⁷ In the *Vita Rimberti* visions serve to link Anskar and Rimbart, both through the content of the visions and the fact of having them.⁷⁸

The visions in the *Vita Anskarii* punctuate the work, providing structure and allowing Rimbart to introduce and reinforce certain themes, such as Anskar's desire for martyrdom and the divine mandate of the mission.⁷⁹ They appear to be based on Anskar's own written records of his visions, which Lammers suggests he began to collate retrospectively in his thirties, at the earliest.⁸⁰ What Rimbart presents us with in the *Vita Anskarii* is an edited selection of these visions; at times he appears to rework his source, seemingly changing the person and content of the visions, but elsewhere the visions appear in the first person, suggesting that Rimbart was copying Anskar's words directly, as he claimed to be.⁸¹ How representative this is of what Anskar wrote, let alone actually saw, is difficult to say. We have little reason to doubt the sincerity of Rimbart's devotion, and Lammers' suggestion that Anskar's visions lent cohesion to his followers following his death is appealing.⁸² A number of the visions affirm the divine mandate and ultimate success of Hamburg's mission, and in such moments the *Vita Anskarii* appears to be, more than anything, a text affirming and disseminating an identity and a set of ideals, centred on Anskar's sanctity and expressed through his visions.⁸³

⁷⁶ Rimbart, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 25, 27, 29, 35; *Vita Rimberti*, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 22, 24; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 127-129; James Palmer, 'Rimbart's *Vita Anskarii*', pp. 239, 244, 245.

⁷⁷ Lisa M. Bitel, '“In Visu Noctis”: Dreams in European Hagiography and Histories, 450-900.' *History of Religions*, 31, 1 (1991), 39-59 (pp. 48, 49, 51, 54); Jesse Keskiaho, 'The handling and interpretation of dreams and visions in late sixth- to eighth-century Gallic and Anglo-Latin hagiography and histories' *Early Medieval Europe*, 13 (2005), 227-248 (pp. 228, 239, 241, 244); Paul E. Dutton, *The Politics of Dreaming in the Carolingian Empire* (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1994). The author of the *Vita Rimberti* may have been trying to reinforce a more prescriptive approach to dreams and visions when she has Rimbart ask for counsel immediately following his first vision. *Vita Rimberti*, 8.

⁷⁸ Rimbart's biographer is clear that Rimbart had visions 'like Anskar' and that Anskar was often a participant in, or subject of, these visions. Rimbart, 19, 23.

⁷⁹ Rimbart, 3, 9, 25, 29, 40.

⁸⁰ Walther Lammers, p. 554.

⁸¹ c.f. Rimbart, 2, 3,4.

⁸² Walther Lammers, p. 543; Rimbart, 34.

⁸³ Rimbart, 3, 25, 34.

Yet we must also treat the visions in the *Vita Anskarii* with caution, for neither the genre nor Rimbert's devotion demanded that he provide a representative or accurate account of them. Rimbert's inclusion of Anskar's visions was, in part, a means of pursuing certain aims.⁸⁴ For example, one of the major themes in the *Vita Anskarii* is Anskar's martyrdom. Anskar had expected to die as a martyr, but failed to do so.⁸⁵ This was, apparently, well-known and part of Rimbert's task was to uphold Anskar's status as a martyr, despite his natural death. Thus Rimbert records a vision in which Anskar is told that Fulbert, a pupil of his who had died when struck by a writing tablet, would be counted amongst the martyrs for his patient endurance.⁸⁶ This account lays the foundations for an argument which Rimbert pursues throughout his work, culminating in the final chapter where he asserts that Anskar ought to be considered a martyr, despite dying peacefully.⁸⁷ Unusually, Rimbert's account of this vision is entirely in the third person, suggesting that Rimbert was forced to edit this account more than most. Given that Anskar himself expected a conventional martyrdom, and thus had no need to dwell on the possibility of martyrdom earned through suffering, this vision must be seen as an example of Rimbert actively selecting and re-imagining Anskar's visions, to ensure that they adhered to Rimbert's narrative of Anskar's life.

4.v.c. Eschatology.

The *Vita Anskarii* can usefully be described as an eschatological and apocalyptic text. It is shaped around Anskar's visions, which suggest a worldview in which the temporal and geographical ends of the earth were intermingled with Anskar's anticipation of his own death.⁸⁸ Such a mingling of ideas was natural within the context of missionary work in an area regarded as the ends of the earth: the rewards and motivation for mission were clearest when viewed from the endpoint of sacred history; and mission was, justifiably, associated with martyrdom in the period.⁸⁹ The blurring of these various boundaries has been recognised by scholars of early medieval mission, notably Ian Wood and James Palmer.⁹⁰

⁸⁴ For discussions on the careful structuring of the *Vita Anskarii* see, Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 126; Ian N. Wood, 'Christians and Pagans', pp. 38, 41, 46. Rimbert was explicit about the careful structuring of his work. See Rimbert, 3, 6, 19, 24.

⁸⁵ Rimbert, 3, 5, 17, 25, 35, 40, 42; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 127, 128; Eric Knibbs, pp. 188-194.

⁸⁶ Rimbert, 5.

⁸⁷ Rimbert, 42.

⁸⁸ Rimbert, esp. 3, 25, 34, 35.

⁸⁹ For instance, Willibald, *Vita Bonifatii*, ed. by Wilhelm Levison, *Vitae sancti Bonifatii archiepiscopi Moguntini*, MGH SRG, 57, 8, 9; Bede, *Histoire Ecclésiastique du Peuple Anglais - Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum*, ed. by

However, it is important to qualify this description of the *Vita Anskarii* as an eschatological and apocalyptic text. For there is little evidence that either Rimbert or Anskar believed that the (temporal) end of the earth was nigh. Palmer has suggested that the eschatological strain in the *Vita Anskarii* extended to an expectation that the end of time was imminent, although more recent comments suggest that he may now have revised this conclusion.⁹¹

In the second vision of the *Vita Anskarii*, Anskar, having passed through purgatory into heaven, is commanded by a voice, ‘go and return to me crowned with martyrdom’.⁹² This led him to anticipate a martyr’s death. A number of scholars have commented on the imagery of this vision, which is striking, especially in its focus on light.⁹³ Palmer has suggested that Anskar/Rimbert’s description of twenty-four elders enthroned in heaven, a reference to Revelation 4.4, should be regarded as evidence of Rimbert’s eschatological concerns, reflecting his own blending of the geographic and temporal ends of the earth.⁹⁴ From the context of Palmer’s article, the implication is that Rimbert’s reference to John’s *Apocalypse* is indicative of his belief that the day of judgement was at hand.⁹⁵ However, a reference to the book of Revelation or the twenty-four elders was apocalyptic primarily in the sense that the book was an unveiling or a vision, not that it concerned judgement day. The motif itself, of twenty-four elders crowned and seated around the throne of God, was not uncommon in Carolingian art.⁹⁶ Charlemagne’s chapel at Aachen was adorned with such imagery, which has led Paul Dutton to posit that Anskar’s vision may have been prompted by the memory of a visit there.⁹⁷ More generally, commentaries on Revelation in the ninth century maintained what Guy Lobrichon has described as ‘strategies of silence’, interpreting the book in such a way as to resist and dispel fears of an imminent end. Thus Haimo of Auxerre wrote that Revelation could only be interpreted as a spiritual allegory of the

Michael Lapidge, Pierre Monat and Philippe Robin (Paris: Cerf, 2005), v. 10; Rimbert, 17, 25, 40; *Vita Quinque*, 2, 12, 13; *Passio Adalberti*, 20, 22, 24-34.

⁹⁰ James Palmer, ‘Defining Paganism’, pp. 423-425; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 133, 134; Ian N. Wood, ‘The Pagans and the Other: Varying Presentations in the Early Middle Ages’, *Networks and Neighbours* 1, 1 (2013), p. 10; Rimbert, 3, 25; Paul E. Dutton, *The Politics of Dreaming*, p. 53.

⁹¹ ‘Interview with James Palmer’, ed. by Richard Broome and Tim Barnwell, *Networks and Neighbours*, 2, 1 (2014), 170-177 (pp. 172-174); James Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge: CUP, 2014).

⁹² Rimbert, 3.

⁹³ See especially Walther Lammers, pp. 551, 554, who suggests a Platonic influence on Rimbert’s imagery; Paul E. Dutton, *The Politics of Dreaming*, pp. 53, 54.

⁹⁴ James Palmer, ‘Defining Paganism’, pp. 424, 425; Rimbert, 3; Revelation 4.4, ‘And surrounding the throne were twenty-four smaller thrones. And upon the thrones, twenty-four elders were sitting, clothed entirely in white vestments, and on their heads were gold crowns’ (NIV).

⁹⁵ James Palmer, ‘Defining Paganism’, p. 424-425, esp. f.n. 121, 122, 124.

⁹⁶ Lawrence Nees, ‘Art and architecture’, in *The New Cambridge Medieval History. Vol. 2, c.700-c.900*, ed. by Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), pp. 809-844 (pp. 822, 837); Walther Lammers, p. 551.

⁹⁷ Paul E. Dutton, *The Politics of Dreaming*, p. 52.

Church.⁹⁸ A reference to Revelation is not in itself evidence that Rimbert or Anskar believed that the end of time was near.

When Rimbert did explicitly mention the day of the judgement, he did so as a means of emphasising Anskar's piety and enduring zeal for mission, which in turn acted to legitimise Hamburg's mission. Rimbert imagined Anskar leading the joyful Danes and Swedes into heaven on the final day; in what may be an echo of Gregory the Great's homily on Luke 10.⁹⁹ Such an awareness of the eschatological consequences of mission was fundamental to missionary work, imbuing it with a sense of urgency and meaning. But although this sentiment might be reinforced by a belief in the nearness of the end, it was not essential to it.

Elsewhere, Palmer argues that we should interpret Rimbert's work in the light of the *Expositio in Matthaem* written by Paschasius Radbertus, monk and occasional abbot of the monastery of Corbie.¹⁰⁰ Such an interpretation is based on the close ties between Corvey and its mother house, which Rimbert was trying to revitalise, and the likelihood that Rimbert's use of Job in the *Vita Anskarii* was influenced by Radbert's *Life of Wala*.¹⁰¹ What is less clear is how we should interpret this influence. Palmer emphasises that Radbert was confident that he could identify the signs of the end times and connect biblical prophecies with events happening around him. Radbert saw apocalyptic prophecies fulfilled in the Carolingian civil wars, the Northmen's entry into Paris in 845 and, most pertinently, the establishment of churches in the North.¹⁰² Similar attempts to try and identify the signs of the coming end could also be found in Rimbert's sources, especially in Gregory the Great's *Homilies* and *Dialogues*, which interpreted the Lombard invasion of Italy in such a way.¹⁰³ What Radbert did not do, unlike Gregory, was to claim that the fulfilment of these

⁹⁸ Guy Lobrichon, 'Stalking the Signs: the Apocalyptic Commentaries', *The Apocalyptic Year 1000. Religious Expectation and Social Change, 950-1050*, ed. by Richard Landes, Andrew Gow and David C. Van Meter (Oxford: OUP, 2003), pp. 61-80 (pp. 72-74).

⁹⁹ cf. Rimbert, 24, 37; Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in euangelia*, ed. by Raymond Etaix, CCSL 141 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), 19.

¹⁰⁰ James Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*', p. 244; Allen Cabaniss, *Charlemagne's Cousins: Contemporary Lives of Adalard and Wala* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1967), p.2, 3.

¹⁰¹ Such an influence seems likely, and both Wood and Palmer emphasise how unusual the model of Job was at this time in missionary hagiography. James Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*', p. 243; Ian. N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 134. Yet, as Ganz notes, when looking across a longer period and a wider range of genres the model was quite common. David Ganz, 'The Debate on Predestination', in *Charles the Bald: Court and Kingdom: Papers Based on a Colloquium Held in London in April 1979* ed. by Janet L. Nelson, Margaret Gibson and David Ganz (Oxford, England: B.A.R, 1981), pp. 353-373 (p. 354).

¹⁰² James Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*', p. 243; Simon Coupland, 'The Rod of God's Wrath or the People of God's Wrath? The Carolingian Theology of the Viking Invasions', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 42 (1991), 535-554 (p. 538).

¹⁰³ Gregory the Great, *Homiliae*, 1, 3, 9, 17, 19, 35; Gregory the Great, *Dialogorum Libri IV*, PL 77, cols. 149-430, iii. 37, iv. 38, iv. 43.

prophecies demonstrated that the end of time was imminent. He was amongst the most extreme interpreters of contemporary events, but nonetheless maintained the orthodox line on the apocalypse, concluding, ‘and yet, as the word of the Lord says, the end is not yet.’¹⁰⁴ The *Vita Anskarii* gives us no reason to believe that either Rimbert or Anskar thought to go beyond this.

4.v.d. *Aquilo*.

Did the very language of the Bible encourage and reflect a particular understanding of the North? David Fraesdorff has made this argument as part of his wider study of perceptions of the North in the Middle Ages. He traces the concept of *aquilo*, one of the three Latin words for the North, from its classical origins, to its incorporation into Latin versions of the Bible, through to the twelfth century. Fraesdorff argues that the concept was so overwhelmingly negative that:

The image of the North and the East presented in the written sources of Christian Europe in the ninth and tenth centuries was, without exception, negative. Until around the turn of the millennium, the term *aquilo* – with its connotations of disaster and hostility – was used exclusively for this region. For almost two hundred years, a relatively rigid concept of the North prevailed.¹⁰⁵

Fraesdorff’s analysis works well as a general characterisation of the period, making use of a detailed study of a handful of terms to illustrate the gradual changes in attitudes towards the North.¹⁰⁶ However, Fraesdorff pushes his conclusions a little too far. The narrative which he produces is simply far more comprehensive than the body of evidence allows; our sources are too limited and too partial to be treated as so representative. Nor is his conclusion representative of large sections of the *Vita Anskarii*, as will be argued over the course of this chapter. The primary concern in this section is Fraesdorff’s claim that the negative connotations of the word ‘*aquilo*’ were bolstered by a persistently negative view of the North within the Bible itself.¹⁰⁷ This is misleading.

¹⁰⁴ Matthew 24.6; Paschasius Radbertus, *Expositio in Matthaem*, PL 120, col. 0801C; David Ganz, ‘The Debate on Predestination’, p. 354; Simon Coupland, ‘The Rod of God’s Wrath’, pp. 538, 539.

¹⁰⁵ David Fraesdorff, ‘The Power of the Imagination’, p. 315.

¹⁰⁶ David Fraesdorff, ‘The Power of the Imagination’, pp. 311-315; David Fraesdorff, *Der Barbarische Norden*, pp. 52-81, 130-135.

¹⁰⁷ David Fraesdorff, ‘The Power of the Imagination’, pp. 310, 311.

There are around one hundred and fifty references to the north in the Bible; the majority are not explicitly negative. The great variety and complexity of medieval exegesis should make us wary of ascribing too certain a meaning to any particular phrase in the Bible, but a characterisation of the general tendencies is sufficient to make the required point. References to the north in the Books of the Law are primarily concerned with the positioning of things such as altars, boundaries and tribes.¹⁰⁸ Elsewhere, many references to the north are rhetorical. For instance, Ecclesiastes 11.3 reads ‘whether a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where it falls, there it will lie.’¹⁰⁹ Others relate to the Lord’s promise to multiply and gather in his people from across the earth.¹¹⁰ It is in the Books of the Prophets that the north sometimes acquires apocalyptic, and occasionally negative, connotations. In Daniel’s visions the King of the North takes a central role.¹¹¹ In the last part of Ezekiel, references to the north abound as Ezekiel orientates himself within his vision of a new temple.¹¹² Earlier in his prophecy the north is referred to as the place from which Babylon’s destruction will emanate.¹¹³ This idea of the north as a place from which divinely ordained destruction will come is most persistently pursued by Jeremiah, who prophesies the destruction of Israel and Judah by Babylon.¹¹⁴ He sees armies being stirred up in the north, from ‘the ends of the earth’, to destroy Israel for its sins.¹¹⁵ Carolingian authors were not slow to connect Jeremiah’s visions of judgement descending from the north with the pagan Northmen who raided the Frankish lands throughout the ninth century.¹¹⁶

Rimbert himself framed his mission in terms of both the geographical and temporal ends of the earth, and it is tempting to interpret his understanding of the North as part of this typological tradition.¹¹⁷ But we must be cautious, for it is only a typological reading of Jeremiah. Jeremiah’s own words make a historical reading of his work straightforward

¹⁰⁸ For example, Exodus 26.20, 26.35, 27.11, 36.25; Numbers 3.35, 34.7, 34.9; Deuteronomy 3.12, 3.27.

¹⁰⁹ For example, Ecclesiastes 11.3 (NIV); Psalms 89.12; Proverbs 25.23.

¹¹⁰ For example, Genesis 28.14; Luke 13.29; Psalm 107.3; Isaiah 43.6, 49.12.

¹¹¹ Daniel 11.6-9, 11.11, 11.13, 11.15, 11.28, 11.40.

¹¹² For example, Ezekiel 40.19, 40.20, 40.23, 40.5, 40.40, 40.44, 40.46, 41.11, 42.1, 42.2, 42.4, 42.4, 42.11, 42.13, 42.17, 44.4, 46.9, 46.19, 47.2, 47.15, 47.17, 48.1, 48.10, 48.16, 48.17, 48.30, 48.31, 48.31.

¹¹³ Ezekiel 1.4, 8.3, 8.5, 8.14, 9.2, 16.46, 20.47, 21.4, 26.7, 32.30, 38.6, 38.15, 39.2.

¹¹⁴ Jeremiah 1.13-15, 3.12, 4.5, 4.6, 6.1, 6.22, 10.22, 13.20, 15.12, 16.15, 23.8, 25.9, 25.26, 31.8, 46.6, 46.10, 46.24, 47.2, 50.3, 50.9, 50.41, 51.48.

¹¹⁵ Jeremiah 6.22 (NIV).

¹¹⁶ Simon Coupland, ‘The Rod of God’s Wrath’, p. 538; David Fraesdorff, ‘The Power of the Imagination’, p. 311; David Fraesdorff, *Der Barbarische Norden*, pp. 41, 118; Daniel C. DeSelm, pp. 212, 213; Horst Zettel, *Das Bild der Normannen und der Normanneneinfälle in westfränkische, ostfränkische und angelsächsische Quellen des 8. bis 11. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: W. Fink, 1977), pp. 191-204.

¹¹⁷ Rimbert, 25, 38, 42. c.f. Matthew 28.20; Ian N. Wood, ‘The Ends of the Earth’, p. 205; James Palmer, ‘Rimbert’s *Vita Anskari*’, pp. 238-239, 255-256; Ian N. Wood, ‘The Pagans and the Other’, p. 10.

enough; he is explicit that when referring to the north he is announcing the very real threat of the Babylonians.¹¹⁸ To connect Jeremiah's prophecies with current or recent events represents a choice; his work does not demand it and the Bible provides many alternative models for interpreting the north. That many Carolingian authors chose to associate this threat from the north with the Northmen tells us a lot about the way they perceived and responded to their situations. This is an important part of the context for interpreting Rimbert's depiction of the North. But we should not assume that Rimbert subscribed to such an interpretation of Jeremiah or the North. Indeed, on the one occasion Rimbert does reference Jeremiah, the ideas he directs his readers towards are quite different.

4.v.e. Biblical models: Isaiah and Jeremiah.

The twenty-fifth chapter of the *Vita Anskarii* contains the fifth vision of the work.¹¹⁹ Given that Rimbert's authorial control is clear, even explicit in places, we must see its inclusion as part of Rimbert's wider literary strategy, even if it is also a genuine reflection of Anskar's visionary experiences.¹²⁰ During the vision Anskar is addressed by the deceased abbot of Corbie, Adalhard:¹²¹

He (the prophet) looked upon him and said immediately: 'Hear, O islands, and give ear ye peoples from afar. The Lord hath called thee from the womb and from thy mother's belly; he hath remembered thy name and he hath made thy mouth as a sharp sword and hath covered thee with the shadow of his hand and hath made thee like a choice arrow. He hath hidden thee in his quiver, and hath said unto thee, "Thou art my servant, for in thee I will be glorified." ' [Isaiah 49.1-3] Having said this he stretched out his arm and lifted his right hand to him. When Anskar saw this he advanced to his knees hoping that he would be willing to bless him. But he added these words, 'Now saith the Lord that formed thee from the womb to be his servant, I have given thee to be a light to the Gentiles that thou mayest be unto them salvation even to the end of the earth. Kings shall see and princes shall rise up

¹¹⁸ For example, Jeremiah 1.15, 25.9, 46.6, 50.9.

¹¹⁹ Rimbert, 25. For the existing scholarship on this vision see: Ian N. Wood, 'The Ends of the Earth', p. 205; James Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*', pp. 238-239, 255-256; Ian N. Wood, 'The Pagans and the Other', p. 10

¹²⁰ Rimbert, 3, 19, 24; Ian N. Wood, 'Christians and Pagans', p. 41.

¹²¹ The inclusion of the former abbot of Corbie as a prophetic figure within a work addressed to the monks of Corbie is not coincidental. Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 127, James Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*', p. 245; Eric Knibbs, pp. 1, 63, 64.

together and they shall worship the Lord thy God, even the Holy One of Israel, for He shall glorify thee.' [Isaiah 49.5-7]

God's servant, having beheld this vision long before he set out on his journey, was assured that he was summoned by a divine command to go to those parts, and specially by the word that had been spoken 'Hear, O islands,' because almost all that country consisted of islands; and by that which had been added, 'Thou shalt be unto them for salvation, even unto the end of the earth,' because in the north the end of the world lay in Swedish territory. Finally the word [‘*verbum*’] quoted from the end of Jeremiah's: 'For He shall glorify thee,' encouraged his eager desire, as he thought that this referred to the crown of martyrdom that had once been promised to him.¹²²

Rimbert uses the beginning of Isaiah chapter forty-nine to frame Anskar's calling. It is the longest citation of any work in the *Vita Anskarii*, and a key tool for understanding the idea of the North to which Rimbert was guiding his audience. The translations given by Robinson and, more recently, by Mellor, both suggest that Rimbert misattributed this passage to Jeremiah.¹²³ Thus Robinson renders Rimbert's reference to Jeremiah as: 'finally the word quoted from the end of Jeremiah's prophecy'¹²⁴ and Mellor has it as 'finally the words quoted from the end of Jeremiah's prophecy.'¹²⁵ This is misleading.

Firstly, it seems an odd mistake for Rimbert, whose learning is conspicuous in the *Vita Anskarii* and elsewhere, to make. Besides altering the prophecy from first to second person, the language is identical to the Vulgate, albeit with omissions.¹²⁶ This would suggest that Rimbert either had a copy of Isaiah in front of him while writing or could quote the verses from memory. Either possibility makes the misattribution appear more, not

¹²² Rimbert, 25; Charles H. Robinson, pp. 105-107.

¹²³ Scott A. Mellor, 'St Ansgar: His Swedish Mission and its Larger Context', in *Sanctity in the North: Saints, Lives, and Cults in Medieval Scandinavia*, ed. by Thomas A. DuBois (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), pp. 31-64 (p. 55).

¹²⁴ Rimbert, 25.

¹²⁵ Scott A. Mellor, p. 55. The forty-ninth chapter of Isaiah represents a natural break in the book of Isaiah. Modern theologians have variously identified the Suffering Servant as Christ, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the remnant of Israel. However, it is generally accepted that the identity of the speaker was not widely disputed until the eighteenth century. A survey of the relevant passages in the commentaries on Isaiah available to Carolingian scholars appears to confirm this. All identify the servant as Christ and associate this passage with the nativity. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah* (Leicester: IVP, 1993), pp. 383-386; John Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), pp. 363-374; Christopher R. North, *The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah. An Historical and Critical Study* (London: OUP, 1956), pp. 1, 23-27; Smaragdus, 'lectio Isaiaie, Cap. XLIX' in *Collectiones in Epistolas et Evangelia*, PL 102, cols. 0382A- 0382C; Hraban Maur, *Homiliae*, PL 110, cols. 0340A- 0340C; *Commentaria in Isaiam*, PL 116, cols.715-1086 (cols. 0963A-0964B); *Commentariorum in Isaiam libri octo et decem*, PL 24, cols. 9-679 (cols. 0463D-0465B).

¹²⁶ c.f. Rimbert, 25; Isaiah 49.1-3, 49.5-7 (Vulgate).

less, perplexing. Rimbert also reveals a real concern with books throughout his work; when describing the sack of Hamburg he tells us more about the Bible destroyed by the raiders than the Northmen themselves.¹²⁷ This would not have guaranteed Rimbert a perfect memory, but it might add to our surprise at his mistake. Significantly, there is no indication that the scribes who subsequently copied the *Vita Anskarii* felt that it was necessary to change Rimbert's choice of words, despite comprehensive reworkings of the text, particularly in the 'B' manuscript tradition.¹²⁸

Secondly, both translators gloss over the degree of interpretation required to render '*commutatam es*' as 'quoted.' It is more comfortably translated as 'changed', 'altered' or 'rearranged.' If we compare the forty-ninth chapter of Isaiah with Jeremiah, the first chapter of Jeremiah immediately stands out. Here, Jeremiah is called by the Lord to prophesy:

The Word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.'¹²⁹

This is strikingly similar to the beginning of Isaiah forty-nine where the Servant is called, especially when we remember that Rimbert had altered the passage from first to second person. If we interpret Anskar's vision with one eye on the first chapter of Jeremiah, then translating this clause as 'finally the Word changed from the end of Jeremiah's prophecy' becomes comprehensible. For both Isaiah and Rimbert can be seen as altering these verses. It would also make sense of Rimbert's decision to use '*verbum*' in the singular, rather than in the plural form to which Mellor changes it. *Verbum*, with all its prophetic and Christological connotations, echoes Jeremiah 1.4.

The beginnings of Isaiah chapter forty-nine and the first chapter of Jeremiah mirror one another: both Jeremiah and the Servant are called by God; both were known in the womb; both are appointed as a prophet to the nations.¹³⁰ But then the stark contrast between the message of Isaiah and Jeremiah becomes clear. Jeremiah is appointed over nations 'to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow', whereas the Servant is called to be 'a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.'¹³¹ Isaiah

¹²⁷ Rimbert, 10, 16, 18, 25, 35. Ian N. Wood, 'Christians and Pagans', p. 61; Ian N. Wood, 'the Ends of the Earth', pp. 210-212.

¹²⁸ Georg Waitz, MGH SRG, 55, pp. 5-11, 55; Eva Odelman, p. 295.

¹²⁹ Jeremiah 1.4-5 (NIV).

¹³⁰ Jeremiah 1.1-9; Isaiah 49.1-76.

¹³¹ Jeremiah 1.10; Isaiah 49.6 (NIV).

promises that kings and princes will bow to the Servant; Jeremiah prophesies that northern kings will besiege all the towns of Judah.¹³² Isaiah prophesies that the Servant will gather in the people of God from afar, ‘some from the north, some from the west, some from the region of Aswan.’¹³³ Jeremiah promises destruction, in words which were later used by Carolingian authors describing the Scandinavian raids, and by historians attempting to understand the Carolingian view of the Northmen:¹³⁴

The Word of the Lord came to me again: ‘What do you see?’ ‘I see a pot that is boiling,’ I answered. ‘It is tilting toward us from the north.’ The Lord said to me, ‘From the north disaster will be poured out on all who live in the land. I am about to summon all the peoples of the northern kingdoms,’ declares the Lord.¹³⁵

The books of Isaiah and Jeremiah are not wholly incompatible; Isaiah does warn of judgement, Jeremiah sometimes hints at salvation. But the difference in tone is significant; while Isaiah preaches salvation to the world, Jeremiah preaches judgement to a doomed nation. Jeremiah’s message is directed internally. Gentiles feature principally as an instrument of God’s judgement, or, on occasion, to be cursed. On the few occasions when Jeremiah addresses the whole earth, he calls on it to bear witness to Israel’s judgement or, rarely, its eventual restoration.¹³⁶ In contrast, Isaiah’s message is explicitly addressed to the whole world. It is filled with prophecies of distant islands and unknown peoples being gathered up by God.¹³⁷

The difference in message and perspective is a key indicator of the view of the northern mission to which Rimbert was trying to lead his audience. The interpretation of the North formulated within the empire made less sense to a missionary working outside it. Rimbert was probably aware that the Northmen could be interpreted as a scourge from God, and his sources could have supplied him with such a model had he wanted it, but he makes no such interpretation of the attacks in his work.¹³⁸ On the two occasions when

¹³² Isaiah 1.7, 23; Jeremiah 1.15.

¹³³ Isaiah 49.12 (NIV).

¹³⁴ See p. 42, fn. 119.

¹³⁵ Jeremiah 1.13-15 (NIV).

¹³⁶ For other nations as a source of judgement, see Jeremiah 1.13-15, 4.7, 5.15, 6.22, 13.20, 15.12, c.21, c.22, 25.15. For other nations as witnesses, see Jeremiah 4.16, 6.18, 9.16, 15.4, 16.19, 22.8, 31.10, 33.9. For Jeremiah’s hints at Israel’s eventual redemption see, 3.14, 12.14, 16.14, 23.3, 27.22, 30.

¹³⁷ Isaiah 2, 4, 5.26-30, 11.10-12, 12.4,5, 14.2, 25.3-7, 42.4, 42.10-11, 43.5, 6, 49, 41.4, 55.4,5, 56.3, 56.8, 60, 61, 62, 66.

¹³⁸ Rimbert, 9, 10, 34, 42; Gregory the Great, *Homiliae*, 3, 9, 17, 19, 35; Gregory the Great, *Dialogorum Libri IV*, iii. 38, iv. 36, iv. 43.

Rimbert connects sin with the misfortunes of the mission, he immediately reaffirms God's faithfulness and the divine mandate of the mission.¹³⁹ Rimbert's work is full of suffering, but it is suffering in a battle that is already won, for the outcome is preordained. Thus Rimbert has Ebo say,

I firmly believe, nay I know of a truth, that although for the time being on account of our sins a hindrance may arise, the work that we have begun amongst these nations will never be entirely obliterated, but by the grace of God will bear fruit and prosper till the name of the Lord reach unto the ends of the earth.¹⁴⁰

By defining Anskar's mission in the words of Isaiah, Rimbert locates it firmly within sacred history. Christian history was marked out, with its key events known in advance. Thus Gregory the Great and Paschasius Radbertus felt able to list what must happen before the end. Isaiah provided Rimbert with an outward-looking missionary perspective that contrasts sharply with the inward-looking prophecies of Jeremiah. But it also allowed Rimbert to give this perspective an aura of inevitability, as something that had been prophesied and must therefore be fulfilled, as we are told all of Anskar's visions were.¹⁴¹ This theme of prophecy and fulfilment runs throughout the work, and has been associated with the predestination debates of the time.¹⁴² But rather than seeing Rimbert as trying to position himself within this debate, which he does not seem to do, we can see him using the themes and language of an evocative contemporary debate to reinforce his vision of mission.¹⁴³ To argue that something is inevitable is a powerful rhetorical device; sheer force of repetition can make it appear so.

¹³⁹ Rimbert, 1, 34.

¹⁴⁰ Rimbert, 34; Charles H. Robinson, pp. 106, 107. That he presents Ebbo in such an authoritative and positive light is also remarkable, given his reputation. cf. Adam, 1. xxii (24); Peter R. McKeon, 'Archbishop Ebbo of Reims (816–835): A study in the Carolingian Empire and Church', *Church History*, 43 (1974), 437–447.

¹⁴¹ Rimbert, 36, 37.

¹⁴² Ian N. Wood, 'Christians and Pagans', p. 39; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 128; James Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskari*', pp. 241–243.

¹⁴³ Given that the monks of Corbie, to whom he was writing, seem to have been divided on this issue it would have been prudent for Rimbert not to have explicitly taken a side, even if he had one. E. Ann Matter, 'The Lamentations Commentaries of Hrabanus Maurus and Paschasius Radbertus', *Traditio*, 38 (1982), 137–163 (p. 149); Willemien Otten, 'Between Augustinian sign and Carolingian reality: the presence of Ambrose and Augustine in the Eucharistic debate between Paschasius Radbertus and Ratramnus of Corbie', *Nederlands archief voor kerkgeschiedenis*, 80, 2 (2000), 137–156; David Ganz, 'The Debate on Predestination', pp. 355–361; Celia M. Chazelle, *The Crucified God in the Carolingian Era: Theology and Art of Christ's Passion* (Cambridge: CUP, 2001), pp. 169–208; Alan G. Zola, *Radbertus's Monastic Voice: Ideas about Monasticism at Ninth-century Corbie* (Ann Arbor: UMI, 2008), pp. 37–42.

The use of Isaiah forty-nine extends beyond this passage. It re-emerges on a number of occasions when Rimbert echoes the language of Isaiah 49.6, writing prophetically of the ‘ends of the earth.’¹⁴⁴ Rimbert’s depiction of kings, his portrayal of Anskar’s suffering, and his account of one of Anskar’s miracles were also shaped around Isaiah forty-nine. Modelling Anskar’s commission on that of the Suffering Servant allowed Rimbert to unite the two great themes of his work – mission and Anskar’s martyrdom through suffering – in a single, biblical model. Like the Suffering Servant, who in the ninth century was understood to be Christ, Anskar was called to be both ‘a light for the Gentiles’ and ‘a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering’.¹⁴⁵ Associating Anskar with this model of suffering and mission – a notion which may have originated with Anskar himself – provided a familiar point of reference for Rimbert’s vision of the mission, which drew on the immense authority of the model of Christ.

4.v.f. Kings.

Kings feature prominently in the *Vita Anskarii*, and are presented in a way which reinforces an understanding of the mission centred on Isaiah forty-nine. Despite frequent regime changes, the kings of the Danes, Swedes and Frankish kingdoms are all depicted in a remarkably uniform manner.¹⁴⁶ Rimbert was careful to distance all the kings in the *Vita Anskarii* from the mission’s troubles, instead emphasising the royal favour which it enjoyed. The Northmen who attacked Hamburg are merely described as ‘pirates’ and ‘the enemy.’¹⁴⁷ Other sources attribute the attack to the Danish King Horik, but Rimbert chose to omit this detail.¹⁴⁸ In contrast to this studied imprecision, when he described the mission being driven out of Sweden, Rimbert was careful to state that this was done by the people, not the king.¹⁴⁹ Later on, Rimbert describes Anskar being kindly received by the new king, who also blamed the common people.¹⁵⁰ This may reflect something of the realities of the mission – social class may have been a factor in attitudes towards foreign missionaries – but

¹⁴⁴ Rimbert, 25, 34, 38.

¹⁴⁵ Isaiah 49.6, Isaiah 53.3 (NIV).

¹⁴⁶ c.f. Rimbert, 7, 10, 24, 25, 26, 31, 32.

¹⁴⁷ Rimbert, 16.

¹⁴⁸ Heiric of Auxerre, 14–15; Ian N. Wood, ‘Christians and Pagans’, p. 59; James Palmer, ‘Rimbert’s *Vita Anskarii*’, p. 251.

¹⁴⁹ Rimbert, 17.

¹⁵⁰ Rimbert, 26.

we must recognise that Rimbert was actively choosing to make this distinction.¹⁵¹ This is especially noteworthy as Rimbert chose to blame the common people, a group which the *Vita Anskarii* and other works suggest Anskar was particularly concerned for.¹⁵² Similarly, when Rimbert described Horik I (d. 854) being replaced by his relative Horik II, he chose to dissociate Horik II from the ensuing ‘persecution’ of the mission. Rimbert describes the king being urged to abolish Christianity by his chief men, the headman Hovi, and the ‘enemies of Christ’, but his response is tacitly omitted.¹⁵³ Only when Horik II began to favour Christianity does Rimbert choose to record his stance toward it.¹⁵⁴

Distancing kings from the troubles of the mission allowed Rimbert to present them as being unanimously supportive of it. Horik I in particular is singled out as having an extremely high regard for Anskar, whom Rimbert describes as his intimate friend.¹⁵⁵ It is perhaps no coincidence that the two passages which Rimbert dedicated to describing Horik’s affection and cooperation are placed either side of his description of Anskar’s vision of Adalhard. Here Anskar was promised that:

Kings shall see and princes shall rise up together and they shall worship the Lord thy God, even the Holy One of Israel, for He shall glorify thee.¹⁵⁶

Later on in this chapter of Isaiah, the Servant is promised that ‘kings will be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers’ and this theme is continued throughout the book.¹⁵⁷ Significantly, Rimbert also quotes Proverbs 21.1, ‘the heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord.’¹⁵⁸

These verses provide us with the interpretive framework around which Rimbert shaped his portrayal of kings, for the kings in the *Vita Anskarii* are moulded around a single model of kingship. Rimbert’s decision to apply the model near-universally suggests that it had little to do with the actions of the kings themselves. Certainly the cooperation of kings was vital to the mission, and this was an important lesson to impart to potential

¹⁵¹ Ian N. Wood, ‘Christians and Pagans’, pp. 47, 48, 58, 59. For instance, Bede, *Historia*, v. 10; Bruno, *Epistola*, pp. 99-100.

¹⁵² Rimbert, 35, 37, 41; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 132; Anskar, *Miracula Willehadi*, ed. by Alain Poncelet, AASS, 8 Nov., vol. 3 (Brussels, 1910), pp. 847-51. Rimbert’s claims seem to be supported by Anskar’s own *Miracula Willehadi*, in which miracles amongst the poor and women are unusually well represented.

¹⁵³ Rimbert, 31.

¹⁵⁴ Rimbert, 32.

¹⁵⁵ Rimbert, 24, 25, 26.

¹⁵⁶ Rimbert, 25.

¹⁵⁷ Isaiah 49.23. See also Isaiah 49.3, 60.3, 60.10-11, 62.2.

¹⁵⁸ Rimbert, 10; Proverbs 21.1.

missionaries. But this did not necessitate insisting that every king welcomed the mission. Palmer has suggested that Rimbart was attempting to rehabilitate the reputation of Scandinavian kings after the disappointment of Harald Klak, and so encourage potential missionaries.¹⁵⁹ This is plausible, but it must be emphasised that it is only royal attitudes which are whitewashed so enthusiastically, and often at the expense of making their peoples appear more hostile. Rimbart not only records the setbacks of the mission, but seems to go out of his way to emphasise Anskar's personal suffering.¹⁶⁰ Isaiah forty-nine provides a framework through which we can understand Rimbart's decision to emphasise Anskar's suffering even while distancing kings from it. By shaping his description of kings around Isaiah forty-nine, Rimbart reinforces his vision of the mission as something divinely ordained to succeed. For kings to unanimously aid the mission is a partial fulfilment of the prophecy, acting to legitimise it and promising its completion in the conversion of the North.

4.v.g. The Suffering Servant.

Isaiah's prophecies are filled with the Servant's suffering, and this suffering is echoed in Rimbart's vision of Anskar's living martyrdom. Anskar's suffering permeates the whole work.¹⁶¹ The only verse to be quoted twice in the *Vita Anskarii* is Galatians 6.14, 'the world is crucified to me, and I to the world.'¹⁶² Similarly, the book of Job is referenced throughout the work to emphasise Anskar's submission to the will of God throughout his sufferings.¹⁶³ In chapter twenty-nine Rimbart even records a vision where Anskar, upon seeing Christ being beaten on the way to Calvary, tried to shield Him with his own body, and was beaten all over as a result.¹⁶⁴ Rimbart writes that Anskar came to see this as symbolic of the suffering which he had endured for Christ, and we might connect this vision with the model of the Suffering Servant. Like Christ, the Suffering Servant, Anskar could say, 'I offered my back to those who beat me...I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.'¹⁶⁵

Towards the end of the *Vita Anskarii* Rimbart begins to state explicitly what had been left implicit for much of the work; that Anskar ought to be regarded as a martyr on

¹⁵⁹ James Palmer, 'Rimbart's *Vita Anskarii*', p. 252.

¹⁶⁰ Rimbart, 3, 7, 9, 10, 16, 17, 22, 25, 29, 32, 34, 35, 40-42.

¹⁶¹ Rimbart, 3, 7, 9, 10, 16, 17, 22, 25, 29, 32, 34, 35, 40-42.

¹⁶² Galatians 6.14 (NIV); Rimbart, 3, 42.

¹⁶³ Rimbart, 16, 35, 40; Job 1.21, 31.16, 2.10.

¹⁶⁴ Rimbart, 29.

¹⁶⁵ Isaiah 50.6 (NIV); Rimbart, 29.

account of his sufferings. In doing so he provided a very clear example of how his narrative concerns shaped his presentation of different groups and situations. Rimbert compares Anskar's sufferings to those of Saint Paul, rewording II Corinthians 11.26-29. He writes:

We cannot, however, altogether deny that he attained actual martyrdom if we compare his great labours with those of the apostle. In journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils from his own race, in perils from the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in lonely places, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in labour and distress, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings; often, in cold and nakedness; besides those things which are without, that which came upon him daily, the care of all the churches. Who was weak and he was not? Who was offended and he did not burn?¹⁶⁶

Here Rimbert is explicit that he is using different groups and situations to support a particular understanding of his subject. It is a technique that we can observe throughout the *Vita Anskarii* and the *Vita Rimberti* as well.

Rimbert's biographer imitated his use of II Corinthians by referencing the verse preceding Rimbert's citation. This occurs within the only section of the *Vita Rimberti* concerned with Hamburg's mission to the North, and therefore of greatest interest to us here.¹⁶⁷ Yet it swiftly becomes clear that historical accuracy was of secondary concern. She writes that, like the apostle, Rimbert could say, 'night and day I was in the depths of the sea.'¹⁶⁸ In this way a chapter claiming to describe Rimbert's devotion to the mission rapidly turns into a reflection on his similarities to the archetypal missionary; Rimbert was saintly because he was like Anskar and Saint Paul.¹⁶⁹ Like so many other hagiographers, Rimbert and his biographer were aiming to present a certain interpretation of events to their audience, not a historical record *per se*. They were concerned with signs and symbols. A medieval audience would expect this, and approach the works expecting the kind of allusions and interpretive models epitomised in the Rimbert's re-working of the Suffering Servant. The North is described, but framed within a typological framework which linked Anskar, Saint Paul, the Suffering Servant, and Christ.

¹⁶⁶ Rimbert, 42; C. H. Robinson, p. 129. Cf. II Corinthians 11.26-29.

¹⁶⁷ *Vita Rimberti*, 16, 17.

¹⁶⁸ *Vita Rimberti*, 16.

¹⁶⁹ Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 135.

4.vi.a. Pagans and barbarians.

Pagans and barbarians were indispensable literary tools for Carolingian authors. The terms were often interchangeable, and were primarily used to elicit a sense of otherness. As undisputed outsiders, pagans and barbarians provided a rhetorical device for delineating what a group was or was not. Accordingly, references to pagans and barbarians often appealed to an image detached from any particular time or place, to be more easily attached to as many different causes as there were views of what civilized, Christian life should be. Even named, contemporary figures could be treated as essentially anonymous and unchanging when viewed within this framework. For example, Paul the Deacon dedicated a poem to Charlemagne in which he provides one of the few glimpses of the Danish king Sigifrid. It is a poem in which Paul demonstrates his wit and learning by insulting the Danes and their king, but, aside from the names themselves, the poem tells us almost nothing about the realities of Sigifrid's court. It was probably not intended to. Instead it appeals to clichéd descriptions of barbarians as vulgar and hairy, as well as traditions about Paul's own barbarian ancestors, the Lombards.¹⁷⁰

Discussions of pagans and barbarians were almost invariably primarily about something else. Pagans and barbarians were common figures in early medieval literature, yet our literary evidence is a surprisingly poor source for what paganism was actually like. Images of pagans and barbarians were used to support and illustrate a wide range of ideas; but these were better supported by a vague sense of incompatible difference and antipathy, than the complications, distractions and qualifications concomitant with living, breathing individuals. More generally, unqualified descriptions of contemporary paganism hardly fitted with existing notions of what literature was; there was little place for it in history, exegesis, or hagiography, and we perhaps come closest to plausible descriptions of non-religious practices in canon law, despite a tendency for imaginative and archaizing misrepresentations.¹⁷¹

Within exegetical and theological works, pagans provided a reliable point of reference for defining what Christianity should be. This was an established trope in

¹⁷⁰ Theodore Anderson, 'The Viking image in Carolingian Poetry', in *Les Relations littéraires franco-scandinaves au Moyen Age: actes du Colloque de Liège, avril 1972*, ed. by Maurice Gravier (Paris: Société d'édition Les Belles lettres, 1975), pp. 217-242 (pp. 218-221).

¹⁷¹ James Palmer, 'Defining Paganism', pp. 404, 407, 408, 410, 420-422, 425; Yitzhak Hen, *Culture and Religion in Merovingian Gaul, A.D. 481-751* (Leiden. E.J. Brill, 1995) pp. 154, 163, 166, 169, 172, 178, 189-191; Jonathan Couser, 'Inventing paganism in eighth-century Bavaria' *Early Medieval Europe*, 18, 1 (2010), 26-42; Ian N. Wood, 'The Pagans and the Other', pp. 1-22; Anthony Perron; Hans-Werner Goetz, 'Heiden aus Schicksal', pp. 355-365; David Fraesdorff, *Der Barbarische Norden*, pp. 46-81.

Christian rhetoric, stretching back to Saint Paul's 'what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?' and, ultimately, Old Testament appeals to the division between the people of God and idolaters and worshippers of Baal.¹⁷² Gregory the Great, whose works are referenced intensively by both Rimbert and his biographer, was quite about explicit about using this trope as a means of illustrating theological points.¹⁷³ Rimbert's contemporaries continued this tradition. For hagiographers, pagans provided a familiar point of reference for establishing an individual's sanctity. Sulpitius Severus had described Saint Martin clashing with crowds of anonymous pagans, who were swiftly chastised through divine intervention. His *Life of St. Martin* swiftly became an influential model for saints' lives, and the Carolingian period witnessed an intensification of this type of conflict in its hagiography.¹⁷⁴ Dramatic confrontations with pagans illustrated a saint's piety; both by displaying their divine favour – manifested through miracles or martyrdom – and by placing the saint in opposition to a group defined by its hostility to Christianity.¹⁷⁵

In contrast to the Carolingians' enthusiastic exploitation of pagans and barbarians as convenient literary devices, descriptions of contemporary Northmen became increasingly limited in their focus during the ninth century. We have already seen how this affected the language which authors used, leading them to settle for ambiguous yet familiar terms such as 'Danes', 'Swedes' or 'Northmen'. It also influenced the events which writers chose to record. While Anglo-Saxon authors continued to locate Viking attacks on the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms within their wider European context, Carolingian authors increasingly focused on their own regions and empire.¹⁷⁶ Scandinavian activity tended to be recorded only insofar as it impacted directly on the Carolingian world. Carolingian authors also increasingly resorted to a limited set of *topoi* to describe the Northmen and their attacks: the Northmen were tall; their attacks were cruel and cunning; they burnt and plundered; their Christian victims would huddle piously at the altar facing their deaths with psalms and prayers.¹⁷⁷ Some of these *topoi* were more accurate than others; for instance, descriptions of Northmen

¹⁷² II Corinthians 6.15. cf. Joshua 24.15; I Kings 18.21, 19.18; II Kings 17.41 Psalms 119.113; Isaiah 44.18; Jeremiah 51.17, 10.14; Ezekiel 20.39; Habakkuk 2.18-19; Hosea 10.2, 13.2; Isaiah 44.17, 46.6; Jeremiah 10.4; Hosea 2.8, 4.17, 8.4-5. Rhetorically, at least, the Old Testament division between the people of God and idolaters of various kinds is more prominent than that between Israel and the Gentiles.

¹⁷³ Gregory the Great, *Homiliae*, 6-8; Gregory the Great, *Dialogorum Libri IV*, i. preface, iii. 9, iii. 31, iii. 38.

¹⁷⁴ Sulpitius Severus, *De Vita Beati Martini*, PL 20, cols. 95-248, 12-15; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 29, 30.

¹⁷⁵ Yitzhak Hen, pp. 194-203; Ian Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 29, 30.

¹⁷⁶ Janet L. Nelson, 'A King across the Sea': Alfred in Continental Perspective' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, 36 (1986), 45-68 (pp. 46, 47).

¹⁷⁷ Simon Coupland, 'The Vikings on the Continent in Myth and History' *History* 88, 290 (2003), 186-203; Daniel C. DeSelm, pp. 33-38; Theodore Anderson, pp. 224-241.

attacking at night or burning what they could not plunder seem to have been fairly accurate.¹⁷⁸

The audiences of the *Vita Anskarii* and *Vita Rimberti* could reasonably expect to find a selection of such tropes in these works. To an extent, they would not have been disappointed. Both Rimbart and his biographer deployed familiar images of pagans and barbarians to support the claims of their archdiocese and the piety of their subjects.¹⁷⁹ However, where Rimbart's aims become more unusual, so too does his depiction of pagans and barbarians.

4.vi.b. The sack of Hamburg: legitimising Hamburg-Bremen.

It is no coincidence that references to barbarian savagery in the *Vita Anskarii* and *Vita Rimberti* are clustered around passages defending the rights of Hamburg-Bremen.¹⁸⁰ The attack on Hamburg in 845, combined with the threat of further attacks, was presented as the primary justification for the unification of Hamburg-Bremen, and supported its claims for material support. Describing the 'savagery of the barbarians' in this context provided a familiar point of reference for understanding Hamburg's claims.¹⁸¹ This entailed not just a familiar concept – that barbarians were hostile and violent – but, crucially, a familiar structure of thought as well. As a byword for otherness, for fundamental difference and antagonism, barbarians implied a dichotomizing view of the world: a straightforward division of the world into 'us' and 'them.' By placing Hamburg's claims in opposition to barbarity, these claims are presented as moral and reasonable; everything which barbarians were not. They are also presented as one of only two options. Barbarians provided a familiar and uncomplicated reading of the complex, and occasionally suspect, claims and counter-claims which troubled Hamburg-Bremen's relationship with Verden, Turnhout, Cologne, Osnabrück, and the people and clergy of the diocese.¹⁸²

The significance of the sack of Hamburg within Rimbart's narrative is reflected by its location within the *Vita Anskarii* and the fact that it was included at all.¹⁸³ There are many other events, such as the involvement of the Danes in the Frankish civil war or the

¹⁷⁸ Simon Coupland, 'The Vikings on the Continent', p. 200; Lesley A. Morden, *How much material damage did the Northmen actually do to ninth-century Europe?* (Ph.D Dissertation, Simon Fraser University, 2007), pp. 222-233.

¹⁷⁹ Esp. Rimbart, 7, 12, 22, 23, 38, 40; *Vita Rimberti*, 16-18.

¹⁸⁰ Rimbart, 12, 16, 22, 23; *Vita Rimberti*, 1, 2.

¹⁸¹ Rimbart, 12.

¹⁸² See p. 17 fn. 22 and p. 18 fn. 27.

¹⁸³ Ian N. Wood, 'Christians and Pagans', p. 46.

earliest Viking raids, which Rimbert ignored, even though they must have had a significant impact on the mission.¹⁸⁴ Rimbert presented the attack as occurring suddenly following a period of uninterrupted success for the mission. Thus this sudden calamity, mirrored by setbacks in the mission-field itself, necessitated and justified the unification of Hamburg-Bremen.¹⁸⁵ The unification is presented as the natural, inevitable conclusion to events; the greater the calamity, the more compelling the case for unification. When Rimbert came to explicitly defend the unification, it was an argument that the structure of his narrative had already made. The centrality of the unification within Rimbert's narrative is underlined by his decision to place it at the physical centre of the work, despite the contortions in his chronology which this entailed.¹⁸⁶

The emphases in Rimbert's account of the 845 attack should alert us to his concerns when describing it. Rimbert provides minimal information about the attackers. He describes them as 'pirates' and 'the enemy', but that is all. This served to dissociate the Danish king Horik from the attack, as has been noted, but it also anonymised the Danes, defining them as attackers and nothing more.¹⁸⁷ Rimbert instead focused on Anskar's great patience enduring the damage and suffering inflicted by the attackers. Rimbert finishes the chapter with Anskar quoting Job, saying:

The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away; the Lord's will be done. Blessed be the name of the Lord.¹⁸⁸

The long list of Anskar's material losses, which Rimbert spends the second half of the chapter reciting, is thus incorporated into Rimbert's picture of Anskar as a latter day Job.

Rimbert also chose to present the attack as an unqualified disaster, to further reinforce his picture of Anskar's patient sanctity. This is not something he had to do. The Danes who attacked Hamburg in 845 had been defeated by a Saxon army, and were already retreating when they sacked Hamburg. Shortly after, Louis the German successfully demanded restitution from Horik I, and Hamburg was reoccupied and rebuilt more or less immediately.¹⁸⁹ Three sources depict the 845 raids as a disaster for the Northmen,

¹⁸⁴ Ian N. Wood, 'Christians and Pagans', pp. 42, 46, 47.

¹⁸⁵ Rimbert, 14-16.

¹⁸⁶ Rimbert, 22-24; Ian N. Wood, 'Christians and Pagans', p. 38; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 126, 127; James Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*', pp. 239, 240.

¹⁸⁷ Rimbert, 12; Ian N. Wood, 'Christians and Pagans', p. 47; James Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*', p. 252.

¹⁸⁸ Rimbert, 16; Charles H. Robinson, p. 58; Job 1.21.

¹⁸⁹ See p. 18, fn. 28.

describing the divine vengeance which pursued the Northmen on their way home.¹⁹⁰ Rimbart is likely to have known much of this. Count Cobbo, the Frankish legate who negotiated peace with Horik and who supplied details for at least one of these sources, had very close ties to Corvey, just as Rimbart did.¹⁹¹ However, such details distracted from Rimbart's vision of Anskar as a suffering saint, and were therefore omitted.¹⁹² Rimbart's account of the sack of 845 formed the core of a carefully crafted narrative which legitimised Hamburg-Bremen and its archbishop.

4.vi.c. Christians and pagans: legitimising the bishop.

At times, Rimbart explicitly juxtaposed Christian and pagan, drawing on a sense of the fundamental and irreconcilable division between the two. Surprisingly few groups or individuals are labelled as Christians in the *Vita Anskarii*. Most references occur in connection with the northern mission, where the division between Christian and pagan was an ongoing, practical concern.¹⁹³ Yet although the distinction between Christian and pagan was central to these descriptions, Rimbart's concern to reflect something of the realities of the Scandinavian mission limited the possibilities of exploiting this divide rhetorically. The Christian God is occasionally contrasted with the pagan gods 'who were demons', yet the dichotomizing effect of such statements is muted by Rimbart's more modest accounts of pagan-Christian relations, which were generally far less dramatic.¹⁹⁴ Groups within the Carolingian world are only described as Christian on four occasions.¹⁹⁵ One of these appears at the end of the work, in a passage where the 'opposition of Christians' mirrors 'the persecutions of the heathen', with both serving to underline Anskar's unconquerable zeal.¹⁹⁶ The remainder are clustered together in chapter thirty-eight.¹⁹⁷

Here Rimbart describes some captives of the 'barbarians' escaping to Anskar's diocese, where they were captured by the Nordalbingians and resold into slavery. Having emphasised that this 'was a great crime and one of a terrible nature', Rimbart describes how, inspired by a vision, Anskar led a procession through the diocese, liberating the captives

¹⁹⁰ Eric. J. Goldberg, pp. 134, 135; Ian N. Wood, 'Christians and Pagans', pp. 46-49; Heiric of Auxerre, *Miracula sancti Germani*, PL 124, cols. 1258-66.

¹⁹¹ Eric. J. Goldberg, pp. 97, 98, 134; Ian N. Wood, 'Christians and Pagans', p. 48.

¹⁹² See Rimbart, 18.

¹⁹³ Rimbart, 9, 12-14, 17-20, 24-28, 30-33.

¹⁹⁴ Rimbart, 19.

¹⁹⁵ Rimbart, 38, 42.

¹⁹⁶ Rimbart, 42; Charles H. Robinson, p. 128.

¹⁹⁷ Rimbart, 38.

with miraculous aid. The account is littered with references to Christians, pagans and barbarians. The captives were taken from the ‘Christian lands’, fled to the Christians, but ‘these Christians showed no compassion’, and sold them to ‘other Christians’. These statements are mirrored by references to ‘barbarians’, ‘pagans’ and ‘strangers’.¹⁹⁸

Rimbert’s choice of terminology is striking, for nowhere else in the *Vita Anskarii* does he show such a sustained interest in explicitly distinguishing between Christians and pagans. In part, his decision to do so serves to underline the severity of the crime; Christians were not supposed to sell their co-religionists to pagans, for fear of apostasy. By framing events in terms of a Christian/ pagan dichotomy, Rimbert highlights the disturbing reality that Christians had acted in precisely the same way as pagans.

This dichotomy also served to present Anskar as a pious and authoritative bishop. Like many of Rimbert’s direct references to pagans, the dichotomizing structure of the thought is key. Anskar is placed in opposition to his own flock; they are shown to be error, and he chastises them. The relationship between the bishop and his flock is overlaid on to the familiar and unambiguous dichotomy of Christian and pagan, and thus reified. The bishop’s authority is enacted and justified, an authority Rimbert himself sought to maintain. As elsewhere, Rimbert is open about his intentions in this passage, beginning the preceding chapter by stating that he was writing to demonstrate that Anskar had been a good pastor, who adhered to the model of Gregory the Great’s *Pastoral Rule*.¹⁹⁹

Rimbert may have had another model in mind as well. He ends the chapter on an intriguing note, writing:

Thus did the Lord manifest on this journey the truth of the promise which He made to those who believe when He said, ‘Lo I am with you all the days even unto the end of the world.’²⁰⁰

Rimbert cites Matthew, but we might see this as an allusion to the prophecy of Adalhard/ Isaiah, which used similar language.²⁰¹ It may be no coincidence that much of Isaiah forty-nine is concerned with the freeing of captives. When Isaiah asks, ‘can plunder be taken from warriors, or captives be rescued from the fierce?’ the Lord’s answer is an emphatic ‘yes.’²⁰² Again, we must suspect that Rimbert was shaping his description of Anskar around

¹⁹⁸ Rimbert, 38; Charles H. Robinson, p. 118-120.

¹⁹⁹ Rimbert, 25, 38, 42. c.f. Matthew 28.20.

²⁰⁰ Rimbert, 38; Charles H. Robinson, p. 120.

²⁰¹ Rimbert, 25.

²⁰² Isaiah 49.9, 49.24-26.

established models, providing his audience with signs through which to interpret his account. This may take us further from the reality of the events described, yet it also hints at the ideological underpinnings of Hamburg's Church and mission which originated, in part, with Anskar himself.²⁰³

Rimbert's description of Anskar's initial decision to join the mission provides an example of how he balanced various aims when describing the North and its inhabitants. Rimbert describes Louis the Pious' search for someone sufficiently devoted to accompany Harald Klak back to Denmark, following his baptism in 826. No one brave enough could be found until, at last, Anskar and one companion came forward. Thus:

Many began to express astonishment at his [Anskar's] strength of purpose and his willingness to abandon his country and his acquaintances and the love of the brethren with whom he had been brought up and hold intercourse with unknown and barbarous peoples.²⁰⁴

Throughout the passage Rimbert emphasises that the task was a forbidding one, and one which was undertaken freely. For instance, he writes:

At that time it seemed to him [Wala] to be abhorrent and wrong that anyone should be compelled against his will to live amongst pagans.²⁰⁵

In the most negative description of any king in the work Harald Klak is described as being 'as yet ignorant and untaught in the faith', although this assessment soon improves in line with Rimbert's adherence to Isaiah.²⁰⁶

Rimbert's account does not chime with the other sources which deal with Harald Klak's baptism, primarily Ermold the Black's *Carmina in honorem Hludovici*, which present a far more optimistic view.²⁰⁷ But depicting the North as barbarous was not uncommon; Paul the Deacon even joked about what a miserable prospect missionary work to the Danes would be.²⁰⁸ Once again, we can see Rimbert incorporating established imagery into his

²⁰³ See especially, Rimbert, 36.

²⁰⁴ Rimbert, 7; Charles H. Robinson, p. 40.

²⁰⁵ Rimbert, 7; Charles H. Robinson, p. 42.

²⁰⁶ Rimbert, 7, 8; Charles H. Robinson, p. 43.

²⁰⁷ Ermoldus Nigellus, *Carmina in honorem Hludovici Christianissimi Caesaris Augusti*, PL 105, cols. 1882-2513; Ian N. Wood, 'Christians and Pagans', pp. 36-39; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 136.

²⁰⁸ Theodore Anderson, p. 218.

narrative. Painting the North as a grim and forbidding prospect enabled Rimbert to emphasise Anskar's zeal in daring to go there. Such a technique was not uncommon, and many of the grim pagan kings who populated hagiographical literature fulfilled a similar role.

But there is another aspect to Rimbert's account. At the beginning of the passage he explains that his purpose was to describe how Anskar came to leave his *stabilitatis loci* at Corbie, so that no one might accuse Anskar of leaving out of fickleness.²⁰⁹ The phrase '*stabilitatis loci*' is a reference to the *Benedictine Rule*, and specifically to the vow taken to remain in the monastery unless given special dispensation to leave it.²¹⁰ It was a concern which shaped the lives of his monastic audience, and about which one of Rimbert's favourite works, the *Dialogues*, moralized extensively.²¹¹

Yet Rimbert's argument is more than a vindication of Anskar's actions since, by extension, it justified other monks joining the mission. This issue has been noted by a number of commentators.²¹² The *Vita Anskarii* was directed to Anskar's old monastery of Corbie, which had previously supported the mission, and it was not unreasonable for Rimbert to hope that this support might be renewed. The passage must be understood in this context. Rimbert's emphasis on the need for the would-be-missionary to freely embrace missionary work not only accentuated Anskar's heroism, but also provided a practical model by which future missionaries could be selected. It was a model which echoed the ideals of free choice and service in the *Benedictine Rule*.²¹³ Here, as elsewhere, Rimbert drew on the negative connotations of the North in defence of his diocese and mission, presenting the North as a fearful place as a means of eliciting monastic support.

4.vi.d. Describing the mission.

Where Rimbert's aims change, so too does his depiction of the Northmen. This is the clearest warning the *Vita Anskarii* gives us against taking such descriptions at face value. When describing events within the Carolingian world, Rimbert was largely content to exploit the familiarity of negative descriptions of the Northmen. In her use of language, if

²⁰⁹ Rimbert, 7; Charles H. Robinson, p. 37.

²¹⁰ Benedict, *The Rule of Benedict*, ed. and trans. by Justin McCann (London: Burns and Oates, 1972), pp. 14–15, 138 (c. 1, 61); Rimbert, 7; James Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*', p. 244; Ian N. Wood, 'Christians and Pagans', pp. 38–39.

²¹¹ For instance, Gregory the Great, *Dialogorum Libri IV*, ii. 24–25.

²¹² James Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*', pp. 244; Ian N. Wood, 'Christians and Pagans', pp. 38–39.

²¹³ Benedict, 1, 5, 6, 53, 60.

not structure, the author of the *Vita Rimberti* imitated such techniques in the short section of her work devoted to the mission. Yet when Rimbert described events taking place outside the empire, he abandoned this negative, dichotomizing approach, producing descriptions of Scandinavians of unusual sympathy and realism. Rimbert continued to maintain close control over his narrative, but his changing aims led him to present a far more humane perspective of the North than can be found in most other Carolingian sources.²¹⁴

As a number of scholars have observed, Rimbert's narrative was left deliberately open-ended, as an invitation for others to join the mission.²¹⁵ Accordingly, Rimbert appears to have tried to convey a sense of the realities of mission to would-be-missionaries when describing the North. Rimbert was not trying to provide an accurate description of Scandinavia *per se*. Yet he does adjust his perspective when discussing events in the North, to one which reflects the concerns and aspirations of an early medieval missionary working in an area in which Christianity was far from secure. Other Carolingian hagiographers had tried to explore the realities of mission, but none could match the practical experience which Rimbert brought to the task, nor the urgency of his aims.²¹⁶

In the *Vita Anskarii* we can see Rimbert straying away from established models to pursue his unusual aims. In doing so he risked some of the comfortable acceptability that came with using models which appeared predictable and uncontroversial, however they were used. Many of the concepts Rimbert employed to describe the mission were still familiar; he writes of Swedes, Danes, heroic Christians, pagan demons and divine vengeance. Nonetheless, Rimbert was unable to wholly to disguise the novelty of his perspective. The originality of Rimbert's missionary perspective has been explored elsewhere and will therefore only be discussed briefly here.²¹⁷

Some terms were less useful for describing events outside the empire. Rimbert uses the terms 'barbarians' and 'pagans' throughout his work, but the perspective and interpretive framework that came with these words, of outsiders and insiders, did not sit comfortably alongside the missionary perspective which Rimbert was trying to provide. Consequently Rimbert tended only to draw out the connotations of these terms when describing events within the Carolingian world. When describing events outside the empire

²¹⁴ Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 131.

²¹⁵ James Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*', pp. 244.

²¹⁶ Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 79-92, 100-115, 136-137.

²¹⁷ Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 126-131; Judith Jesch, pp. 89-91; James Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*', pp. 237, 242-250; Ian N. Wood, 'Pagans and the Other', pp. 10, 11; Richard A. Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, pp. 225-227; Sverrir Jakobsson, 'Mission Miscarried: The Narrators of the Ninth Century Missions to Scandinavia and Central Europe', *Bulgaria mediaevalis*, 2 (2011), 49-70 (pp. 90, 91, 97, 103-106, 107).

Rimbert seems to have been far more concerned with distinguishing between those who were sympathetic to the mission and those who were hostile to it.²¹⁸ Such an approach required the reader to reimagine the North, and begin to distinguish between those previously known only as ‘pagans’ or ‘barbarians’. The acquisition of such a conceptual tool was an essential prerequisite of effective missionary work, and its inclusion reflects Rimbert’s practical aims.

Rimbert’s practical concerns are also reflected in the missionary methods he describes, and the modest achievements he celebrates. For example, having described the Swedes defeating the *Cori* with divine aid, Rimbert did not claim that the Swedes converted. On the contrary, he continued to distinguish the Swedes from ‘the Christians’ and ‘Christian merchants’, leaving no doubt about their continued paganism. Nonetheless, he presented the outcome as a success, because:

Many in their reverence and love for Christ, began to lay stress upon the fasts observed by Christians and upon alms giving, and began to assist the poor because they had learnt that this was pleasing to Christ.²¹⁹

For Rimbert, achieving some degree of sympathy for the mission and partial Christianisation were worthwhile achievements. Accordingly, Rimbert does not claim that Anskar converted Horik I, but rather states that:

When Anskar had thus gained his friendship he began to urge him to become a Christian. The king listened to all that he told him out of the Holy Scriptures, and declared that it was both good and helpful and that he took great delight therein, and that he desired to earn the favour of Christ.²²⁰

Similarly, Rimbert described Horik II assuring Anskar that, like his father, ‘he desired to deserve Christ’s favour and to secure the friendship of the bishop.’²²¹ Both remained pagan, but Rimbert celebrated the fact that they were nonetheless sympathetic to Christianity. This account seems to have been unsatisfactory for Adam of Bremen, who transformed

²¹⁸ Rimbert, 11, 17, 18, 27, 30, 31, 32.

²¹⁹ Rimbert, 30; Charles H. Robinson, pp. 96-100.

²²⁰ Rimbert, 24; Charles H. Robinson, p. 83.

²²¹ Rimbert, 32; Charles H. Robinson, pp. 102-103.

Rimbert's depiction of Horik II as an accommodating but unrepentant pagan into the story of a 'grim tyrant' whom Anskar fearlessly converted, along with his whole kingdom.²²²

Unlike his sources, Rimbert's descriptions of mission included very few miracle stories. Those he did include were clustered around the new Scandinavian converts, not Anskar.²²³ The harshest polemics against pagans are delivered, not by Anskar, but by these converts, and particularly by converted Swedish nobleman, Herigar.²²⁴ Rimbert does very little to encourage potential missionaries to imitate the dramatic confrontations pursued by Saint Boniface, Saint Martin and the like.²²⁵ Rather, a 'softly, softly' approach is emphasised. This probably reflects Rimbert's own missionary experiences, where as an outsider he was especially reliant on local cooperation. Bruno of Querfurt's missionary tactics were similarly modest, and it is probably no coincidence that, like Rimbert, he had the personal experience of mission which Adam of Bremen lacked.²²⁶ The dramatic confrontations and miraculous interventions imagined by generations of hagiographers could support a variety of literary strategies, but they were of little use to potential missionaries.

Rimbert's approach to religious attitudes in the North reflects his sensitivity to the realities of mission. Rimbert does not attempt to provide an accurate account of Scandinavian paganism, yet he does appear interested in conveying a surprisingly sympathetic account of pagan perceptions of Christianity. Rimbert's sensitivity to the perception of Christianity is evident in his satisfaction with Christianity's improved status following the Swedes' conflict with the *Cori*. This interest is reproduced through the work, and is especially clear in the remarkable number of occasions when Rimbert allows pagan speakers to voice their views on Christianity. He records pagans describing Christianity as atheistic, as useful on long voyages, as a means of securing Christian allies or victory.²²⁷ This has justifiably invited comparisons with Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, and his description of the conversion of the high priest Coifi in particular.²²⁸

The *Vita Anskarii* may also be usefully compared to the *Translatio sanctae Pusinnae*, which was written around the same time in Corvey's sister house of Herford. The author of the *Translatio* presented Saxon resistance to conquest and conversion not as stubborn

²²² Adam, 1.xxix (31); Francis. J. Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 32.

²²³ c.f. Rimbert, 37, 39 and 18, 19, 20, 27, 30. Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 129-132.

²²⁴ Rimbert, 19, 20.

²²⁵ Ian N. Wood, 'Christians and Pagans', p. 57.

²²⁶ cf. Bruno, *Epistola*, pp. 98-100; *Passio Adalberti*, 26, 32; *Vita Quinque*, 5, 10, 13; Adam, 1. viii (9), 1. ix (10), 1. x (11), 1. xi (12), 1. xxv (27), 1. xxix (31).

²²⁷ Rimbert, 7, 19, 27, 30.

²²⁸ James Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*', p. 247; Ian N. Wood, 'Christians and Pagans', p. 54; Bede, *Historia*, ii. 13.

impertinence, as was common, but as admirable loyalty to the ways of their ancestors.²²⁹ The twenty-sixth chapter of Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii* does something similar. Here Rimbert records a 'devilish announcement', purporting to be from the Swedish gods, objecting to the invitation of a missionary (Anskar) into the country. The gods objected on the basis of their longstanding loyalty to the Swedish people, and Rimbert suggests that the Swedes found this argument extremely compelling.²³⁰ Rimbert was not demonstrating disinterested empathy by acknowledging that Anskar came as a representative of 'a foreign god'. Yet his missionary concerns forced him to show a degree of sympathy to pagan arguments which was both invaluable to successful missionary work and unusual for the genre.

It is notable how Rimbert framed this event. He does not doubt that the Swedes received the message in good faith, but he questions its source, claiming that it came from the devil rather than the gods. Associating the pagan gods with the devil was not unusual; it was standard to the genre and Christian thought more generally.²³¹ But attributing Scandinavian paganism and sin to the wiles of the devil provided Rimbert with a means of distinguishing pagans from their paganism.²³² The Swedes attempted to act honourably, but were misled by the devil. Rimbert's perspective remained self-consciously Christian, yet it nonetheless undermined a simple dichotomy of Christian and pagan, presenting a more fluid perspective instead. Pagans are not seen as the timeless and immutable antitheses of Christians; rather they are kings and peoples who participate in pagan worship. The difference is significant, for it allows not just the possibility of change, but change which is more gradual than the thunderbolt conversion expected by Adam of Bremen and so many others. It was a missionary perspective.

4.vii. Conclusion.

Both Rimbert and his biographer shaped their descriptions of pagans, barbarians and other outsiders around the aims which inspired their works. They were not disinterested observers, and nor did they pretend to be. Both authors thought and wrote within the imaginative confines of their society. Some concepts will have been almost impossible to think around, others impossible to conceive of at all. Such is the nature of human thought. But recent attempts to identify the boundaries of what was thinkable have had a tendency to

²²⁹ Eric Schuler, 'The Saxons within Carolingian Christendom: post-conquest identity in the translations of Vitus, Pusinna and Liborius', *Journal of Medieval History*, 36 (2010), 39–54 (pp. 47, 48).

²³⁰ Rimbert, 26.

²³¹ James Palmer, 'Defining Paganism', p. 413; I Corinthians 10.20.

²³² Rimbert, 16, 19, 26, 33, 35.

ascribe rather narrow and rigid limits to Carolingian concepts of the North and Northmen. Such conclusions must be questioned. For there are strong suggestions in the *Vita Anskarii* that Rimbart, at least, was able to stray beyond the confines of Fraesdorff's *aquilo* or Fried's *gens* when it suited him. This is not to suggest that the arguments developed by Fried and Fraesdorff are groundless, for they are not. Both have proposed useful, and generally convincing, accounts of the Carolingian understanding of the North. Yet rather than attempting to define precisely the boundaries of medieval thought, it is perhaps more rewarding to think in terms of strong tendencies to think in certain ways, and ideas which held a certain formidable acceptability through their familiarity and the force of sheer repetition.

Medieval authors seem to have not only recognised the power of such ideas but embraced them, especially in hagiographical works. Exploiting established tropes and models was one of the benefits of engaging with the genre, and we can observe how Rimbart and his biographer did so. Both authors freely used established images of pagans and barbarians to pursue aims common to the genre; to support the rights of their diocese and the piety of their subjects. Having no reason to do so, Rimbart's biographer did not go beyond this.

But Rimbart's aims could only be partially fulfilled by exploiting established *topoi*. By attempting to convey something of the realities of mission he was forced to stray beyond these familiar images, forfeiting their authority and sometimes going so far as to undermine them. He distinguishes between pagans, presents pagan views of Christianity, and advocates relatively modest missionary aims and methods. In doing so, Rimbart provides a far more outward-looking view than can be found in most Carolingian literature, and his work brings us closer to the realities of ninth century Scandinavia than any other Carolingian text. Yet insofar as he was able, Rimbart associated his own ideas as closely as possible with existing and authoritative models. Many examples have been given, notably Rimbart's sustained use of Isaiah's Suffering Servant as a model for Anskar's suffering and missionary perspective. Thus while Rimbart's *Vita Anskarii* provides evidence that at least some Carolingian authors could think beyond the narrow conceptual horizons which have been attributed to them, it also suggests that appearing to do so was rarely deemed an effective means of pursuing one's aims in an early medieval saint's life.

5. Adam of Bremen.

5.i.a. The *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum*.

In around 1075 Adam of Bremen produced the first draft of his *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum*, the ‘Deeds of the Bishops of Hamburg.’ It was the most comprehensive description of northern history, geography, and ethnology which had ever been written. He began researching the history shortly after arriving in Bremen at the invitation of Archbishop Adalbert in 1066/7, and appears to have continued editing and expanding the text until his death in early 1080s.¹

The *Gesta* is divided into four books. The first two describe the history of Hamburg-Bremen, beginning with an account of the earliest inhabitants of Saxony and ending with the death of Archbishop Alebrand/ Bezelin in 1043.² These books are primarily historical in nature, incorporating elements of geographical and ethnological commentary, in keeping with Adam’s literary models.³ Adam also includes a substantial amount of Scandinavian and Slavic history, reflecting Hamburg-Bremen’s identification with the mission to the North.

The third book describes the pontificate of Archbishop Adalbert up to his death in 1072, and was ostensibly written at the request of Adalbert’s successor, Liemar.⁴ The book has a more biographical and hagiographical tone, but this was more a shift in emphasis than a wholesale change in genre. Adam maintains an interest in wider historical events throughout the third book, while the earlier books are framed in terms of the death and succession of Hamburg-Bremen’s bishops; which was, after all, Adam’s stated purpose. The immediacy of the events described in Book Three allowed Adam to provide a far more detailed account of Adalbert’s pontificate than for his predecessors, but it also created

¹ Adam, prologue, 3. i (1), 3. iv (4), 3. liv (53), 3. lxxi (70). Dating the *Gesta* precisely is deeply problematic. Bernhard Schmeidler, *Hamburg-Bremen und Nordost-Europa vom 9. bis 11. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig: Dieterich, 1918), pp. 9-122; Anne K. G. Kristensen, *Studien zur Adam von Bremen Überlieferung. Die Wiener Handschrift, Erstredaktion oder später verkürzte Fassung?* (Copenhagen: Copenhagen University, 1975); Erik Niblaeus, *German Influence on Religious Practice in Scandinavia, c. 1050-1150* (doctoral thesis, King’s College London, 2010), pp. 121- 127. ‘Anyone who attempts to fix the date of Adam’s text will both inevitably be bogged down in intricate philological detail, and find it necessary to question common assumptions about textual integrity and authorship... Adam’s text fervently resists precise contextualisation, both in terms of form and content.’ pp. 126, 127.

² Adam, 1. i (1) - 2. lxxxii (78).

³ For instance, cf. Adam, 1. i (1) - 1. iii (3); Orosius, *Adversum Paganos Libri VII*, ed. by Caroli Zangemeister (Leipzig: Teubner, 1889), 1. ii, 7. xxxii.

⁴ Adam, 3. i (1).

problems. Adalbert remained a deeply divisive figure, and Adam faced the challenge of reconciling Adalbert's commendable ambition for his archdiocese, with the destruction and enmity this ambition generated. Adam's solution was remarkably elegant, both rhetorically and intellectually. He accentuated both Adalbert's vices and his virtues, presenting the reader with a paradox which is left unresolved.

The fourth book of the *Gesta*, the *Descriptio insularum Aquilonis*, has been of particular interest to scholars concerned with identity and otherness in the period. The book describes the peoples and places of the North, encompassing the Baltic and North Sea worlds, monstrous races such as the Troglodytes and *cynocephali*, and the first known reference to North America.⁵ Adam drew on a wide range of sources, both written and oral, to create his account, and his own struggle to organise these disparate and conflicting accounts into a coherent whole is fundamental to the dynamic and final form of the book. The *Descriptio* is testimony to the staggering claims and ambition of the archdiocese of Hamburg-Bremen in the wake of Adalbert's pontificate, but it may also reflect a more specific agenda. Following the work of Anne Kristensen, there is growing acceptance that Book Four describes a journey across the North which Adalbert had failed to make, but which Adam hoped that Liemar might undertake as a means of enforcing the claims of Hamburg-Bremen.⁶

5.i.b. Dating and manuscripts.

Adam began work on his *Gesta* in around 1066 or 1067 and continued to add to the work until his death in the early 1080s. Following the study of Anne Kristensen, we can no longer be certain that Adam actually dedicated a copy of his text to Archbishop Liemar in 1075 as his prologue suggests.⁷ Indeed, given that Adam appears to have continued editing the text throughout his life there is probably no 'definitive' text to be found.⁸ We must therefore be cautious about relating the work too closely to any particular event. This is especially clear if we bear in mind the upheavals in Saxony and the empire during this period. Adam's original patron, the singular Archbishop Adalbert, died a few years into the undertaking, to be replaced by Archbishop Liemar in 1072. Both of their pontificates were

⁵ Adam, 4. xix (19), 4. xx (20), 3. xxxix (38).

⁶ Adam, prologue, 3. i (1); Anne K. G. Kristensen, pp. 46-49; Volker Scior, pp. 66-69, 90-93; Ildar H. Garipzanov, 'Christianity and paganism', pp. 21-24. However, Hans-Werner Goetz, 'Adam of Bremen', p. 46, is a little more cautious about making this connection, noting that the end of Book Three does not wholly correspond to the subject of the fourth book.

⁷ Anne K. G. Kristensen, pp. 30-44.

⁸ Anne K. G. Kristensen, pp. 18-23; Erik Niblaeus, pp. 121- 127.

marked by crisis and change. The significance of a history recounting the glory and authority of Hamburg-Bremen must have continually shifted during this period, as the Church's circumstances continued to change.

There is no extant autograph copy of the *Gesta*, but the manuscript tradition makes it possible to reconstruct the core of Adam's text with some confidence.⁹ The main areas of doubt are the authorship of the many *scholia* which were appended to the work. Adam and later copyists added, removed and edited these enthusiastically, and the origin of some remains uncertain.¹⁰ Kristensen has also raised doubts about the boundary between the third and fourth books, suggesting that what has been understood to be a postscript to Adalbert's *vita*, should be treated as the preface to the *Descriptio*.¹¹ But otherwise Adam's work survives intact. However, this is somewhat misleading. The medieval transmission of the *Gesta* tended to fragment and confuse Adam's text, and the 'original' text reprinted in modern editions is an imperfect guide to the work read by its medieval audience. The geographical and ethnological sections of the *Gesta* appear to have received far greater attention than Adam's historical material, and the earliest manuscript of the work contains only those sections which describe the North.¹² Yet unlike Rimbert's account of the origins of the archdiocese, Adam's ambitious vision of Hamburg-Bremen's authority did not become widely accepted. However, Adam's insistence on the rights of Hamburg-Bremen could not be wholly ignored, and it was the task of the first Scandinavian historians and others to try and counter the worldview which Adam had set out.¹³

5.i.c. Themes and summary.

The general outlines of Adam's aims are well known.¹⁴ He was writing to honour his Church and uphold its rights.¹⁵ Adam presents a view of the world in which Hamburg-Bremen was at the centre; a new Rome or Jerusalem to which the people of the North

⁹ Bernhard Schmeidler, *Hamburg-Bremen*, pp. 9-122; Volker Scior, pp. 31-34.

¹⁰ Bernhard Schmeidler, *Hamburg-Bremen*, pp. 65-70, 102-107, 312-317.

¹¹ Anne K. G. Kristensen, pp. 46-49; Volker Scior, pp. 66-69, 90-93; Ildar H. Garipzanov, 'Christianity and paganism', pp. 21-24.

¹² The Codex Vossianus Latinus, University of Leiden (4^o 123). See Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. xxxix.

¹³ Peter Sawyer and Birgit Sawyer, 'Adam and the Eve of Scandinavian History', in *Perception of the Past in Twelfth-Century Europe*, ed. by Paul Magdalino (London: Hambledon Press, 1992), pp. 37-51 (pp. 39, 40, 48); Erik Niblaeus, pp. 104-134, 261, 262; Anne K. G. Kristensen, pp. 20-23.

¹⁴ For instance, Ildar H. Garipzanov, 'Christianity and paganism', pp. 13-18; Erik Niblaeus, pp. 104-134; Volker Scior, pp. 29-47.

¹⁵ Adam, prologue, 3. i (1), 3. lxxi (70), 4. xliii (41), 4. xlv (42).

flocked.¹⁶ Kings, popes, and peoples are all assessed almost exclusively in terms of their relationship to Hamburg-Bremen. The enemies of Hamburg-Bremen are vilified or ignored, and its heroes glorified. This vision was directed in the first instance to those within the diocese. The work was addressed to Liemar, and much of it can be read as a guide to Hamburg-Bremen and how its archbishops ought to behave. We should also recall the wider clerical community in the archdiocese; Adam's work contains hints of such of a community and the divisions within it, and no group had so great a need for an account of the Church's identity and purpose.¹⁷

Aspects of the work are likely to have been written with an external audience in mind. Henrik Janson has argued that parts of the *Gesta* must be seen as a scathing criticism of Gregory VII and his supporters, situating the work within the wider conflicts engulfing the empire, and Archbishop Liemar's confrontation with Gregory VII.¹⁸ Adam himself does not explicitly connect his work with any specific occasion, or any cause more specific than the Church's welfare.¹⁹ However, he acknowledges the external challenges facing the Church, and the importance of outside forces such as the pope, emperor and northern kings in maintaining its claims.²⁰ Outsiders also needed to be convinced of Hamburg-Bremen's authority.

Less visible, but of comparable importance, were Adam's literary concerns; his understanding of genre and good literary style, an exegetical mindset, and his absolute faith in the authority of the written word. These concerns underpin the text, and often overshadow Adam's own aims and ideas. They also cultivated the fragmented and contradictory nature of the work.

5.i.d. Overview.

This chapter is concerned with the representation of otherness in Adam's *Gesta*: the pagans, barbarians, women, laity, poor, Prussians, Frisians, Slavs and Saxons whom Adam presented as marginal and alienated. The aim is not to provide a comprehensive overview of all the outsiders in Adam's work. Such surveys already exist in various forms, particularly

¹⁶ Adam, 3. xxiv (23).

¹⁷ Adam, prologue, 3. i (1), 2. lxix (67), 2. lxxxi (77), 3. viii (8), 3. xv (14), 3. xvi (15), 3. schol. 65 (66), 3. lvii (56), 3. lxiv (63), 3. schol. 92 (93), 3. lxix(68).

¹⁸ Henrik Janson, *Templum nobilissimum*; Henrik Janson, 'Adam of Bremen and the conversion of Scandinavia', in *Christianizing Peoples and Converting individuals*, ed. by Guyda Armstrong and Ian N. Wood (Brepols: Turnhout, 2000) pp. 83-88 (pp. 86-87).

¹⁹ Adam, prologue, 3. i (1), 3. lxxi (70); Erik Niblaeus, pp. 112-127.

²⁰ For instance, 3. i (1), 3. xvii (16), 3. xxxiii (32), 3. xxxiv (33), 3. xlvi (47), 3. xlix (48).

for the political and ethnic divisions described in the *Gesta*.²¹ Instead, the emphasis is on approaching these issues with the expectation of variety. This builds on an older strand of scholarship, epitomised by the studies of Gerhard Theuerkauf, Johannes Nowak, and Piergiorgio Parroni, which emphasised the conceptual variety and contradictions in Adam's work.²² The tendency in more recent scholarship has been to approach the *Gesta* with an expectation of consistency, seeking patterns and explicable schemes. This has resulted in an excellent understanding of the nuances of Adam's work and its place in wider debates about the North, developed by Ildar Garipzanov, Volker Scior, Linda Kaljundi, Hans-Werner Goetz, Henrik Janson, David Fraesdorff and others.²³ Yet the contradictions and inconsistencies in his thought have attracted much less attention. This is unfortunate, as Adam's work is peculiarly fragmented. A close reading of the *Gesta* reveals a mass of paradoxes and contradictions; it is a work in which consistency is not the norm. The causes of this variety were diverse, although Adam's understanding of literary authority played a key role. The aim of this chapter is to explore Adam's handling of otherness within the framework of this conceptual fragmentation.

5.ii. The framework: otherness and literary authority.

Adam's *Gesta* is characterised by conceptual variety and inconsistency. A diverse range of factors contributed to this conceptual fragmentation. The great length of time Adam spent working on the *Gesta*, and his proclivity for revising what he had already written, were both significant factors. Adam spent almost two decades researching, writing, and revising his *Gesta*, during which time the fortunes of his Church fluctuated dramatically.

The nature of Adam's subject also encouraged conceptual fragmentation. The *Gesta* is a long work, covering a wide range of topics – historical, biographical, ethnological, geographical, and apologetic – and the tone of the final two books varies significantly from the others. The third is closer to hagiography or secular biography, imitating the model of Einhard's *Vita Karoli*, while the fourth is closer to medieval geographical literature, taking its lead from Orosius' geographical introduction to his *History*, and authors such as

²¹ See especially, Volker Scior pp. 10-135; David Fraesdorff, *Der Barbarische Norden*, pp. 144-156, 251-309.

²² Gerhard Theuerkauf, pp. 118-136; Piergiorgio Parroni pp. 352-5; Johannes Nowak, pp. 26-65.

²³ Ildar H. Garipzanov, 'Christianity and paganism'; Volker Scior, *Das Eigene und das Fremde*, pp. 10-137; David Fraesdorff, *Der Barbarische Norden*, pp. 144-156, 251-317; Henrik Janson, *Templum nobilissimum*; Linda Kaljundi, pp. 113-27; Hans-Werner Goetz, pp. 23-46.

Martianus Capella and Solinus. Adam's perspective shifted with the changes in his subject and literary models.

The breadth of Adam's subject matter was reflected in the remarkable range of sources which he used to create his *Gesta*. His sources ranged from works of classical poetry to the testimony of contemporary eyewitnesses, and disagreements between his sources were inevitable. Yet it was Adam's own understanding of his task which cemented the conceptual fragmentation of his work. Adam was, on the whole, interested in producing a coherent and consistent account of his Church and its history. Yet he often prioritised other concerns; sometimes quite deliberately, sometimes reflexively. Fundamentally, Adam was reading and writing in a manner alien to our own culture, informed by ideas of correct literary style and genre, the authority of the written word, and an exegetical approach to finding meaning in a text. This section establishes the framework for interpreting Adam's representation of otherness, by exploring his understanding of what he was actually doing when writing the *Gesta*. How did Adam understand his role as an author, and how did this affect the depiction of outsiders in his work?

5.ii.a. Writing the *Gesta*.

We know almost nothing about Adam of Bremen; we only know his name because Helmold of Bosau mentions it in his *Chronicle*.²⁴ Adam himself does not use it. In the long term this made Adam's identity something of a mystery, but at the time this anonymity was more feigned than real; Adam clearly expected his audience to know who he was.²⁵ But Adam's decision to appear anonymous hints at his understanding of the task he was undertaking. In the first instance it was an expression of humility, or at least the appearance of it. Medieval prefaces are replete with claims of the author's unworthiness before their audience and tradition, and the decision to remain anonymous was a natural extension of this sentiment. Significantly, the authors of the *Vita Anskarii* and the *Vita Rimberti*, key texts in Adam's institutional history, had also chosen to remain anonymous, with the author of the *Vita Rimberti* explicitly advocating the virtues of doing so.²⁶ By choosing to appear anonymous Adam was locating his work within the literary tradition of his archdiocese, as well as claiming a certain authority for his work through this demonstration of humility and fidelity to the genre.

²⁴ Helmold, 1. 14.

²⁵ Adam, 3. iii (3), 3. lvii (56).

²⁶ *Vita Rimberti*, 9; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 134-135.

More significantly, Adam's decision to remain anonymous is the first indication he gives of the ancillary position of the author in his own mind. We have not yet come to what Foucault termed the 'privileged moment of individualisation in the history of ideas', when the Author came to dominate the understanding of what a text was.²⁷ Adam was perfectly capable of distinguishing between individual authors and treating them differently when he needed to. But if we look at how he refers to their works, as the 'Deeds of the Franks', the 'Annals of the Caesars', the 'Testimony of the Romans', and so on, the authority of these texts seems to come not so much from the individual author as from their status as literature.²⁸ This impression is reinforced if we compare the way that Adam frames oral and literary testimony. Even in the case of such a prestigious informant as the Danish king Svein Estrithson, Adam regularly reassures his readers of the veracity and learning of his source. Svein, we are told, remembered the deeds of the barbarians 'as if they had been written down'.²⁹ In contrast, Adam does not seem to regard the information provided by his literary sources as requiring any sort of justification, even when the text is obscure or anonymous. It was the medium, rather than the author or content, that defined how Adam treated his sources.³⁰ This prioritisation of the medium over the individual is important for understanding the way in which Adam treats his sources and how he perceived his role as an author.

To write historical or geographical literature in the Middle Ages meant engaging with past literary authority. One learned about the world primarily through past authorities, and then emulated them in style and form. Authors tried to avoid the appearance of novelty, presenting new information within established literary norms, and sometimes insinuating the novelty under the name of an established authority.³¹ The centrality of literary authority was particularly visible in the geographical tradition, which was detached, quite consciously, from practical knowledge about peoples and places in the contemporary world. The anachronisms and apparent errors in medieval works of

²⁷ Michel Foucault, 'What is an *Author*?', in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. by Paul Rabinow (London: Pantheon, repr. 1991), p. 115.

²⁸ Adam, 1. xxxvii (39) '*Gestis Francorum*'; 1. xxxviii (40) '*Annalibus cesarum*'; 1. ii (2) '*Romanorum testimonio*'.

²⁹ Adam, 2.xliii (41). '*qui omnes barbarorum gestas res in memoria tenuit, ac si scriptae essent*'; Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 84.

³⁰ Andrew H. Merrills, *History and Geography in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), pp. 5, 23, 25-7, 33; Natalia Lozovsky, pp. 3-8, 138-40, 152-3; Clive S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image* (Cambridge: CUP, 1964, repr. 2009), pp. 2-12, 148, 200-6, 209-15; Giles Constable, *Culture and Spirituality in Medieval Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate 1996), pp. 27, 38-40.

³¹ For instance, Jordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum*, ed. by Francesco Giunta and Antonino Grillone (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo, 1995), ii. 10-15; Aethicus Ister, *Cosmographia*, ed. by Otto Prinz, *Die Cosmographie des Aethicus*, MGH Quellen zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 14 (Munich: MGH, 1993); Natalia Lozovsky, pp. 81-83; Andrew H. Merrills, p. 27.

geography result largely from this this concept of geography as a form of literature; far closer to theology or history in its aims and methods than modern notions of geographical knowledge.³²

This reverence for the written word was reflected in the tools used for understanding it. The primacy of a literal reading of a text was not felt to be self-evident in a literary culture centred on the authority of the written word in general, and the prophetic Word in particular. It was far more intuitive and rewarding to imagine alternative means of interpretation when faced with the inevitable variations, inconsistencies, and impossibilities which emerged from a literal reading of any substantial text, particularly when a line-by-line reading was often the preferred approach. Literal contradictions were far less of a problem when both the author and their audience assumed that any passage could have multiple meanings, and that the different tools for finding these meanings – the moral/tropological, typological, eschatological, and literal/ historical readings of a text, and the innumerable variations of these – could be applied with great flexibility. As Gregory the Great stated at the beginning of his hugely influential *Moralia in Job*, ‘as the fitness of each passage requires, the line of interpretation is studiously varied accordingly.’³³

This reverence for the written word was also expressed in how medieval authors wrote about the world. Descriptions tended to echo established models; hagiographers aimed not so much to provide a factual account of an individual's life, but to provide signs as to how their audience ought to interpret it. The discovery of a perfectly preserved and unaccountably sweet smelling corpse could mark the deceased as a saint. As long as the author regarded that person as a saint, the invention of such an anecdote was only a lie in a lesser sense, just as the great medieval forgeries reflected that which the authors felt to be true, but which previous generations had unaccountably neglected to write down.³⁴ Peter Damian, who once went so far as to claim that all the popes had died of natural causes, despite knowing this to be (objectively) false, summed up this attitude towards truth

³² Natalia Lozovsky, pp. 4–9, 35–63, 70–78, 138–140, 153–154. ‘To compose their image of the world, they turned to texts; to explain the world, they treated it like a text.’ (p. 138); Andrew H. Merrills, pp. 1–27; Evelyn Edson, *Mapping Time and Space: How Medieval Mapmakers Viewed Their World* (London: British Library, 1997), pp. 9, 53.

³³ Gregory the Great, *Moralia*, ep. 4, ‘*Ut ergo uniuscujusque loci opportunitas postulat, ita se per studium expositionis ordo immutat...*’; Gregory the Great, *Morals on the Book of Job*, trans. by John H. Parker, 3 vols. (Oxford: OUP, 1844), p. 9. All of the Hamburg-Bremen authors knew Gregory’s works well. Rimbart, 37, 42; *Vita Rimbarti*, 6, 8, 15, 20; Adam, prologue, 1. xxiv (26), 1. xxxix (41), 1. xl (42), 1. xlv (46), 4. xlv.

³⁴ Giles Constable, ‘Forgery and Plagiarism in the Middle Ages’, *Archiv für Diplomatik*, 29 (1983), 1–41. See pp. 25–27, above.

succinctly when he wrote: ‘since lying is to say the opposite of what one thinks, it sometimes happens that something is subjectively true, but objectively a lie.’³⁵

Non-literal modes of interpretation are essential for understanding Adam’s *Gesta*. The most extended treatment of Adam’s work in such terms is Henrik Janson’s study of his description of the temple at Uppsala in Book Four. Janson argues that Adam’s account of the temple should be viewed as a thinly veiled attack on Gregory VII and his supporters.³⁶ The connection between the *Gesta* and the growing conflict between Gregory VII and Henry IV is somewhat problematic; Archbishop Liemar is well-known for his harsh criticisms of Gregory VII – that ‘*periculosus homo*’ as he called him – yet the first draft of the work appears to have been completed before this crisis had escalated to the point where such harsh rhetoric might be expected.³⁷ However, Janson convincingly establishes that Adam’s description cannot be understood literally; there was no temple on this site in Adam’s time, not least as the surrounding inhabitants were conspicuously Christian.³⁸ Adam’s description of the temple at Uppsala must therefore be seen as an allegorical attack on a region which had frustrated Hamburg’s efforts to establish its authority there. The subtleties of the account, however, remain elusive.³⁹

Adam hints at the presence of non-literal elements in the *Gesta* in his preface. Adam begins his work by praising his patron, defending his undertaking and describing his sources. He writes that he drew on ‘scattered records’, Roman histories and old men ‘who knew the facts.’⁴⁰ Like many such prefaces, Adam’s is a florid mass of *topoi* and literary allusions. One such allusion stands out. Adam writes:

Nevertheless I know that as regularly happens with really novel works, I shall not lack critics. They will say what I have written is fictitious and false, like Scipio’s dreams as invented by Tully.⁴¹

³⁵ Peter Damian, *Letters 61-90*, trans. by Owen J. Blum (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1992), p. 299. cf. letter 89, p. 341.

³⁶ Adam, 4. xxvi (26)– 4. xxviii (28); Henrik Janson, *Templum nobilissimum*; Henrik Janson, ‘Adam of Bremen’, pp. 86–87.

³⁷ Erik Niblaeus, pp. 112–127; Liemar of Bremen, *Epistola*, in *Briefsammlungen der Zeit Heinrichs IV*, ed. by Carl Erdmann and Norbert Fickermann, (Weimar: MGH, 1950), pp. 33–35; Ian S. Robinson, ‘Periculosus homo: Pope Gregory VII and Episcopal Authority’, *Viator*, 9 (1978), 103–31.

³⁸ Henrik Janson, *Templum nobilissimum*; Henrik Janson, ‘Adam of Bremen’, pp. 81–85.

³⁹ Ildar H. Garipzanov, ‘Christianity and paganism’, pp. 24–28; Timothy Bolton, ‘A Textual Historical Response to Adam of Bremen’s Witness to the Activities of the Uppsala-Cult’, in *Transformasjoner i Vikingtid og Norron Middelalder*, 5, ed. by Gro Steinsland (Oslo: Unipub, 2006), pp. 61–91.

⁴⁰ Adam, prologue; Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, pp. 3–5.

⁴¹ Adam, prologue; Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 4 ‘*Scio tamen aliquos, ut in novissimis rebus fieri/consuetum est, adversarios mihi non defuturos, qui dicant haec ficta et falsa veluti somnia Scipionis a Tullio mediata.*’

Adam probably had the first chapters of Macrobius' commentary on Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* in mind at this point.⁴² Cicero himself does not mention any such criticism, at least in his surviving works. On the other hand, Adam explicitly cites Macrobius in the fourth book of his *Gesta*, and he is likely to have known the commentary from his own education, and from teaching at the cathedral school in Bremen. Indeed, the survival of the *Somnium Scipionis* – a section from the sixth book of *De re publica* – can be attributed to the popularity of Macrobius' commentary on it.⁴³

Macrobius includes a scathing refutation of the Epicurean critics of Cicero, who allegedly claimed that it was inappropriate for Cicero to use fables in a serious work of philosophy.⁴⁴ By dividing and subdividing fables into a number of categories, Macrobius argued that not only was it acceptable for Cicero to present holy truths 'beneath a modest veil of allegory' but that it was extremely prudent of him to do so.⁴⁵ This appears to be the context for Adam's reference to the *Somnium Scipionis*. Cicero's critics were wrong, not because they had suggested that Cicero invented *fabulae*, but because they did not understand that *fabulae* could be a legitimate and truthful form of literature. Cicero's work *was* fictitious but, at least in Macrobius' eyes, it was redeemed by its truthful intent. At first glance, Adam's reference to Cicero appears to do nothing more than reinforce his claims to truthfulness presented elsewhere in the prologue, where he states that he had not invented anything, for everything which he had written was based on sound authorities.⁴⁶ But on closer inspection it looks quite different, hinting at an understanding of truth which encompassed *fabulae*. In this way Adam gently signals to his readers that although some aspects of his work may appear literally false, they may nonetheless be true.

Adam's respect for past authority, and its centrality in the process of writing new literature, could easily turn into credulity of anything written down; 'they find it hard to believe anything an old auctour has said is simply untrue'.⁴⁷ Even if a writer did suspect his sources were inaccurate, this in itself was no reason to dismiss what they said. As Solinus commented at the beginning of his *Polyhistor*, although much of what his authorities had

⁴² Macrobius, *Commentariorum in somnium Scipionis*, in *Macrobius*, ed. by Franz Eyssenhardt (Leipzig: Teubner, 1868), pp. 465-641, i. 2.

⁴³ cf. Adam, 4. xlii (40) *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, trans. by William H. Stahl (London: Columbia University Press, 1952), pp. 12, 39-52; Douglas Kelly, *The Conspiracy of Allusion: Description, Rewriting, and Authorship from Macrobius to Medieval Romance* (Leiden : Brill, 1999), pp. 13-35.

⁴⁴ Macrobius, i. 2.

⁴⁵ Macrobius, i. 2 ; William H. Stahl, p. 86.

⁴⁶ Adam, prologue.

⁴⁷ Clive S. Lewis, p. 11.

written appeared untrue to him, he would record what they had written anyway, because they were authorities.⁴⁸

Because of this regard for the written word independent of any particular author, we can justifiably talk of literary authority in the singular. While medieval authors were skilled at adapting their style to different genres, they appear to have had a certain blindness to the limitations of genre in their sources. Texts from a range of times, places, and genres were all felt to be in some way compatible. This attitude inevitably caused problems for medieval authors, as they sought to reconcile pagan and Christian authors, theological and historical works, geographical and poetic texts. Thus while Macrobius could appreciate that Virgil wrote as a poet, he struggled with the idea that the *Aeneid* might not be wholly relevant when considering geographical issues. Unable to conceive of Virgil as either irrelevant or in error, Macrobius was forced to expend great energies demonstrating that Virgil meant almost precisely the opposite of what he had actually said.⁴⁹ And it was only with great trepidation that he concluded that Lucan's geographical information may have been imperfect because he was writing poetry, not geography.⁵⁰ This reverent attitude towards authority formed the environment in which medieval authors were raised. In writing his history Adam was consciously imitating authors such as Macrobius and Solinus, whose works he is likely to have taught at the cathedral school in Bremen.⁵¹

Ernst Goldschmidt wrote that 'we are guilty of anachronism if we imagine that the medieval student regarded the contents of the books he read as an expression of another man's personality and opinion', but we might invert this statement, and consider that the medieval student was also the medieval author.⁵² The habits of thought associated with reading a text might easily be transferred to the writing of a text. We should not assume that Adam's primary concern was to express his own personality and opinion, or confuse what Adam wrote in his work with his own view of the world. In writing, Adam was assuming the identity of an author in which the author was secondary to past literary authorities and the standards of the genre. It is possible to look for Adam's own ideas and identities in the work, but it is far easier to discuss discourses of identity detached from any individual, for, to a great extent, this is what Adam presents us with.

⁴⁸ Solinus, preface (Solinus' address to Autius); Natalia Lozovsky, p. 102.

⁴⁹ Macrobius, ii. 8, cf. i. 3, i. 7, i.13-17.

⁵⁰ Macrobius, ii. 7.

⁵¹ Natalia Lozovsky, pp. 7, 8, 24, 107, 138, 149-150.

⁵² Ernst Goldschmidt, *Medieval Texts and Their First Appearance in Print* (London: Biblio & Tannen, 1943), p. 113.

Adam's attitude to authority was not such that he could simply use his literary sources to reflect his own ideas and then discard them. This would be unthinkable for him. To write literature was to imitate and incorporate past authority. This desire to imitate past authority is clearest when we see Adam including ideas from his sources which appear superfluous or contrary to his own aims and ideas. This discrepancy between Adam's own ideas and those borrowed from his sources is most visible in his use of archaic terminology to describe the North, which he describes as inhabited by Hyperboreans, Amazons, *cyclopes* and other monstrous peoples. Writing credible geographical literature meant including such peoples in his account of the North, but what is revealing is how tentative Adam is when equating these established concepts with his own ideas.⁵³ Whilst he tries to integrate his own knowledge into existing traditions, he seems unwilling to conflate the two. Adam knew that the inhabitants of his 'Land of the Women' were not quite the same as Amazons; that *cyclopes* were not same as his giants; that his Northmen did not entirely fit the description of the fabled Hyperboreans; and that King Svein's Finns were distinct from Solinus' monstrous races.⁵⁴ Yet while Adam seems aware of this disparity, he nonetheless tried to make these connections, not because it helped him to express his own ideas, but because his work needed to imitate existing literature to appear legitimate, in his own eyes as much as those of anyone else.

We can also see this tendency in Adam's more extended use of his literary sources. It is important to recognise that Adam had very few sources to draw upon when trying to describe the northern world. Jordanes' *Getica*, Paul the Deacon's *History of the Lombards*, Pliny's *Natural History*, and Frechulf's *Histories* were all unknown to him when writing.⁵⁵ Tacitus he knew only through the *Translatio Sancti Alexandri* and perhaps also by reputation.⁵⁶ Those sources he did draw upon when describing the North, primarily Solinus'

⁵³ Volker Scior, pp. 120-4.

⁵⁴ For the Amazons, see Adam, 4. xiv (14), 4. xix (19), 4. xxv (25) and 3. xvi (15) '*cum in patriam feminarum pervenisset, quas nos arbitramur Amazonas esse*'. See also, Guy C. Rothery, *The Amazons* (London: Francis Griffiths, 1910), pp. 96-98; Ian N. Wood, 'Categorising the cynocephali', *Ego Trouble: Authors and their Identities in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Richard Corradini and others (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010), pp. 125-36 (pp. 128, 129, 136). For the *cyclopes* see Adam, 4. xii (40). Compare Adam's account of the Hyperboreans, Adam, 4. xii (12), 4. xxi (21) with Martianus Capella, vi. 664, 693, and Solinus, 25. For the Finns see Adam, 4. xxv (25).

⁵⁵ Jordanes, 1-6, Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardum*, ed. by Georg Waitz, MGH SRL, 1-14; Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia*, ed. and trans. by Harris Rackham *Natural History*, 1 (London: Heinemann, 1938-1963), iv. 76-105, vii. 10-12; Frechulf of Lisieux, *Historia*, in *Frechulfi Lexoviensis episcopi opera Omnia*, ed. by Michael. I. Allen, CCCM 169A (Brepols: Turnhout, 2002), i. 17. It seems likely that Adam, or perhaps a later commentator, only discovered Paul the Deacon's *History of the Lombards* and Pliny's *Natural Histories* after the first draft of the work had been completed. Adam, 4. schol. 129 (123), 4. schol. 149 (143).

⁵⁶ Based on his reference to the *Suevi* as one of the first peoples of *Germania*. There was a copy at Fulda. Ronald H. Martin, *Tacitus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), p. 237; Rudolf of Fulda and

Polyhistor, Capella's *De nuptiis*, Einhard's *Life of Charlemagne*, and Virgil's *Georgics*, had remarkably little to say about it.⁵⁷ What is revealing is that Adam nonetheless used these sources repeatedly throughout his work.

For example, Adam uses the twelfth chapter of Einhard's *Life of Charlemagne* throughout, presenting part of his fourth book as a commentary on it.⁵⁸ Adam is open about the fact that he is reusing this source here, and acknowledges that he has struggled to find any other sources about the Baltic. But he uses the little information that Einhard provides to structure his own information on the North. Thus he writes:

What Einhard says about the unexplored length of this gulf has lately been proved by the enterprise of the highly spirited men, Ganuz Wolf, a Danish leader, and Harold, the king of the Norwegians. After exploring the compass of this sea with much toilsome travel and many dangers to their associates, they finally came back, broken and overcome by the redoubled blows of wind and pirates. But the Danes affirm that many have oftentimes explored the length of this sea.⁵⁹

Einhard describes the Baltic as an 'unexplored gulf', so Adam does the same, and then goes on to describe those he knows to have explored it.⁶⁰ He does not present his information as contradicting, or even updating, Einhard's account, but as confirming it; his desire to reflect the content of his literary sources outweighed the desire to express his own ideas.

Adam's determination to imitate the form and content of his literary sources is apparent at the beginning of his work. Here he states that the earliest inhabitants of *Germania* were the *Suevi*, an idea which originated in Tacitus' *Germania*. He then lists the peoples neighbouring them, including bards ('*Bardi*') and druids ('*Driade*'), whom he describes as peoples ('*gentes*').⁶¹ Again, this information has little obvious relation to his aims, identity or society. He knows of these 'peoples' only through his sources, and he lists

Meginhart, *Translatio sancti Alexandri*, ed. by Bruno Krusch, *Nachrichten von der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, Philologisch-Historische Klasse, II, 13 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1933), 405-36 (1-3). A later author appears to have had access to at least part of the *Germania*. Adam, 4. schol. 128 (124).

⁵⁷ Virgil, *Georgics*, in *Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid 1-6*, ed. by Rushton H. Fairclough and George P. Goold (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1999), i. 30, 204-258, iii. 339-383, 460-462, iv. 170-175, 453-527; Lucan, *Pharsalia*, ed. and trans. by James Duff (London: Heinemann, 1928), i. 2, 17-20, ii. 1, 12, iv. 7, vi. 33, vii. 11, 13; Capella, vi. 614, 618, 661-666, ix. 925-928; Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, ed. by Oswald Holder-Egger, MGH SRG, 25, 12; Solinus, 24-6, 29-34.

⁵⁸ Einhard, 12; Adam, 2. xix (16), 4. x (10)- 4. xiv (14).

⁵⁹ Adam 4. xi (11); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 194.

⁶⁰ Adam, 4. x (10).

⁶¹ Adam, 1. iii (3). However, see Adam, 2. schol. 33 (34) where he refers to a 'village of the Bardi' near Ramesloh.

them because he is imitating the literary form of his historical and geographical authorities. The names of the peoples themselves are taken from a passage in Lucan's *Pharsalia*.⁶² Adam was not doing anything unusual in taking his geographic and ethnological information from a work of poetry; there were many precedents for this, and poetry was often associated with maps in manuscripts.⁶³ His misrepresentation of bards and druids as peoples is also quite understandable when seen in the context of this section of Lucan's work, which is primarily a list of barbarian peoples.⁶⁴ What is striking about Adam's use of Lucan is just how little relevant information this passage of Lucan actually contains, not just in terms of Adam's broader aims, identity and society, but also his aims in this particular passage. Adam was attempting to describe the earliest inhabitants of *Germania*, but this was not Lucan's aim. Yet despite having only a tenuous connection to his subject Adam relies on this section of Lucan for his information, and draws on it throughout his work.⁶⁵

This leads to a crucial point about Adam's relationship with his sources. Although, very rightly, we emphasise an author's choices and aims when using a source, we must recognise that Adam had extremely limited options when trying to find authoritative information about the North, because his sources said very little about it. This affects how we interpret Adam's use of sources when writing about the North. For example, Adam cites Virgil when describing the pagan centre at Rethra, which had nine gates and was surrounded by a moat.⁶⁶ He writes that:

For this there is, I believe, a meaningful explanation: fitly the 'Styx imprisons with its ninefold circles' the lost souls of those who serve idols.⁶⁷

The phrase 'Styx imprisons with its ninefold circles' is used in both the *Aeneid* and *Georgics*, although Adam probably had the latter in mind.⁶⁸ In the fourth book of the *Georgics* Virgil describes Orpheus descending into Hades and wandering the 'farthest North' in mourning

⁶² cf. Adam, 1. iii (3); Lucan, i. 447, 451.

⁶³ Although cartographic and geographical traditions were largely distinct. Evelyn Edson, pp. 10-14, 20-24; Natalia Lozovsky, pp. 4, 28.

⁶⁴ cf. Adam, 1. iii (3); Lucan, i. 447, 451.

⁶⁵ Adam, 1. xxviii (30), 2. xxvii (25), 2. lxxx (76), 3. xxiii (22), 3. xxxix (38), 4. i (1), 4. xliii (41).

⁶⁶ Adam, 2. xxi (18). On Rethra, see: Leszek Paweł Ślupecki, *Slavonic Pagan Sanctuaries* (Warsaw: Institute of archaeology and ethnology PAS, 1994), pp. 51-69; Leszek Paweł Ślupecki, 'The Temple in Rethra-Riedegost. West Slavic Pagan Ritual as Described at the Beginning of Eleventh Century', in *Old Norse Religion in Long-term Perspectives*, ed. by Anders Andrén, Kristina Jennbert and Catharina Raudvere (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2006), pp. 224-228.

⁶⁷ Adam, 2. xxi (18); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 66.

⁶⁸ Virgil, *Georgics*, iv. 480; Virgil, *Aeneid*, vi. 439.

on his return. Virgil uses a number of terms loosely associated with the North during the passage, including ‘Hyperborean’, ‘fields of Getae’ and ‘the Rhiphaean Mountains’.⁶⁹ Adam’s use of Virgil here, comparing those trapped in Hades with those trapped in idolatry, is by no means inappropriate or clumsy. It adds moral, literary and aesthetic aspects to a literal description. Yet, given Adam’s lack of sources about the North, there must be a suspicion that this citation is at least partly, perhaps primarily, an attempt to incorporate one of the few occasions when his literary authorities referred to the North into his work. This suspicion increases when we realise that Adam uses this same passage of Virgil again later on in the *Gesta*.⁷⁰

Adam’s preoccupation with literary authority can be seen even in those passages where he was unable to cite, overtly imitate or allude to existing literature. Two passages in particular require comment, for they have often been misrepresented. During the first book of his *Gesta* Adam writes that, ‘it is enough for us to know that to this day they [the Danes] were all pagans.’ A few chapters later, Adam appears to repeat this sentiment, writing that ‘it seems useless to scrutinize the doings of those who did not believe.’⁷¹ Most discussions of Adam’s perception of the North reference one or both of these statements, using them as a useful means of characterising Adam’s view of the North as hostile and antithetical to his own Christian world.⁷² Yet neither is a particularly useful summary of Adam’s attitude towards the North in general, or the sentiment in these specific passages.

In both passages Adam is trying to establish certain facts about the North; who had ruled in Denmark, and what had happened during Archbishop Unni’s visit to the Swedes. He is not uninterested in the doings of pagans; on the contrary, this is precisely what he is trying to describe, and he consistently justifies this interest in the North throughout his work.⁷³ In both chapters Adam is explicit about the sources which he is using, and in the earlier passage he notes that the ‘History of the Franks’ ended at this point.⁷⁴ This is our clue to Adam’s concerns when writing these passages, including his remarks on pagans; he had run out of sources. Unable to continue what he had set out to do Adam was forced to justify this deficiency. It is this lack of sources which elicits the literary sleight of hand

⁶⁹ Virgil, *Georgics*, iv. 455-535.

⁷⁰ Adam, 4. xx (20), 4. schol. 134 (129).

⁷¹ Adam, 1. lii (54), ‘*Nobis huc scire sufficiat omnes adhuc pagonos fuisse...*’; Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 47; Adam, 1. lxi (63), ‘*Meo autem arbitrato, sicut inutile videtur eorum acta scrutari, qui non crediderunt...*’, Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 52.

⁷² For example, Volker Scior, p. 118; Hans-Werner Goetz, ‘Constructing the Past’, p. 38; Gerhard Theuerkauf, p. 129.

⁷³ Cf. Adam, 1. xv (17), 1. xxxviii (40), 2. xvii (15), 2. xxiii (20).

⁷⁴ Adam, 1. lii (54).

through which Adam changes his subject from the kings of the Swedes and the Danes to the more easily dismissed topic of pagans. He disparages pagans, but only because he lacked the sources to do anything else.

5.ii.b. Literary style.

Bound up with Adam's understanding of literary authority was his sense of literary style. This was an important factor shaping his description of others, and was often prioritised over accuracy and consistency.

As we have seen, Adam diligently mined his literary sources for terms to describe the peoples of the North; thus his work is populated with Hyperboreans and *Bardi*, alongside the more mundane Swedes and Danes. Yet style also appears to have been a major factor for Adam when deciding which terms to use, for he persistently avoids repeating the same term within the same chapter. Hence the same group is commonly referred to by many different names. For instance, the Northmen are variously labelled as Danes, Northmen, pirates, pagans and barbarians within a single short chapter.⁷⁵ Aesthetically pleasing, this technique came at the cost of precision; apparently Adam thought this trade-off worthwhile. Such variety is not unusual, and should make us cautious about considering issues of identity and ethnicity without first addressing questions of literary style.

Adam's enthusiasm for rhetorical techniques such as exaggeration, juxtaposition and paradox should also make us cautious about ignoring his stylistic concerns. Such tools often came at the expense of consistency or precision. For instance, when describing Archbishop Lievizo's care for the poor, Adam states that Lievizo's zeal and generosity made up for the negligence of his predecessors.⁷⁶ This reinforces our impression that Lievizo was a good bishop, which appears to be Adam's aim in this passage, but it also flatly contradicts Adam's own descriptions of earlier bishops, all of whom are praised for their care for the poor.⁷⁷ The effect of an individual passage is prioritised over the consistency of the work as a whole.

Traces of humour in the *Gesta* similarly complicate a literal reading of the work, and any expectation of consistency. Adam is explicit about his use of humour on a number of occasions, but his humour can often appear quite alien and cruel, such as when he writes that Adalbert asserted,

⁷⁵ Adam, 1. xxxvi (38).

⁷⁶ Adam, 2. lxiii (61).

⁷⁷ Adam, 1. xxx (32), 1. xliv (46). 2. xiv (12).

With a laugh that afflicting the body is good for the soul, that the loss of one's goods wipes away sins.⁷⁸

This introduces a significant element of uncertainty into our interpretation of the work. For while it is reasonable to expect further instances of humour, we cannot be confident in our ability to identify and interpret such moments. Tone and intent are both essential factors in assessing humour, yet it is immensely difficult to infer either from a Latin text written nearly a thousand years ago. How should we interpret Adam's description of Henry III imitating Greek 'dress and deportment' because of his great pride in his Greek ancestry?⁷⁹ Or his description of the consecration of the renegade cleric Osmund in Poland, after he had been rejected in Rome?⁸⁰ These may have been comic moments, but we cannot be certain. Yet this ambivalence reinforces the need to consider Adam's interests and priorities before applying our own questions to the text. Sometimes the *Gesta* was intended as entertainment, and this has significant implications for how we read and use it.⁸¹

Describing the other.

5.iii. Describing the other: The North.

Adam of Bremen's choice of language for describing the peoples and places of the North has been explored in some depth, and this work will not be replicated here. Detailed studies exist for Adam's ideas about the individual peoples of the North, his sense of the North as a whole, the nuances of his terminology for its peoples and nations, and his understanding of the North as a pagan other. Such work has contributed greatly to our understanding of Adam and his society, but there has, at times, been a tendency to find answers which are a little too neat, and a little too focused on issues of identity and ethnicity. For identity can only exist and function within a broader framework of ideas. It is a location within a wider worldview. The purpose of this section is to indicate the position of Adam's understanding of the North and its inhabitants within the context of the conceptual fragmentation of his work, and his ideas of literary style and authority.

⁷⁸ Adam, 3. lvi (55); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 162.

⁷⁹ Adam, 3. xxxii (31); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 140. Henry III was the great-great-great nephew of Otto II and Empress Theophano.

⁸⁰ Adam, 3. xv (14).

⁸¹ Lars Boje Mortensen, 'The Glorious Past: Entertainment, Example or History? Levels of Twelfth-century Historical Culture', *Culture and History*, 13 (1994), 57-71.

5.iii.a. *Aquilo* and *gens*.

For Adam, like Rimbert, the North was as much a moral and spiritual category as it was a geographical or ethnic one.⁸² Within the histories and charters of Hamburg-Bremen the areas encompassed by the North – and therefore nominally within its jurisdiction – steadily expanded between the ninth and eleventh centuries. By Adam’s time it included the Baltic world as well as Greenland, Iceland, Vinland, and the Orkneys and Hebrides. In part, this reflected changing political circumstances – the Orkneys, for instance, had been fully integrated into the Scandinavian world – but it also reflects the increased knowledge about, and exploration of, the North.⁸³ David Fraesdorff sees Adam’s *Gesta* as lying within a transitional period for ideas about the North, where a new awareness of its realities, and particularly its Christianisation, existed alongside established notions of the North as alien, apocalyptic and fundamentally pagan.⁸⁴ Fraesdorff’s characterisation is extremely useful, and echoes Piergiorgio Parroni’s analysis of Adam’s sources, in which he distinguishes between an older, literary approach to geographical knowledge, and a newer approach based largely on the experiences of recent travellers.⁸⁵ It is important to emphasise the tension between these two approaches; Adam prioritised his literary sources, and his inclusion of so much contemporary oral information was, in part, a consequence of the dearth of literature dealing with the North. Yet this does not diminish the importance of recognising the *Gesta* as an amalgamation of different approaches.

David Fraesdorff has attempted to connect Adam’s various understandings of the North with the vocabulary he used to describe it. He argues that the term ‘*aquilo*’ was used to indicate an older view of the North as barbaric and alien, while ‘*septentrio*’ and ‘*boreas*’ were used for newer and less hostile understandings of the North.⁸⁶ As he writes, ‘it is no coincidence that Adam talks of the *feroci populi aquilonis* and the *ferocissimi reges aquilonis*.’⁸⁷ To some extent this approach is justified; Adam uses ‘*aquilo*’ on two of the three occasions when he uses a term for the North in an unambiguously negative context.⁸⁸ Yet Adam used

⁸² David Fraesdorff, ‘The Power of Imagination’, pp. 310–315.

⁸³ *Orkneyinga Saga: The History of the Earls of Orkney* trans. by Hermann Pálsson and Paul Edwards (London: Hogarth Press, 1981).

⁸⁴ David Fraesdorff, ‘The Power of Imagination’, pp. 310–315; David Fraesdorff, *Der Barbarische Norden*, pp. 82–100, 144–156, 251–309.

⁸⁵ Piergiorgio Parroni, pp. 354–355.

⁸⁶ David Fraesdorff, ‘The Power of Imagination’, p. 318; David Fraesdorff, *Der Barbarische Norden*, pp. 37–44.

⁸⁷ David Fraesdorff, ‘The Power of Imagination’, p. 318.

⁸⁸ Adam, 1. lxiii (65), 2. l (48).

'*septentrio*' in the same way.⁸⁹ Crucially, the vast majority of Adam's references to the North are not used in negative contexts, and appear largely interchangeable.

All three terms are used in connection with the northern mission, and the terms are used at a similar rate across the work.⁹⁰ Indeed, Adam only repeats the same term within a single chapter on one occasion; otherwise the three terms for the North are thoroughly intermingled. For instance, in thirty-ninth chapter of Book Four, Adam uses each term once.⁹¹ Furthermore, wherever possible, Adam imitated the language of his literary authorities, choosing to reflect the preferences of his sources rather than his own understanding of these terms.⁹² Therefore, although it may be possible to associate *aquilo* with an older and more hostile view of the North, we should be cautious about overstating the connection between Adam's various understandings of the North and the terms he used to describe it. Most of the time the distinct connotations of each term appear to have been a relatively minor concern compared to Adam's sense of literary style and authority. Furthermore, given the length of the work and the substantial amount of space which Adam dedicates to the North, it may be preferable to comment on the remarkable infrequency with which any term for the North appears in a negative context. If the North was a byword for savage barbarism there were many occasions in the *Gesta* where Adam might have usefully exploited these associations, but he did not. The North often appears as barbarous and strange in the *Gesta*, but such associations do not appear to have been ingrained in the labels used for it.

The same concerns can be seen in the ways in which Adam used the different terms for people; *gens*, *natio*, and *populus*. Johannes Nowak's study of these terms is exhaustive, and extremely sensitive to the range of meanings each of these terms could have.⁹³ As with Fraesdorff's work, the concern here is merely to qualify this study, by situating it within the wider framework of Adam's thought.

Most relevant to a study of otherness is Adam's use of the word '*gens*', with its association with pagans and gentiles. Adam does, at times, exploit the moralising and religious tone of the term. For example, he writes that,

⁸⁹ Adam, 1. v (5).

⁹⁰ cf. Adam, 1. xi (12), 1. xv (17), 1. lxiii (65), 2. xxiv (21), 2. xxviii (26), 2. l (48).

⁹¹ Adam, 4. xl (39). cf. Adam, 2. xviii (15), 2. xxii (19).

⁹² Adam, 2. xix (16), 3. xxvi (70), 4. xii (12), 4. xxxvi (35), 4. xliv (42).

⁹³ Johannes Nowak, pp. 26-64.

He [Boniface] undertook a mission to the pagans (*gentes*) and made the German peoples (*Teutonumque populos*).

Thus the pagan *gentes*, once converted, is transformed into the Christian *populus*.⁹⁴ Similarly, Adam describes God punishing the people of Hamburg for their sins by means of the gentiles, just as God had once punished Israel.⁹⁵ Adam also used the term *gens* whenever he described the mission in a theoretical sense, separate from the messier realities of missionary work, thus reflecting its association with the idea of religious outsiders.⁹⁶ Yet once again, when Adam had authorities to draw upon he preferred to reproduce their terminology, and we can see that in individual chapters and across the work as a whole he seems to have tried to balance his use of these different terms, presumably for the sake of style.⁹⁷ Adam's representation of outsiders came filtered through his sense of self and, while writing, it was his identity as an author which was often paramount.

5.iii.b. Pagans and Barbarians.

5.iii.c. Barbarians.

The term 'barbarian' and its various permutations denote a wide range of concepts in Adam's work. In part, this reflects Adam's tendency to follow the terminology of his sources and his willingness to sacrifice clarity for the sake of style, but it also reflects the variety of applications of the term in Adam's own mind. Such variety can be connected with the ubiquity of the term, and the ease with which it was used. My purpose here is not to catalogue the diverse uses of the language of barbarism in the *Gesta*, but to indicate something of this variety by focusing on its moralised aspect. Scholarship has tended to focus on the negative, moralised connotations of the language of barbarism; the notion of barbarians as cruel, passionate and prone to tyranny.⁹⁸ This is justifiable, but it ignores the conceptual variety of Adam's work.

⁹⁴ Adam, 1.x (11); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 12.

⁹⁵ Adam, 2. xl (42).

⁹⁶ Adam, 1. xvii (19), 1. xxvii (29), 1. xxx (32), 1. xlii (44), 1. xlvi (48), 1. lix (61), 2. iii (3), 2. v (5), 2. vii (6), 2. xxvi (23), 2. xxxvi (34), 2. xlvi (44), 2.l (48), 2. lx (58), 2. (62).

⁹⁷ Adam, 1. iii (3), 1. x (11), 1. xi (12), 1. xlii (44), 2. vi (5), 2. xxviii (26), 2. xxix (27), 2. lviii (56).

⁹⁸ David Fraesdorff, 'The Power of Imagination'; David Fraesdorff, *Der Barbarische Norden*, pp. 251-317; Robert Bartlett, *Gerald*, pp. 131-46; Volker Scior, pp. 100-107.

Adam often did use the term ‘barbarian’ as we might expect, exploiting its connotations of savagery and cruelty. Thus Anskar dared to go alone amongst the barbarians, even though they were shunned by all for their cruelty; Theotimus tamed the barbarians’ ferocious nature; and the peoples of the North were taught to sing hallelujahs, where they previously knew only how to barbarously gnash their teeth.⁹⁹ Yet such negative characterisations are not representative of the *Gesta* as a whole. These examples represent the most unambiguously hostile statements about barbarians in the work, but in each case Adam can be seen to be exploiting the negative associations of barbarism for very specific purposes, and using the language of his literary sources to do so. This does not mean that Adam was insincere, but it should make us cautious about accepting such statements as straightforward examples of Adam’s understanding of barbarians.

Elsewhere the language of barbarism rarely appears in such overtly hostile contexts. The majority of such negative depictions occur within the first book of the work, in which Adam describes the Scandinavian raids of the ninth century. Here, Adam draws on a small stock of short phrases, such as ‘the harassment of the barbarians’ or ‘the ravaging of the barbarians’ to summarise these events.¹⁰⁰ Adam’s repeated use of such phrases, together with his willingness to use them as a point of reference for understanding other issues, suggests a familiarity with the ninth-century raids as a distinct, and known, period. Adam’s claim that it was Arnulf’s slaughter of a hundred thousand Danes which ‘made an end of the persecution of the Northmen’, likewise suggests that Adam understood the raids as a distinct historical era.¹⁰¹ We should therefore be cautious about assuming that such statements reflect Adam’s understanding of the Northmen of his own day. Adam’s view of the North was not monolithic, and time is a very basic means of subdividing groups and classifications. The worst barbarians in the *Gesta* belonged in the past.

More generally, Adam’s use of the term ‘barbarian’ appears to be intended as a label with few or no moral connotations. Whilst tone is immensely difficult to deduce from a text, especially one which originated in such a distant society, the vast majority of Adam’s references to barbarians do not appear in contexts which suggest that Adam expected the term to be understood negatively. Adam uses it in a variety of ways: for various peoples and groups of peoples, including the Danes, Swedes, Slavs, Scandinavians and Anglo-Saxons and

⁹⁹ Cf. Adam, 1. xv (17), 2. l (48), 4. xlv (42); Rimbert, 7, 8; Cassiodorus, *Historia Ecclesiastica Tripartita*; ed. by Walter Jacob, CCSL 71 (Vienna: Hoelder, Pinchler, Tempisky, 1972), ix. 47; Gregory the Great, *Moralia*, xxvii. 11.

¹⁰⁰ Adam, 1. xii (13), 1. xv (17), 1. xxxviii (40), 1. xxxix (41), 1. xlvi (48), 1. lii (54), 1. lxi (63).

¹⁰¹ Adam, 1. xlvi (49).

their customs; to denote vernacular languages; and to describe places, both barbarism as a whole and places within it such as ‘the barbarian sea’ (the Baltic).¹⁰²

Significantly, Adam is also able to assume the perspective of those he at times labels as ‘barbarians’. Thus he claims that Adalbert was persuaded not to travel to Denmark in person, because he was told that the ‘barbarous peoples’ would be more easily converted by their own ‘than by persons unacquainted with their ways and strange to their kind.’¹⁰³ Similarly, he presents those living around the Baltic as being barbarians in the eyes of the Danes.¹⁰⁴ While there is more than a hint of the moralising division we associate with the term in the second example, what is notable is the flexibility with which Adam uses it. He is not locked into a simple dichotomy of Christian civilization and pagan barbarity; he can appreciate that the barbarians too have their outsiders, which may include himself.

At times Adam even labels groups and individuals with which he has clear sympathies as ‘barbarians’. Svein Estrithson, regularly praised by Adam, is called ‘the brightest amongst the barbarians’.¹⁰⁵ Newly-converted groups are often described as barbarians, as are those whom Adam laments remain trapped in paganism through negligent priests and avaricious princes.¹⁰⁶ When Adam describes the Christian Frisians ‘barbarously’ fighting for freedom, he seems to approve of them doing so.¹⁰⁷

Adam was also able to present barbarians as having legitimate kings. The distinction between legitimate kings, symbolised by thrones and sceptres, and tyrants, characterised by their cruelty and injustice, is maintained throughout his work. The language of legitimacy and tyranny was particularly laden with meaning in the context of Henry IV’s struggles with the Saxons and the papacy, and Adam exploited the connotations of the terms enthusiastically.¹⁰⁸ Thus he describes Anskar fearlessly placating the ‘grim tyrant’; Adalbert stands up to a raging tyrant; while Harald Hardrada is described as ‘surpassing all the tyrants in his savage wildness’.¹⁰⁹ Adam seems to have expected his audience to recognise and accept a connection between barbarism and tyranny, yet these things were not

¹⁰² For various peoples: Adam, 2. lxxv (63), 3. xvii (16), 3. liv (53), 4. vi (6); for the vernacular 2. lxxix (75); for various places 2. xvii (15), 2. lvii (55), 4. i (1), 4. iv (4), 4. x (10).

¹⁰³ Adam, 3.lxxii; Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 180.

¹⁰⁴ Adam, 4. vi (6).

¹⁰⁵ Adam, 3. liv (53).

¹⁰⁶ For example, Adam, 1. xxi (23), 3. xv (14), 3. liv (53), 4. xxxi (30).

¹⁰⁷ Adam, 3. xlii (41).

¹⁰⁸ cf. Lampert of Hersfeld, an. 1076; Bruno of Merseburg, 25; Stephan Weinfurter, *The Salian Century: Main Currents in an Age of Transition*, trans. by Barbara M. Bowlus (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp. 139-143.

¹⁰⁹ Adam, 3. xvii (16); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, pp. 127, 128.

inseparably linked for Adam, as David Fraesdorff has suggested.¹¹⁰ The Christians too had their tyrants, such as the dukes of Saxony, as Adam makes clear.¹¹¹ And Adam does describe many of the Scandinavian rulers as ‘*rex*’, ascribing them the legitimising paraphernalia of sceptres, thrones and royal blood.¹¹² Such descriptions are not confined to the rulers which Adam praised, such as Svein Estrithson, but extended to those whom he criticised, such as Haakon the Bad, of whom he wrote:

Exceedingly cruel, this Haakon, of the stock of Ivar and descended from a race of giants, was the first among the Norwegians to seize a kingship whereas chiefs had ruled before.¹¹³

Scholarship has tended to accept that the idea of the barbarian in the eleventh century was something negative and antithetical to Christianity and civilization.¹¹⁴ An implicit assumption of this position is that the term ‘barbarian’ related to a single, stable concept. Thus Ilona Opelt’s suggestion that Adam’s remarkably neutral language to describe the Slavs may indicate a purely descriptive use of the term ‘barbarian’ has been dismissed by Volker Scior, on the grounds that ‘non-Christian’ could never be a neutral term for a medieval author.¹¹⁵ It may be the case that ‘non-Christian’ was never a neutral concept for medieval authors, but this slightly misses the point, for when Adam used the term ‘barbarian’ he could invoke a wide range of meanings, of which ‘non-Christian’ was only one.

5.iii.d. Pagans.

The distinction between Christians and pagans was integral to Adam’s work in a way that the barbarian as a cruel outsider simply was not. Barbarism was largely ephemeral to the identity which Adam adopted when writing the *Gesta*. The language of barbarism was

¹¹⁰ David Fraesdorff, ‘The Power of Imagination’, pp. 316-331; David Fraesdorff, *Der Barbarische Norden*, pp. 148, 174, 246, 269, 322.

¹¹¹ Adam, 2. xxv (22), 3. xii (11), 3. xiv (13), 3. vii (16), epilogue.

¹¹² Adam, 1. xxxvi. (39), 1. xxxix (41), 1. lii (54), 2. xxv (22), 2. xxxvi (34), 3. xii (11), 3. xiv (13), 3. vii (16), 4. viii (8).

¹¹³ Adam, 2. xxv (22); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 70.

¹¹⁴ Robert Bartlett, *Gerald*, pp. 131-46; Volker Scior, pp. 100-107. However, David Fraesdorff’s view is rather more nuanced. David Fraesdorff, ‘The Power of Imagination’, pp. 316-331; David Fraesdorff, *Der Barbarische Norden*, pp. 82-101, 144-156.

¹¹⁵ Volker Scior, pp. 100-102; Ilona Opelt, ‘Slavenbeschimpfungen in Helmonds Chronik’, *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch: Internationale Zeitschrift für Mediävistik*, 19 (1984), 162-169.

a useful authorial tool; it was familiar yet ill-defined and could, at times, be used to elicit a vague sense of otherness. But the *Gesta* is not a history of the clash of barbarism and civilization; it is a history of the archbishops of a missionary diocese. A history of the mission required its pagans, and so did significant parts of Adam's Christian and institutional identities. The 'moral antipodes' of Christianity and paganism provided the conceptual backdrop to the *Gesta's* narrative, as Ildar Garipzanov has shown.¹¹⁶ Adam struggled with the idea that pagans might be anything but the antithesis of Christians and Christianity. However, much of what Adam knew about the North undermined this view, and he did not always perceive those he described as pagans in this way. Instead, he used the language of paganism to reflect a number of different discourses, some of which contradicted the dominant discourse, to his occasional distress.

Where possible, Adam preferred to use a variety of labels to describe the same group. We should not expect a greater level of terminological precision than is justified by the text. Sometimes 'pagan' could mean 'pirate', 'Dane', 'Northman', or 'barbarian', amongst other things.¹¹⁷ Adam often described the Slavs as 'pagans' in moments where he appears sympathetic to their situation, such as when he complains of their ill treatment by the Saxon dukes.¹¹⁸ That he could substitute 'pagan' for these terms does point towards an important way in which Adam's society had divided up the world to maintain its own identity. Yet while Adam may have been reinforcing this division in his choice of language, he often used the term to suggest quite different ideas. Adam's use of the language of paganism was not inextricably bound up with the worldview implied by it. For instance, Adam often drew on classical imagery without fitting it into the dominant dichotomy of Christian and pagan: Neptune and Vulcan both feature in his description of Jumne without any sort of qualification; and he reproduces Tacitus' praise of Saxon paganism, which had been only lightly Christianised by the authors of the *Translatio Sancti Alexandri*.¹¹⁹

Adam was also able to empathise with those he had labelled as pagans. He notes that the Prussians, while hospitable, would not allow Christians into their sacred groves, for fear of contamination; momentarily Adam imagines himself as the outsider, as 'non-pagan'.¹²⁰ Most significantly, he also notes that the Swedes now recognised that 'the God of the

¹¹⁶ Ildar H. Garipzanov, 'Christianity and Paganism', pp. 15, 20, 23.

¹¹⁷ cf. Adam, 1. xxxviii (40), 1. xxxix (41), 2. xxxi (29).

¹¹⁸ Adam, 2. xxviii (26), 2. xlii (40), 2. xlvi (46), 2. lxvi (64), 3. xxiii (22) 4. xviii (18), 4. xx (20), 4. xxi (21), 4. xxii (22).

¹¹⁹ Adam, 1. iv (4)- 1. vii (7), 2. xxii (19); Rudolf of Fulda and Meginhart, 1-3.

¹²⁰ Adam, 4. xviii (18).

Christians is most powerful of all.¹²¹ This hints at a noticeably different attitude towards the relative merits of Christianity and paganism than we find in the rest of the work. It seems closer to the glimpses we have of attitudes toward deities in the North, where the Christian God was simply one god amongst many. Thus when converted around the year one thousand, Hallfredr claimed that while the anger of Christ was more fearful than the anger of the old gods, he was reluctant to hate those he had known so long.¹²² It may be that in this passage we get a glimpse of a pagan view of Christianity, which had not been fully synthesised into Adam's own thought-world.

Just as the majority of Adam's descriptions of those he labels as 'barbarians' or 'barbaric' do not fit into a straightforward dichotomy of civilization and barbarism, neither do the majority of his references to 'pagans' and 'paganism' suggest that Adam only associated these terms with an inverted image of Christendom. Adam could use the language of paganism to describe a wide variety of peoples, places, customs and individuals, including Northmen he liked, and Christians he did not.¹²³ Insofar as it is meaningful to talk of Adam's attitude towards pagans and paganism in the singular, we must say that it was fragmented and contradictory.

Paradoxically, part of the conceptual fragmentation of the *Gesta* was underpinned by Adam's acceptance of the fundamental divide between Christian and pagan. Much of the work can be understood in terms of an unresolved tension between an understanding of paganism which necessitated missionary activity, and that which was necessary to carry it out successfully. In the first, the pagan was fundamentally different, defined by and conflated with their paganism; conversion was a transformation from one state to another, between which there was no middle ground. But while such a dichotomy might lend urgency to missionary work, it was hardly a practical guide for how to go about it. The effective missionary had to separate the individual pagan from their paganism, and recognise that conversion could be a long and rather mundane process. In doing so, the missionary came

¹²¹ Adam, 4. xxii (22); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 204.

¹²² cf. Dag Strömbäck, *The Conversion of Iceland: a Survey*, trans. by Peter Foote (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1975), p. 71; Diana Whaley, "The "Conversion Verses" in *Hallfredar saga*: Authentic Voice of a Reluctant Christian?", in *Old Norse Myths, Literature and Society*, ed. by Margaret Clunies Ross (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2003), pp. 234-57; Widukind of Corvey, *Widukindi monachi Corbeiensis Rerum gestarum saxoniarum libri tres*, ed. by Paul Hirsch and others, MGH SRG, 5, iii. 65.

¹²³ Adam, 1. viii (8), xi (12), 1. xxi (23), 1. xxxvi (38), 1. xxxviii (40), 1. xxxix(41), 1. xlvii (49), 1. liii (55), 1. lviii (60), 2. ii (2), 2. xxii (19), 2. xxviii (26), 2. xxxiv (32), 2. xxxv (33), 2. xxxviii (36), 2. xlv (42), 2. xlvi (46), 2. lviii (56), 2. lxii (60), 2. lxvi (64), 2. lxxix (75), 3. i (1), 3. xii (11), 3. xviii (17), 3. xix (18), 3. xxi (20), 3. xxii (21), 3. xxv (25), 3. l (49), 3. lv (54), 3. lvi (55), 3. lxiv (63), 4. i (1), 4. viii (8), 4. xvi (16), 4. xviii (18), 4. xxxi (28), 4. xxxviii (37).

uncomfortably close to treating paganism as comparable to Christianity, even while being motivated by a dichotomy which hardly allowed such comparisons.

The concept of pagans and paganism as an inversion of Christianity appears to have been the dominant discourse about paganism in Adam's work. Adam could use the terms 'pagan' and 'paganism' to indicate a variety of different concepts and think about those he labelled 'pagans' in a variety of ways. This has been under-appreciated in existing scholarship. Yet the concept of paganism as fundamentally antithetical to Christianity had a hold over the way in which Adam viewed the world which these alternative concepts did not. An essential difference between Christianity and paganism underpinned the Christian missionary identity which Adam assumed when writing his work. Whilst Adam may have described virtuous pagans and avaricious Christians, I do not think he would have been able to have seen these descriptions as in any way undermining or contradicting the fundamental dichotomy between Christians and pagans. Mary Douglas has described the 'shadowed places' present in all cognitive systems; the concepts which simply cannot be questioned or abandoned, and around which memory and perception are forced to shape themselves.¹²⁴ Adam's accounts of conversion suggest that the dichotomy between Christians and pagans was one such 'shadowed place' for Adam.

Like most medieval authors Adam applied the term 'conversion' to a variety of situations, and over the course of his work he provides an instructive picture of the realities of the conversion process. He discusses issues of language, culture, class and credibility, and recognises the importance of royal authority, pagan resistance, and the difficulties establishing the ecclesiastical structures required for widespread Christianisation.¹²⁵

However, when describing the moment of conversion, or the moment of confrontation between a Christian missionary and his pagan audience, Adam tended to frame events in terms of a fundamental antagonism between Christian and pagan. This is perhaps unsurprising, for a sense of irreconcilable difference underpinned and legitimised missionary work; proselytization was made urgent and meaningful by the perceived gulf between the two parties. Yet what is striking is that Adam seems to have struggled to accept alternative understandings of paganism once this model had been brought to mind. Occasionally he is explicit about this struggle: he expresses surprise that Harald Bluetooth chose to aid Christian missionaries before he had been baptised; and confesses that he is perplexed that Archbishop Unni may have been given royal permission to preach, even

¹²⁴ Mary Douglas, *How Institutions Think*, p. 69.

¹²⁵ Adam, 3. lxxii, 4. xxi (21), 4. xxiii (23), 4. xxxi (30), 4. xxxiii (32), 4. xxxiv (33), 4. xxxvi (35).

though these kings did not believe.¹²⁶ More often, Adam tailored his accounts of conversion and relapse to fit this dominant idea of paganism as Christianity's opposite. Thus he tended to present conversion or relapse as instantaneous and comprehensive; both intuitive qualities of conversion if conversion is assumed to be a shift from one opposing one state to another, between which there is no middle ground. He also tended to exaggerate missionaries' success and make the moment of conversion far more dramatic than it truly was; thus the pagans are more fearsome and the missionaries more heroic.¹²⁷ This leads him to comprehensively alter some of his most important sources, such as the *Vita Anskarii* – something which he strenuously avoided doing elsewhere – suggesting that Adam felt he had good cause to do so.¹²⁸ It also created many inconsistencies across Adam's work as a whole; the same nations are converted numerous times, whilst Christians appear amongst nations Adam claimed were wholly relapsed, and pagans within nations he had described as wholly converted.¹²⁹ This perception of pagans as other, as antithetical to all things Christian, dominated Adam's thought. Although he may have exploited the notion to create dramatic conversion narratives or fulfil the norms of the genre, we should not exaggerate the extent to which Adam chose to do so. It is too simplistic to say that Adam could only perceive the unconverted northern peoples through this narrow definition of paganism, yet Adam does appear to have had a very limited capacity to question the validity of this concept, or to consider alternative concepts of paganism, when he had already brought this one to mind. Sometimes it was enough to affirm that the pagan was other.

5.iii.e. Adam's description of the Prussians and the Frisians: the problem with concepts.

5.iii.f. The Prussians.

Adam's presentation of pagans was characterised by such contradictions, and many more examples might be given. But rather than cataloguing the diverse usages of the language of paganism, I would like to approach the issue from the other direction, by arguing that there was no unified concept of paganism underlying Adam's work. To

¹²⁶ Adam, 1. lix (61), 1. lxi (63).

¹²⁷ Adam, 1. xv (17), 1. xvi (18), 1. xxi (12), 1. xxix (31), 2. xlii (40), 3. xx (19), 3. li (50); cf. Anders Winroth, p. 128.

¹²⁸ cf. Adam, 1. xvi (18), 1. xxv (27), 1. xxviii (30), 1. xxix (31); Rimbart, 12, 17, 24.

¹²⁹ cf. Adam, 1. xii (13), 1. xv (17), 1. lv (58), 2. v (5), 2. xxiii (20), 2. xxv (22), 2. xxvii (25), 2. xxxvi (34), 2. xli (39), 2. xlii (40), 2. lii (50), 2. lviii (56), 2. lix (57), 1. lxi (63), 2. lxvi (64), 3. li (50).

illustrate this point, I would like to take the example of Adam's description of the Prussians, from the fourth book of his history. Here, Adam presents us with a number of distinct perspectives on the Prussians, which he makes little effort to synthesise. Adam writes:

The third island, that called Samland, is close to the Russians and Poles. It is inhabited by the *Sembi* or Prussians, a most humane people, who go out to help those who are in peril at sea or who are attacked by pirates. Gold and silver they hold in very slight esteem. They have an abundance of strange furs, the odour of which has inoculated our world with the deadly poison of pride. But these furs they regard, indeed, as dung, to our shame, I believe, for right or wrong we hanker after a martenskin robe as much as for supreme happiness. Therefore, they offer their very precious marten furs for the woollen garments called *faldones*. Many praiseworthy things could be said about these peoples with respect to their morals, if only they had the faith of Christ whose missionaries they cruelly persecute. At their hands Adalbert, the illustrious bishop of the Bohemians, was crowned with martyrdom. Although they share everything else with our people, they prohibit only, to this very day indeed, access to their groves and springs which, they aver, are polluted by the entry of Christians. They take the meat of their mares for food and use their milk and blood as drink so freely that they are said to become intoxicated. These men are blue of colour, ruddy of face, and long-haired. Living, moreover, in inaccessible swamps, they will not endure a master among them.¹³⁰

A number of different ways of imagining the Prussians can be distinguished, but these are merely for the purposes of illustration; they are not presented as definitive. Firstly, Adam describes the Prussians as humane (*'homines humanissimi'*), for they go out and rescue mariners from pirates and stormy seas. This is in contrast to the more conventional pagans who lived in the islands neighbouring the Prussians, whom Adam describes in the preceding passage as killing anyone they encountered at sea.¹³¹ As Gerhard Theuerkauf suggests, Adam had probably acquired this understanding of the Prussians through his conversations with sailors in the ports of Hamburg and Bremen.¹³²

Adam develops this piece of dockside rumour into a comment on the failings of his own society. The Prussians, he tells us, scorned the furs which have 'inoculated our world

¹³⁰ Adam, 4. xviii (18); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, pp. 198, 199.

¹³¹ Adam, 4. xvii (17).

¹³² Gerhard Theuerkauf, pp. 122, 126-8.

with the deadly poison of pride'.¹³³ In doing so, Adam transforms the Prussians from benevolent sailors into that most well-worn of clichés, the noble savage. Adam is no longer concerned with the Prussians themselves, but with an imagined other through which he can condemn his own society's obsession with wealth and status, a theme to which he returns throughout his work.¹³⁴

Sitting uncomfortably alongside these two perspectives was Adam's knowledge that the Prussians not only remained pagan, but that they were responsible for the martyrdom of the missionary Adalbert of Prague in 997.¹³⁵ Adam could hardly ignore this, for it was common knowledge and he was, after all, writing a history of the mission. Yet he seems aware that this missionary perspective on the Prussians hardly complemented what he had heard from Hamburg-Bremen's merchants, and his own moralising take on their stories. Nonetheless, Adam makes little more than a gesture towards synthesising these accounts.

Adam may also have been reflecting something of the Prussian's own understanding of themselves and others in his claim that they barred Christians from entering their sacred groves and springs. We can't be sure of this, and at the very least Adam's information about the Prussians was probably second-hand. Adam was also prone to using imaginative descriptions of paganism as a way of commenting on a situation, and indeed the notion that the Prussians shared everything with the Christians except their sacred places was a rather succinct way of summarising Adam's mixed feelings towards them.¹³⁶ Nonetheless, Adam takes a peculiar stance in this moment, inverting the right order of things and imagining a world in which Christians are the outsiders who must be kept from the sacred places. Such a perspective on the Prussians, presented without qualification despite its proximity to a reference to Adalbert's martyrdom, is testimony to Adam's remarkable ability to empathise with those he classified as outsiders.

Adam ends his account of the Prussians by listing a collection of attributes which mark them out as peripheral and, to some extent, barbarian. His suggestion that the Prussians became intoxicated on the blood and milk of their animals echoes a long tradition associating drunkenness with barbarism.¹³⁷ Adam was no teetotaler – he shows a keen

¹³³ Adam, 4. xviii (18); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 199.

¹³⁴ Adam, 1. lxiii (65), 3. lxix (68).

¹³⁵ It is intriguing that Adam does not mention Bruno of Querfurt's martyrdom at the hands of the Prussians. This may support Peter Damian's claim that Bruno was killed amongst the Rus, not the Prussians. *Vita Romualdi*, 27.

¹³⁶ Adam, 4. xxi (26)- 4. xxix (28); Henrik Janson, 'Adam of Bremen', pp. 81-7; Ildar H. Garipzanov, 'Christianity and paganism', pp. 25-7.

¹³⁷ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Rerum gestarum libri qui supersunt*, ed. by Wolfgang Seyfarth, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1978), 15.12.4, 30.8.2, 30.9.2; Tacitus, 22-23, 24.2; Päivi Kuosmanen, *The Nature of Nomadic Power*.

interest in viticulture and the wine stipend of his Church's clergy – but the values of moderation and self-control implicit in many critiques of barbarian drunkenness find many parallels in his work.¹³⁸ Such values, and the tradition of moralising ethnography which helped express and sustain them, may also have underpinned Adam's claim that the Prussians would 'not endure a master among them.' However, familiar forms do guarantee familiar intent. Adam was not wholly dependent on his literary sources and models, his remarks are not explicitly moralising, and his intentions across the passage as a whole are far from clear.

That Adam associated the Prussians with the Scythians is clearer. His report of the Prussians becoming intoxicated through the milk and blood of their animals mirrored established accounts of the Scythians, which had, in turn, provided a model for descriptions of other peripheral peoples.¹³⁹ Many of these peoples were, like the Scythians, nomadic to some degree, but the imagery associated with these groups was often less about the lifestyle of a particular people or region, than a sense of difference. Adam's attribution of nomadic traits to a people which he correctly identified as living in 'inaccessible swamps' appears implausible in practical terms, but approached in terms of moral or literary ethnography, this unlikely combination is more comprehensible; both the Prussians' location and lifestyle marked them out as a marginal people.

The connection between the Prussians and the Scythians is reinforced by a *scholium* which Adam later appended to the passage. In it, he cites a few short lines from Horace's *Odes* describing the Scythian's nomadic lifestyle, and the virtuous agrarian communities of the *Getae*.¹⁴⁰ Adam claims that Horace's description remained true of 'these peoples', 'the *Turci*, who are near to the Russians' and 'other Scythian peoples.'¹⁴¹ Yet although this *scholium* confirms that Adam associated the Prussians with the Scythians, it also undermines the possibility of constructing a coherent ethnic understanding of the Prussians from Adam's remarks. For Adam also connects the Prussians with the *Getae*. This is somewhat understandable as Adam, like many others, freely associated the *Getae* with the Goths and

Contacts between the Huns and the Romans during the Fourth and Fifth Centuries (Doctoral thesis, University of Turku, 2013), p. 207; Mark Humphries, 'The Lexicon of Abuse: Drunkenness and Political Illegitimacy in Late Roman World', in *Humor, History and Politics in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Guy Halsall (Cambridge: CUP, 2004), pp. 75-88 (p. 78); Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 514-416.

¹³⁸ On viticulture, Adam, 1. i (1), 2. lxix (67), 3. xxxvii (36), 4. xxxix (38). On moderation, Adam, 2. schol. 35 (37), 3. ix (9), 3. lxxiv, 3.lvi (55), 4. xviii (18), 4. xxxi (30).

¹³⁹ For instance, Regino of Prüm, an. 889; Orosius, 1.4.2; James S. Romm, *The Edges of the Earth*, pp. 46-70; Andrew H. Merrills, p. 55-57; Patrick J. Geary, p. 48.

¹⁴⁰ Adam, 4. schol. 122 (118); Horace, *Odes*, ed. by Daniel H. Garrison (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 3. xxiv. 9-11, 14, 21, 24.

¹⁴¹ Adam, 4. schol. 122 (118); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 199.

Gotland, and therefore with the Swedes and the North more generally.¹⁴² Such a connection appears to have encouraged Adam to associate sections of Virgil's *Georgics* with the temple at Rethra. However, Horace is very explicit about presenting the *Getae* and Scythians as two distinct alternatives to Roman civilization; one was nomadic, the other pastoral.¹⁴³ Yet Adam connects the Prussians with the *Getae*, *Turci*, and 'other Scythian peoples' with very little qualification. The *scholium* thus makes the passage appear more as an accumulation of loosely connected statements about the North, than an expression of a coherent ethnological scheme.

This impression is reinforced by Adam's description of the Prussians as being 'blue of colour, ruddy of face, and long-haired.'¹⁴⁴ Tracing the development of ethnic understandings of the Baltic region, Håkon Stang has suggested that the 'logical inconsistency and apparent redundance' of this statement suggests that Adam had misunderstood his source.¹⁴⁵ This seems reasonable, although Stang's solution is less convincing. Stang suggests that Adam's description combines wider ideas about the *Heruli* and a garbling of Tacitus' description of the *Germani* as having 'fierce blue eyes, red hair, huge frames, fit only for a sudden exertion.' 'Caerulei' thus becomes '*homines eruli*' in Adam's *Gesta*.¹⁴⁶ As an aside, he claims that such descriptions referred exclusively to skin colour.¹⁴⁷

These claims are more problematic, although they cannot be dismissed. The key point is that Adam's description of the Prussians as 'blue of colour' lacks any obvious counterpoint in the pre-existing ethnological literature. No prominent ethnic or monstrous group is described in such terms. Lacking these connections, Adam's meaning remains unclear. It is certainly possible that Adam's account was ultimately derived from the *Germania*, although given that it is very unlikely that Adam had a copy of the work to hand when writing the *Gesta*, it would be more reasonable to suggest that Adam was misremembering Tacitus, rather than misunderstanding him.¹⁴⁸ However, this is far from conclusive. 'Blue of colour' may indicate something as simple as eye-colour. This would follow a pattern of ethnological description first seen in Herodotus' *Histories*, and adopted by many others, including Tacitus.¹⁴⁹ Similarly, it is possible that Adam was imagining some

¹⁴² Esp. Adam, 4.schol. 134 (129).

¹⁴³ Horace, 3. xxiv. 9-24.

¹⁴⁴ Adam, xviii (18), Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 199.

¹⁴⁵ Håkon Stang, p. 244.

¹⁴⁶ Håkon Stang, pp. 244, 245; Adam, xxiii (23); Tacitus, i. 4; Jordanes, 2, 3.

¹⁴⁷ Håkon Stang, p. 245; Allan A. Lund, *Adam af Bremen: Beskrivelse af øerne i Norden* (Aarhus: Højbjerg, 1978), p. 68, fn. 17.

¹⁴⁸ See p. 76 fn. 56.

¹⁴⁹ Tacitus, i. 4; Herodotus, *Histories*, trans. by Robert B. Strassler (New York: Anchor Books, 2009), iv, 108.4.

form of body art or tattoos. Having identified the Prussians as Scythians, Adam could then associate them with the Picts, whom Bede described as originating in Scythia.¹⁵⁰ Caesar had claimed that the Britons dyed themselves blue, and his statement gradually developed into an image of the Briton/ Scot/ Pict decorated with paint or tattoos.¹⁵¹ It is unclear whether Adam knew Caesar's *Gallic Wars*, but he was certainly familiar with the work of Solinus, who maintained this image.¹⁵² These represent what are perhaps the most likely literary explanations for Adam's description of the Prussians as 'blue of colour', but none is conclusive, and we must remain open to the possibility that Adam's claim was informed by (untraceable) oral testimony, like so much of his work.

Considered as a whole, Adam's account of the Prussians appears as a jumbled collection of thoughts which Adam felt able to associate, however tentatively, with them. The different sections of the account provide a varied, and occasionally contradictory, picture of the Prussians, and aspects of the description have only a tenuous, and sometimes garbled, connection with the subject. Adam's literary sources provide a useful tool for providing meaning for at least aspects of the account, allowing us to locate it within the ethnological tradition in which Adam was endeavouring to work. However, much of Adam's information appears to have been inspired by oral sources, and parts of what we might classify as literary information was garbled or misapplied.¹⁵³

Nonetheless, Adam's literary sources provide a useful point of reference for understanding the passage as a whole. Dense lists of unqualified claims about peoples and regions were not uncommon in geographical and ethnological literature. This tendency is epitomised in Pliny's *Natural History*, the 'great grab-bag of wonders', but was a commonplace of the genre from Herodotus' time onwards.¹⁵⁴ Such lists could be understood within the wider framework of the text. Thus the cumulative effect of Pliny's immense survey of the natural world is a sense of wonder at the enormity and diversity of nature, a sentiment which Pliny reflected on between 'the hypertrophy of facts and images' which constituted the majority of his work.¹⁵⁵ A similar meta-narrative might be proposed for Adam's *Gesta*, whereby the great size and diversity of the North acted to legitimise and

¹⁵⁰ Bede, *Historia*, i. 1. cf. Adam. 4. schol. 19 (20).

¹⁵¹ Julius Caesar, *De Bello Gallico*, 5.14.

¹⁵² Solinus, 34. cf. Adam, 4. xxv (25), 4. xxxii (31).

¹⁵³ Gerhard Theuerkauf, pp. 122-127; Piergiorgio Parroni, pp. 345, 355; cf. Adam, 4. xx (20), 4. xxxv (34).

¹⁵⁴ James S. Romm, *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought: Geography, Exploration, and Fiction* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 105, 106.

¹⁵⁵ Pliny, vii. 1.6-7; James S. Romm, 'Alexander, Biologist', in *Postmodernism Across the Ages: Essays for a Postmodernity that Wasn't Born Yesterday*, ed. by Bill Readings and Bennet Schaber (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1993), pp. 31-46 (pp. 36, 37); Evelyn Edson, p. 49.

glorify the Church which claimed authority over it. This theme emerges throughout the *Gesta*, and the very act of writing about the North can be seen as enacting the authority which Adam claimed for his Church.¹⁵⁶ The *Gesta* sets out Hamburg's claims over the North explicitly, but it also enacts them, taking on the role of primary authority and representative of the North. It tells the North what it is. There are echoes of Greenblatt and Said in this relationship, as Linda Kaljundi has observed.¹⁵⁷

Yet Adam's description of the Prussians must also be approached in terms of his understanding of the written word. This encouraged an exegetical mindset which assumed that each statement could be treated separately, and could have different layers of meaning. Such an attitude was very tolerant of variety and contradictions, and provided ample opportunities for paradox. Adam himself exploited paradox enthusiastically in his depiction of Archbishop Adalbert, and his account of the North can be approached in the same way. By describing the Prussians through a series contradictory statements Adam provides a more accurate description than if he had simply presented his audience with any one of these statements; for all of them were, to some extent, true. His description encompasses the experiences of merchants and missionaries, as well as moral, geographical, historical, literary and religious perspectives. It is denigrating, laudatory, self-referencing, and empathic. The discrepancies between these approaches are left unresolved, and the account is all the richer for this. By refusing to settle on a single definition of the Prussians Adam adopts a stance towards them, and indeed his own understanding of them, which allows room for, even demands, further thought. The Prussians are defined, but the definition is dynamic.

Thus although we might usefully compare the very act of writing about the North with modern colonial (and colonising) texts which create, enact and maintain unequal power relations between the coloniser and the colonised, this comparison must be qualified. The very act of writing suggested inequality, like the relationship which Adam described. Yet Adam was writing in a mode where he himself was subject to multiple authorities, which combined certainty with multiplicity, and dealt with contradictions through fragmentary readings and an acceptance of paradox. He describes the North, and in defining what it is he makes a claim over it for himself and his Church. He presents his statements as fixed, even timeless, certainties. Yet the account as a whole is characterised by variety and regular

¹⁵⁶ Adam, prologue, 3. xxiv (23), 3. lxxii, 3. lxxiii, 4. xliii (41), 4. xlv (42); Peter C. Sederberg, pp. ix, x, 94-96, 196; Rodney Barker, *Legitimizing Identities: The Self-Presentations of Rulers and Subjects* (Cambridge: CUP, 2001), p. 5; Julia M.H. Smith, *Europe after Rome: A New Cultural History 500-1000* (Oxford: OUP, 2005), pp. 28-40.

¹⁵⁷ Linda Kaljundi, pp. 113, 118, 124.

shifts in perspective. One certainty is swiftly offset by another. In this context, the possibility of developing and claiming a final, definitive meta-narrative which encapsulates and explains the subject is severely impeded by a system of knowledge which was structurally averse to such monomania. Adam describes the North, but the very nature of his description undermines its claim to be conclusive. This is not to suggest that modern colonial discourses are wholly consistent, or that the *Gesta* cannot be viewed in terms of (unequal) power relations. But Adam was operating within a very different set of assumptions, and therefore the possibilities available to him were quite different to those which have shaped modern literature. The totalizing narratives so characteristic of colonial discourses, and indeed postcolonial studies, were less intuitive to a mind acclimatised to paradox, exegesis, and literary authority. Adam's account of the Prussians was fragmented and inconclusive. The only unifying element in the account was Adam's notion of what was, or was not, appropriate to include. It makes little sense to summarise the account in terms of Adam's concept of the Prussians or his concept of paganism, for such notions have only the slightest relevance to the passage. Instead, Adam imagined the Prussians from a variety of perspectives, which were only indirectly related to one another.

5.iii.g. The Frisians.

Yet it is possible to push this point a little further, and suggest that each moment in Adam's text might usefully be approached as being, in some sense, unique. A reference to barbarity in the third book can be used to illustrate this point. Adam writes:

Spurred on by avarice, the duke moved against the Frisians because they did not pay the tribute which they owed. He came into Frisia accompanied by the archbishop, who went only for the sake of reconciling the mutinous folk with the duke. And since the duke was fond of Mammon, he demanded the total sum of the duty, and when he could in no wise be placated with seven hundred marks of silver, the barbarous people soon became furiously enraged and '...rushed on the sword for freedom's sake.'¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁸ Adam, 3. xlii (41); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 149.

In order to analyse this passage, we must begin with a general sense of what medieval authors tended to mean when they described a group as 'barbarous'. We have no alternative but to begin with such generalisations. From the context, it is apparent that Adam was trying to evoke a sense of barbarians as violent and passionate, a notion which appears entirely unoriginal; Greek and Roman authors had said much the same thing.

Yet Adam's depiction of the Frisians is more complex than this. The Frisians were Christian, not pagan, and many of them belonged to the archdiocese of Hamburg-Bremen; Adam could not mean that they were barbarous in the same way that the more distant and exotic peoples of the North were barbarous. Nor is it clear whether Adam felt that the Frisians were wrong to act barbarously; indeed his claim that they fought for the sake of liberty suggests a certain amount of sympathy for their cause. Adam goes so far as to describe their rebellion in the words of Virgil's *Aeneid*, which had originally described the Romans' fight against Tarquin, the last king of Rome.¹⁵⁹ The Frisians may have been acting barbarously, yet they were also behaving like Romans, those self-proclaimed adversaries of barbarism and tyranny. In place of Tarquin, the Frisians have the Saxon duke Bernhard, whose greed is described in terms which subvert his Christian credentials, for 'you cannot serve God and Mammon'.¹⁶⁰

Adam leads his audience to a complex and contradictory understanding of the Frisians; we are to see them as a barbarous people violently rebelling against their duke, but also as somehow Roman, fighting for their freedom against a duke whose tyranny and greed can only be described as barbarous.¹⁶¹ In this context there is little use in falling back on general definitions of barbarism, which can be no more than a starting point for understanding this passage. We might try to identify various aspects of the description for the purposes of analysis – ideas of Christianity, ethnicity, freedom, *Romanitas*, and barbarism – but this is for our own convenience. The moment is unique, and the elements we use to define the stance which Adam takes in this moment are constitutive of it, insofar as they are present at all.

This insistence on uniqueness does not sit comfortably alongside the notion of otherness usually employed by historians. For most historians, otherness provides a convenient vocabulary for describing a broad, cultural phenomenon in which a group is labelled, described and condemned. This is a legitimate and useful tool of thought. However,

¹⁵⁹ Virgil, *Aeneid*, viii. 618-650.

¹⁶⁰ Matthew 6.24. cf. Luke 16.9-13.

¹⁶¹ Adam describes the Saxon dukes as tyrants in his epilogue, while comparing them to pagans. Adam, epilogue.

while there have been many different applications of the language of otherness, many disciplines have treated 'the other' as one part of pair; 'other' with a small 'o' stands in contrast to 'Otherness' with a capital 'O'. A colonial discourse which defines and categorises the colonised is juxtaposed with a sense of the colonised as unique and indefinable; a named and describable God is contrasted with a sense of *mysterium tremendum* and a God utterly beyond human reason.¹⁶² With some notable exceptions, few historians have used the term to evoke such paradoxes.¹⁶³ Otherness, whether capitalised or not, usually only indicates one kind of relationship. Isolating one part of the dichotomy does not prevent sound analysis, but it does mute the sense of contradiction which it evokes. It makes it easier for us to treat our statements as more definitive than they actually are.

We must consider reintroducing this sense of tension into our discussions of otherness, both when recreating medieval concepts of the other, and when reflecting on our own aims and methods. Insisting on the uniqueness of each moment in a text is one way of doing so. The text as known, comprehensible and other is thus juxtaposed with the text as unique, incomprehensible and Other. For how could any moment in the text ever mean quite the same thing? Adam's society, a web of innumerable connections and imperfect exchanges, was in constant flux, and although we have more invested in ignoring this, so was Adam himself. Anything beyond an assertion of the uniqueness of each moment is a simplification; not so much inaccurate as limited. Thinking consists in making connections despite these limitations, and indeed thought is impossible without them. But paradox shows up the limitations in our thought, encouraging movement, and undermining the possibility of settling on a single, sealed definition, which would end thought.

Adam's perspective on the North shifted from moment to moment, to the point where each passage can be meaningfully described as unique. Doing so allows us the flexibility to make sense of many of the more peculiar passages in Adam's work. We do not have to try and fit such moments into the more rigid patterns prescribed by an analysis centred on concepts like society or the author. And yet both Adam's aims and his society are crucial for understanding his work, as Ildar Garipzanov, Volker Scior, David Fraesdorff, Henrik Janson, and many others have shown. Like Adam, we are faced with a number of perspectives which are incompatible with one another; for the concepts of the author or society will never neatly align, and to insist on the uniqueness of each passage is to deny

¹⁶² For example, Homi Bhabha, pp. 94-5; Rudolf Otto, pp. 1-4, 12-5, 19-21, 25-30; Dietrich Bonhoeffer, pp. 30-44; Karl Barth, *Epistle to the Romans*, esp. pp. 362-374 on the 'Krisis of knowledge'.

¹⁶³ See Megan McLaughlin, 'Gender Paradox and the Otherness of God', *Gender and History*, 1 (1991), 147-159, for one such exception.

validity of either approach. The solution is not to try and smooth out the differences between these approaches, to find a point where all of these different perspectives might agree. This would merely create a new concept, albeit a rather complex one. To seek a single account that could encompass the whole of Adam's thought on the North is to misunderstand the nature of Adam's work, and the relationship of thought to reality. Different concepts allow us to see the world in different ways; the world remains the same, but our perspective changes. The fullest understanding of Adam's work would come from accepting numerous perspectives, together with the subsequent contradictions. Adam's descriptions of pagans and barbarians were simultaneously an expression of the anxieties and prejudices of Adam's society (as Robert Bartlett and Anthony Perron have argued), tools by which Adam could pursue his aims (as Henrik Janson and Ildar Garipzanov have argued), and yet so riddled with contradictions and inconsistencies that each description must be accepted as unique.¹⁶⁴ Each of these approaches is distinct, and incompatible with others, and these approaches cannot be synthesised. Yet if we wish to understand the work, we must accept all of these perspectives, and the contradictions with them.

5.iii.h. The Polabian Slavs, conversion and the internal focus of the *Gesta*.

Considered as a whole, Adam's description of the North was formed around two major concerns, only one of which has been fully recognised. On the one hand, the North was characterised by its barbarity. Some groups, such as the Danes, might be less barbarous than others, yet they were barbarians nonetheless.¹⁶⁵ In religious terms, the northern peoples ranged from a 'rude Christianity' to flagrant witchcraft and diabolic paganism.¹⁶⁶ Crucially, all were in need of the guiding authority of Hamburg-Bremen. This aspect of Adam's description of the North is well known, and has been analysed extensively by Volker Scior, David Fraesdorff and others.¹⁶⁷

But there was another significant dynamic in Adam's description of the North which acted to limit and curtail the first. This was the North's place in salvation history; the North needed to appear redeemable. It has long been recognised that Adam's presentation of northern peoples was closely tied up with their relationship with his Church; rivals are

¹⁶⁴ Robert Bartlett, pp. 131-46; Anthony Perron; Henrik Janson, 'Adam of Bremen', pp. 81-7; Garipzanov, 'Christianity and paganism', pp. 18-28.

¹⁶⁵ Volker Scior, pp. 110-113.

¹⁶⁶ cf. Adam, 2. xxvi (23), 2. lvii (55), 2. lxi (59), 3. xvii (16), 4. xxxvi (35).

¹⁶⁷ See p. 69, above.

ignored or reviled, while the Church's allies and successes were praised.¹⁶⁸ Thus Ildar Garipzanov has described how a fundamental struggle between Christianity and paganism provided the backdrop to Adam's work.¹⁶⁹ Yet Hamburg-Bremen's mission is rarely considered as a moderating influence on his description of the North as whole. Adam's *Gesta* is an account of the conflict between Christianity and paganism, but it is conflict that he knows that his Church will win.¹⁷⁰ The people he describes were destined to become Christians under Hamburg's careful tutelage. Hence Adam's description of the North is bounded on the one side by a sense of its barbarity, and on the other, by a belief that it was proto-Christian, or at least Christian *in potentia*. This dynamic can be illustrated through Adam's description of the Polabian Slavs (or Wends), and particularly the Liutizi. As always, we must exercise caution when using a close reading of one part of a text to understand the whole, but such a characterisation can be justified for by its utility for understanding large sections of the work.

The Slavs play a relatively minor role in Adam's *Gesta* compared to the Scandinavian kingdoms. With the failure of Adalbert's Patriarchate and the foundation of archbishoprics in Scandinavia, the attentions of the archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen's would turn increasingly towards the Slavs.¹⁷¹ But in Adam's time the Scandinavian world remained the focus of the Church's ambitions. This shift can be directly related to the possibilities for establishing ecclesiastical authority in these areas. Despite Adam's allegations of witchcraft, sorcery and paganism, Scandinavia was increasingly Christianised in this period. Many of Adam's most vivid depictions of paganism have far more to do with struggles for ecclesiastical authority, than actual pagan practice. Scandinavia had sufficient priests, bishops and churches to be worth fighting over.¹⁷²

The state of Christianity amongst the Polabian Slavs was more problematic, especially from an ecclesiastical point of view. The Ottonians had achieved a measure of political and military dominance over the Polabian Slavs in the tenth century, and a degree of Christianisation followed. However, in 983 the Wends rebelled, in what was regarded by Christian authors as a violent reversion to paganism. Hamburg's diocese was ravaged and its ecclesiastical authority over the Slavs effectively lost.¹⁷³ Some political and ecclesiastical

¹⁶⁸ Volker Scior, pp. 60, 64-74, 137. Scior's exhaustive analysis is almost entirely dedicated to working through the consequences of the proposition that 'the function of representation is to respond to... this situation.' (p. 64). His analysis is generally extremely convincing. Hans-Werner Goetz, 'Adam of Bremen' pp. 40-46

¹⁶⁹ Ildar H. Garipzanov, pp. 15-17, 19-20, 23.

¹⁷⁰ Adam, 4. xliii (41), 4. xliv (42).

¹⁷¹ cf. Adam, Helmold.

¹⁷² Anders Winroth, pp. 102-137; Henrik Janson, 'Adam of Bremen', pp. 81-7; Alexandra Sanmark, pp. 21-89.

¹⁷³ Adam, 2. xiii (40), 2. xliii (41).

influence was gradually restored after 983, but the effect of the rebellion was cemented by another uprising in 1066 in which Hamburg was, once again, destroyed.¹⁷⁴ Following the Slavic uprising of 983, many of the Wends, including the Liutizi, were regarded as pagans and apostates, and treated accordingly.

The designation of the Wendish tribes as pagan had at least as much to do with political and ecclesiastical authority as changes to religious belief and practice. For despite rhetorical descriptions of the wholesale destruction of Christianity across the Elbe by Christian authors such as Adam, Thietmar of Merseburg and Bruno of Querfurt, many of these same authors also hint at the continuation of Christian beliefs and practices amongst at least some of the Wends.¹⁷⁵ Certainly their purported paganism did little to prevent the neighbouring Christians forming alliances with them and accepting their tribute soon after 983. Nonetheless, there are solid grounds for accepting the existence of widespread and unusually organised paganism amongst the Wends following 983, and higher ecclesiastical structures would not be restored in the area until the twelfth century.¹⁷⁶

Adam frames the events of 983 as a wholesale rejection of Christianity:

And so all the Slavs who dwell between the Elbe and the Oder and who had practiced the Christian religion for seventy years and more, during all the time of the Ottos, cut themselves off from the body of Christ and of the Church with which they had before been joined.¹⁷⁷

Adam's description was rooted in the sense of a fundamental antagonism between Christian and pagan; appealed to as a compelling aesthetic, but also intuitively accepted. This underpins Adam's claim that the rebellion represented an instantaneous and comprehensive break. For there could be no middle ground between Christianity and paganism, especially when Hamburg's authority was at stake. The account also reflects a blurring of political and ecclesiastical authority, something which can be observed elsewhere in work.¹⁷⁸ The 'body of Christ' represents both the political and ecclesiastical order, and the two are assumed to

¹⁷⁴ Adam, 3. xx (19), 3. xxi (20) 3. l (49), 3. li (50).

¹⁷⁵ cf. Adam, 1. lv (58), 2. i (1), 2. v (5), 2. vi (5), 2. xv (13), 2. xxiii (20), 2. xxvi (24), 2. xlii (40), 2. xliii (41), 2. xlv (47), 3. xix (18), 2. xx (19), 3. xxiii (22), 3. l (49), 3. li (50); Thietmar, iii. 17; Henrik Janson, 'What made the Pagans Pagans?', in *Medieval Christianitas. Different Regions, 'Faces', Approaches*, ed. by Tsvetelin Stepanov and Georgi Kazakov (Sofia, Военно издателство: 2010), pp. 15-26.

¹⁷⁶ Adam, 2. xiii (40) – 2. xlv (42), 2. xlviii (46); Helmold, i. 6, i. 7, i. 11, i. 16, i. 24; Roman Zaroff, 'Perception of Christianity by the pagan Polabian Slavs', *Studia Mythologica Slavica*, 4 (2001), 81-96 (pp. 82, 90-94); Alexis P. Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs into Christendom* (Cambridge: CUP, 1970), pp. 148, 149.

¹⁷⁷ Adam 2. xlv (42); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 85.

¹⁷⁸ Adam, 1.xi (12), 1. lv (58), 2.v (5), 2.xv (13), 2.lxvi (64), 3.xxiii (22), 3.li (50).

be attuned.¹⁷⁹ The moralising intent of the passage is evident in Adam's sense of time. The uprising is pushed forward beyond the reigns of the three Ottos (912-1002), which are framed in terms of a biblical 'seventy years'. Adam appears aware that this method of dating was not especially precise, although he may not have realised that the events he described occurred during the reign of Otto III rather than Henry II, as he implies. Yet chronological accuracy was not his priority, and doing so serves to underline the sense of a sudden and comprehensive disjuncture which characterises the rest of the passage.

For our purposes, the key issue is how Adam develops this spiritual reading of events in the following lines:

Oh, truly the judgments of God over men are hidden: 'Therefore He hath mercy on whom He will; and whom He will He hardeneth.' Marveling at His omnipotence, we see those who were the first to believe fall back into paganism; those, however, who seemed to be the very last, converted to Christ. But He, the 'just judge, strong and patient,' who of old wiped out in the sight of Israel the seven tribes of Canaan, and kept only the strangers, by whom the transgressors might be punished—He, I say, willed now to harden a small part of the heathen through whom He might confound our faithlessness.¹⁸⁰

Adam begins by framing the Slavs' apostasy as a mystery; he affirms God's control over history, and acknowledges that God's ways are beyond human understanding. But Adam was rarely satisfied with the mystery of God as the sole means for understanding an event.¹⁸¹ Thus by the end of the passage the Slavs' rebellion is made explicable by 'our faithlessness'.

This internalisation of external events is a recurrent theme in Adam's reflections on his Church's mission. It took various forms. At times, Adam affirmed the inevitable success of the mission to the North, and in this we find an echo of Anskar's prophetic visions.¹⁸² More often, Adam made a direct connection between the actions of his own Church, archbishop and people – his terminology is often vague – with the success of the mission.¹⁸³ Thus he wrote concerning the conversion of the Slavs:

¹⁷⁹ Henrik Janson, 'What made the Pagans Pagans?', pp. 81-87.

¹⁸⁰ Adam 2. xlv (42); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 85.

¹⁸¹ Adam, 4. xlii (40).

¹⁸² cf. Adam 4. xliii (41), 4. xlv (42); Rimbart, 34.

¹⁸³ Adam, 4. xxi (21).

For in truth as we, sinning, see ourselves overcome by our enemies, so, when we are converted, shall we be victorious over our enemies. If only we earnestly sought their conversion, they would ere now have been saved and we should surely be at peace.¹⁸⁴

The two perspectives in the passage treat causality as an essentially internal issue. The first encourages by anticipating the Church's success, while the other is more admonitory, underlining the Church's responsibility. God's control is affirmed in both, while 'our' role varies. But neither attributes any agency to the potential converts.

This assumed lack of agency was an important factor shaping Adam's description of the Slavs and others whom he expected to be one day integrated into his Church. By framing the Slavs as passive participants in salvation history, Adam had little cause to focus on the actions and ambitions of the Slavs themselves. The causes of their apostasy and continuing paganism were understood to reside elsewhere. Spiritual explanations could be found; just as God allowed Israel to be tested by the Amorites, Hamburg was being tested by the Slavs.¹⁸⁵ But more mundane explanations were also available. Adam frequently criticised the inadequacies of his own generation, which failed to live up to the Church's glorious past.¹⁸⁶ Adam's criticism of the Saxon dukes is particularly scathing, and he explicitly blamed them for the Slavs' paganism:

'They are,' he [Svein Estrithson] said, 'more intent on the payment of tribute than on the conversion of the heathen'... who through their avarice in the first place threw Christianity in Slavia into disorder, in the second place have by their cruelty forced their subjects to rebel.¹⁸⁷

By shifting responsibility for the Slavs' actions to the Saxons dukes, Adam was able to empathise with the Slavs, even in the moment of their apostasy.¹⁸⁸ Thus he writes:

¹⁸⁴ Adam 3. xxiii (22); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 134.

¹⁸⁵ Adam, 1. 1 (52), 3. 1 (49).

¹⁸⁶ Adam, 1. xlii (44), 4. xviii (18).

¹⁸⁷ Adam 3. xxiii (22); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 133.

¹⁸⁸ It may also be significant that Adam chose to attribute this criticism to Svein Estrithson, which allowed Adam a certain amount of plausible deniability. Although he was deeply concerned with the future of his Church he avoided setting out a specific agenda, and such sleights of hand enabled him to do so.

Then, indeed, the Slavs, more than fairly oppressed by their Christian rulers, at length threw off the yoke of servitude and had to take up arms in defence of their freedom.¹⁸⁹

He subsequently added two *scholia* to the passage reiterating this same point.¹⁹⁰ This is not to suggest that Adam's depiction of the Slavs was entirely sympathetic, for it was not. Having accounted for the causes of the Slavs' rebellion, his description of the rebellion itself was filled with the *topoi* of savage paganism.¹⁹¹ But Adam had little reason to maintain such an unambiguously negative depiction. On the contrary, the Slavs needed to appear redeemable. Adam explicitly claimed that the Slavs would have been converted easily had it not been for the dukes obstructing 'a people who wish to believe.'¹⁹² Having denied the Slavs agency and made their conversion a matter of internal, Christian behaviour, it was natural to describe them as potential believers.

Large parts of Adam's work can be viewed in terms of this dynamic. The northern peoples needed to appear both barbarous and redeemable. Some of Adam's harshest criticisms of paganism are associated with peoples and individuals who were recognizably Christian, but hostile to Hamburg-Bremen's authority.¹⁹³ He also had a tendency to describe pagans who had been converted in the distant past in an exaggerated fashion, emphasising the drama of their conversion. Yet Adam's descriptions of recent, likely or partial converts are often far milder. For instance, Adam praises the Icelanders for their 'holy simplicity' and their obedience to the Archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen, claiming that even,

Before receiving the faith they were in what may be called their natural law, which was not much out of accord with our religion.¹⁹⁴

Similarly, having described the Swedes' exceptional hospitality, Adam claimed that 'perhaps they might readily be persuaded of our faith by preaching but for bad teachers.'¹⁹⁵

Both examples have their own idiosyncrasies which must be addressed in any close reading of these passages, but they fit into a wider pattern which includes Adam's

¹⁸⁹ Adam 2. xiii (40); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 83.

¹⁹⁰ Adam, 2. schol. 28 (31), 2. schol. 27 (30).

¹⁹¹ Adam, 2. xiii (40)- 2. xlv (42).

¹⁹² Adam, 3. xxiii (22); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 133.

¹⁹³ Adam, 2. xl (38), 3. xxxv (34), 3. xxxvi (35), 3. lvi (55), 3. xliii (42), 4. xxvi (26).

¹⁹⁴ Adam, 4. xxxvi (35); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 128.

¹⁹⁵ Adam, 4. xxi (21); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 203.

description of the Prussians and the inhabitants of Jumne, whereby the North is presented as both barbarian *and* redeemable.¹⁹⁶ Stated differently, and contrary to many current characterisations of the *Gesta*, Adam did *not* expend great energies depicting the North as a whole as fundamentally alien and other.¹⁹⁷ The barbarous North was a reflection of the necessity of Hamburg's mission, the content of Adam's literary authorities, and, to some extent, the prejudices of Adam and his society. But Hamburg's mission also dictated that the North appear redeemable. Adam's depiction of the North operates within these two boundaries.

5.iv. Describing the other: Christendom.

Adam's *Gesta* reflects, shapes and maintains a worldview shaped around the institutional claims and identity of Hamburg-Bremen. It operates against the backdrop of Christian-pagan antagonism, but Adam's narrative did not always neatly align with this dichotomy. The pagan was not always other, and many of the most persistently and inextricably alienated groups in the *Gesta* were firmly located within Christendom. These included recalcitrant northerners such as the Swedes and Norwegians who had, at times, opposed Hamburg-Bremen, but it also encompassed groups and individuals even closer to home, including; married clergy and their wives, brigands, heretics, prostitutes, the Saxons and their dukes, and, most dramatically, Archbishop Adalbert himself. A study of representations of otherness in Adam's *Gesta* cannot ignore such groups without ignoring or distorting the contours of Adam's thought. The foreign, pagan other played a significant part role in the *Gesta*, and has justifiably attracted much attention. But this was just one of the contexts in which Adam exploited the language of otherness, and by no means the most important. Thus the remainder of this chapter is concerned with groups and individuals who were located firmly within Christendom, but were nonetheless depicted as other. The focus will be on Adam's presentation of the Saxons, women, social class, and Archbishop Adalbert, which have received less attention in studies of otherness and identity in the *Gesta*.

¹⁹⁶ Adam 2. xxii (19), 4. xviii (18).

¹⁹⁷ cf. Anthony Perron, pp. 483-485; Linda Kaljundi, pp. 114, 117, 118, 124; Robert Bartlett, pp. 131-46; Volker Scior pp. 100-107; David Fraesdorff, *Der Barbarische Norden*, pp. 144-156, 251-317; Volker Scior comes to a similar conclusion in his analysis of Adam's decision to describe the monstrous races of the North as 'monstrous humans'. This, he argued, reflected Adam's missionary concerns. This seems reasonable, and all that I have argued here is that this model can also be usefully extended to many of Adam's descriptions of the more mundane inhabitants of the North. See Volker Scior, pp. 122-124.

5.iv.a. The Saxons.

During the third book of his *Gesta Adam* dedicated a substantial chapter to describing the Saxons in scathing terms, making a concerted effort to make them appear reprehensible, pagan and other.¹⁹⁸ Adam presents a dense list of traits which act to locate the Saxons on the wrong side of established boundaries and surround them with an aura of pollution and defilement. It is presented as an account of Adalbert's complaints about his flock.

Adam depicts the Saxons undermining the (Christian) social order with their drunkenness, blasphemy, quarrels, perjury, fickleness, and proclivity for bloodshed. They violated canonical norms, violating both fast-days and feast-days, as well as (canonical) sexual morality with their 'innumerable wives', incest, adultery and 'other kinds of uncleanness contrary to nature.'¹⁹⁹ They neglected Christian charity through their hostility to strangers, and the Levitical commandments, by using 'the meat of animals that had died, and blood, and strangled beasts, and the flesh of mares as if it were lawful.'²⁰⁰ All this is reinforced through suitably damning references to both Old and New Testaments and Sallust's *Catiline Conspiracy* and *Jurgurthine War*.²⁰¹

Adam frames parts of his attack in terms of paganism, claiming that Archbishop Adalbert had complained that, 'even to his own times many were... steeped in the delusions of pagans.'²⁰² The temporal aspect of his criticism is noteworthy; paganism and pagan behaviour are located, spiritually, in the past.²⁰³ But more relevant here is the use of paganism as a marker of otherness. For nowhere in Adam's descriptions of actual pagans is there anything comparable to this concerted attempt to alienate and exclude. Adam's account of the pagan temple at Uppsala was similarly damning, but it had little to do with pagans for the temple was a myth, and the area was conspicuously Christian. The Prussians provide a better point of comparison. Both groups are described within an ethnological framework, yet although both are condemned for their drunkenness, in the case of the Prussians this is just one part of a miscellany of other attributes, many of which were

¹⁹⁸ Adam, 3. lvi (55).

¹⁹⁹ Adam, 3. lvi (55); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, pp. 163, 164.

²⁰⁰ cf. Leviticus. 11.11, 27, 17.15; Isaiah 5.25; Acts 15.20, 29.

²⁰¹ Matthew 25.19; Philemon 3.19; Titus 3.9; Exodus 32.9, 33.3; Deuteronomy 9.13; Psalm 31.9, Psalm 88.33; Sallust, *Catilina*, in *Catilina, Iugurtha, Historiarum fragmenta selecta, Appendix Sallustiana*, ed. by Leighton D. Reynolds (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1991), xlii. 3; Sallust, *Jugurtha*, in *ibid.*, xci. 7.

²⁰² Adam, 3. lvi (55); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 163.

²⁰³ See below, p. 151.

positive.²⁰⁴ In contrast, Adam's depiction of the Saxons is overwhelmingly negative. Paradoxically, although Adam uses the idea of paganism as part of his strategy to condemn the Saxons, his description of real, historical pagans tended to be far less unambiguously hostile.

Adam's denigration of the Saxons in the third book of his *Gesta* should not be treated as representative of Adam's depiction of the Saxons throughout the work. In the first book Adam had described the ancient, pagan Saxons, taking his account from the *translatio Sancti Alexandri* which was, in turn, largely derived from Tacitus' *Germania*. Rudolf of Fulda, the author of this section of the *translatio*, had made some attempts to lightly Christianise the description, reminding his audience about the dangers of paganism. Yet the core of the account retained the sentiment of the *Germania*, presenting a moralising account of an ordered society with good laws, virtues and religious practices.²⁰⁵ Elsewhere in the work, especially in first two books and while describing the ninth-century Scandinavian raids, Adam often identified with the Saxons; sometimes the Saxons were 'us'.²⁰⁶ Whether any (or all) of these perspectives reflected Adam's personal opinions is unclear.

A further qualification is required. Adam at no point describes the group he denigrates in the fifty-fourth chapter of Book Three as Saxon. This should make us cautious about drawing links between these various accounts, and may to some extent account for the discrepancies between them. Yet such a solution is not wholly satisfying, leaving us with the question of who Adam was attempting to describe in such vitriolic terms, if not the Saxons.

It is difficult to avoid describing Adam's account of the Saxons as ethnological, however polemical or inaccurate the account may be. He describes a large group in terms of common customs, referring to them as both a '*gens*' and a '*populus*', while citing passages from the Bible and Sallust's *Jugurtha* which explicitly deal with the subject of peoples.²⁰⁷ These traits, together with the wider context of Adam's description, suggest that 'Saxon' is the most appropriate term for Adam's subject.

However, such an ethnographic reading does not adequately reflect Adam's major concern in the passage, which was focused on Adalbert's conflict with his own clergy and flock. The diatribe against the Saxons is presented as a means of explaining this conflict. Adam's choice of language reflects his interest in this relationship. He refers to Adalbert's

²⁰⁴ cf. Adam, 3. lvi (55), 4. xviii (18).

²⁰⁵ cf. Adam, 1.iv (4)- 1.vii (7); Rudolf of Fulda and Meginhart, 1-3; Tacitus, iv, ix-xi.

²⁰⁶ Adam, 1. xxxviii (40), 1. xxxix (41), 1.lv(57), 2. xxxi (29), 2. xxxiii (30); Volker Scior, pp. 77-86.

²⁰⁷ Adam, 3. lvi (55); Sallust, *Jugurtha*, xci. 7; Exodus 32.9, 33.3; Deuteronomy 9.13; Psalm 31.9, Psalm 88.33; Zechariah 1.15-16.

parishioners (*'parrochianos'*), his sheep (*'oves suas'*), the whole family of the Church (*'omnem familiam ecclesiae'*) and his servants, overseers, and priests (*'servis et villicis suis', 'suae diocesis presbytero.'*)²⁰⁸ Adalbert is referred to as a their shepherd (*'pastor'*) and his parishioners' sins are illustrated through a partial citation of Philippians 3.19 – 'their god is their stomach' – a verse which is concerned with the destruction of the damned in general, rather than the vices of any particular people.²⁰⁹

Adam's concerns are evident in the anecdotes he chose to accompany his description of the Saxons. He describes Adalbert's brother being murdered by a priest from the diocese, Adalbert's vassals threatening him in his bedchamber when he had seized one of their companions, the corruption of his vassals and administrators, and his willingness to imprison and punish anyone who offended him.²¹⁰ Crucially, Adam reports Adalbert's complaint that 'the people regarded his paternal reproofs with disdain' and that they were 'more faithful to the duke than they were to him and to his Church.'²¹¹ Adam's account is about episcopal authority.

Adam's decision to incorporate ethnological elements into his description of the conflict between the archbishop and his flock is made explicable by his choice of Old Testament language in the passage. He describes Adalbert promising to 'visit their iniquities with a rod', and claims that thus 'was fulfilled the prophecy which runs: "I was angry a little, but they helped forward the evil. . . thus saith the Lord." ' ²¹² Adam's choice of these verses echoes a worldview structured around God and his prophets on the one hand, and his recalcitrant people on the other. As Adam writes, Adalbert concluded 'that they as a people were stiff-necked.'²¹³ Like Israel, the group was defined as a people – a *populous* – by its position within a hierarchy of spiritual authority.

The group was defined by its relationship with Adalbert, and reviled for its failure to adhere to its position in this scheme of things. This failure was equated with the violation of religious, moral, familial, canonical, biblical and sexual boundaries, and Adalbert's episcopal authority was legitimised by doing so. Although Adam drew on elements of ethnological description, it is important to recognise that these operated within a framework of episcopal authority. Even from the *Gesta* itself, it becomes apparent that Adam was imagining the

²⁰⁸ Adam, 3. lvi (55).

²⁰⁹ Philippians 3.19 (NIV).

²¹⁰ Adam, 3. lvi (55); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 164.

²¹¹ Adam, 3. lvi (55); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, pp. 163, 164.

²¹² Psalm 88:33; Zechariah 1.15-16.

²¹³ Adam, 3. lvi (55); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 164; Exodus 32.9, 33.3; Deuteronomy 9.13 and elsewhere.

Saxons very differently than when he had described them within the alternative settings of the first two books.

The sustained vehemence of Adam's description in the third book may be connected to its immediate relevance to archiepiscopal authority. The pagan Saxons of the past or the distant pagans of the North were little threat to Hamburg-Bremen's claims; within the archdiocese they could be defined around the Church's claims, or simply ignored. Christian groups were more able to shape the identity and authority of the Church; hence Adam's wariness towards ambitious Scandinavian rulers and, perhaps, a hostile papacy.²¹⁴ Adalbert's flock, priests and vassals encountered and enacted his authority on a daily basis. Their participation was essential for the day-to-day reification of Adalbert's position, and this allowed them repeated opportunities to ignore, contest, reshape or deny this position. For Adalbert to remain archbishop within his own archdiocese, he required the recognition of those very people which his pontificate had alienated. This crisis of authority did not end with Adalbert's death, but intensified as Archbishop Liemar continued to support the king against the Saxon princes.²¹⁵ The nature and intensity of Adam's denunciation of this 'stiff-necked people' must therefore be firmly located within the context of episcopal authority, which overshadowed the other elements of the account. In similar circumstances both Rimbart and Bruno of Querfurt would resort to the same rhetorical devices and ethnological tropes, in defence of episcopal authority.²¹⁶ Adam was writing about the Saxons, but within a history of the diocese, more than anything, this meant describing those who were subject to his Church's authority.

5.iv.b. Women.

There is perhaps no group in the *Gesta* from which Adam tries to elicit such a variety of responses as women. The *Gesta* is preoccupied with the actions and ambitions of men, and assumptions about masculinity provide the backdrop to the work. A few distinctively masculine virtues can be deduced: men, or at least clergy and noblemen, ought to be brave, generous, and have fine physique. Fighting and facial hair were both masculine traits, while crying was appropriate for men within the empire, but not, apparently, for those in Scandinavia.²¹⁷ But the language of masculinity is not something that Adam dwells on, and

²¹⁴ Adam, 2. 2, vi (5), 2. lxi (59), 3. xvii (16), 3. lxxviii, xxvi (26)- xxviii (28).

²¹⁵ Lambert of Hersfeld, an. 1073, an. 1076.

²¹⁶ *Passio Adalberti*, 11, 15, 16; Rimbart, 37, 38.

²¹⁷ Adam, 2. iii (3), 2. xxiv (27), 2. xxxi (29), 2. lxxv (73), 3. i (1), 3. ii (2), 4. vi (6), 4. xix (19), 4. xxxii (31).

he rarely tries to deploy it for effect.²¹⁸ This in marked contrast to his use of the ideas and language of femininity. Relatively few women feature in Adam's work. Indeed, Adam chose to omit Rimbert's references to the presence of women (Frideburg, Catla and a number of anonymous women) in the early Swedish Church, focusing solely on Herigar, 'distinguished for his miracles and wonder-working.'²¹⁹ But Adam did use the idea of different types of women – the widowed mother, reviled prostitute, and clerical wife – to evoke a wide a range of responses from his audience.

In doing so he was reflecting the clerical culture of his age. Throughout the eleventh-century, authors increasingly used descriptions of women to embody their ideas. The Church was the bride of Christ; the diocese the bride of the bishop, widowed on his death; and the papacy was a mother, with the authority and vulnerability which that entailed.²²⁰ As Megan McLaughlin has shown, such associations were far more than idle metaphors for those who used them.²²¹ The Church was felt to be a mother and a bride in a very real and urgent sense, and this sincerity is reflected in the powerful and sometimes graphic language which churchmen used when describing her. Such emotive imagery is echoed in Adam's portrayal of Hamburg as a widowed mother of adopted sons.²²² The image encompasses both Hamburg's present distress, and her claim to maternal authority.

But descriptions of women could provoke horror and disgust as well as reverence and compassion. In particular, the idea of woman as the embodiment of sin and temptation was part of the common cultural currency of the eleventh century. Although the increasing use of such negative language was one aspect of a general deterioration of the status of women in the eleventh century, the more extreme polemics against women seem to reflect, in the first instance, an anxiety about the status of men vis-a-vis other men. Impassioned criticisms of women were used as means of marking out a new clerical masculinity as

²¹⁸ Adam's references to masculinity also tended to be bound up with other dominant identities such as age, social class and the division between lay and clergymen. It is worth noting that Adam's continuator, Helmold of Bosau, included appeals to masculinity (usually a noble, warrior masculinity) in many of the key moments in his work. Helmold, i. 25, i. 67, ii. 2.

²¹⁹ cf. Adam, 1. xv (17); Rimbert, 20, 24, Judith Jesch, p. 91.

²²⁰ Megan McLaughlin, *Sex, Gender, and Episcopal Authority in an Age of Reform, 1000-1122* (Cambridge: CUP 2010), pp. 51-91, 123-159; Megan McLaughlin, 'The Bishop as Bridegroom: Marital Imagery and Clerical Celibacy in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', in *Medieval Purity and Piety: Essays on Medieval Clerical Celibacy and Religious Reform*, ed. by Michael Frassetto (New York: Garland, 1998), pp. 209-237; Kathleen G. Cushing, *Reform and the Papacy in the Eleventh Century: Spirituality and Social Change* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), pp. 119, 120, 152; Gary Macy, *The Hidden History of Women's Ordination: Female Clergy in the Medieval West* (Oxford: OUP, 2008), pp. 111-127; Stuart Airlie, 'A view from afar. English perspectives on religion and politics in the investiture conflict', in *Religion and Politics in the Middle Ages. Germany and England by Comparison/ Religion und Politik im Mittelalter. Deutschland und England im Vergleich*, ed. by Ludger Körntgen and Dominik Waßenhoven (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), pp. 71-87 (pp. 84-87).

²²¹ Megan McLaughlin, *Sex, Gender, and Episcopal Authority*, pp. 123-159, 221-230.

²²² Adam, 2. xvii (15), 2. xxxvi (35), 2. lxxx (76), 3. iii (3), 3. xxvi (25), 3. lxxviii (67).

separate from, and superior to, lay masculinity and older forms of clerical masculinity.²²³ This connection between clerical reform and increasingly hostile depictions of women can be seen in Adam's work. His harshest condemnation of women comes in the context of his description of the 1049 synod of Mainz. After recording the denunciation of simony and clerical marriage at the synod, he writes:

As to women he [Adalbert] ordained the same policy that his predecessor, the memorable Alebrand, and before him Lievizo had inaugurated: namely, that they 'be put out of the synagogue' and city, that by their seductive presence the strumpets might not affront the chaste of vision.²²⁴

The short-term success of this policy is questionable; its reiteration by successive archbishops together with a reference to its failure in Adam's own day, may suggest that there was only limited support for Adam's reforming ideals.²²⁵ But while this condemnation of women was not in the first instance inspired by, or even really about, women, they could nonetheless feel the effects of such heightened rhetoric. In an earlier *scholium* Adam claimed that under Archbishop Lievizo the wives of clergy were,

Dispersed under custody through the neighbouring villages; and this vice ceased until the cathedral burned and the cloister was ruined.²²⁶

He describes the women as cohabiting with the canons, a description which acts to delegitimise the unions, but the account also suggests that such rhetoric had, at times, spilled over into the lives of those who did not accept it. Adam voices his approval for the physical

²²³ Maureen C. Miller, 'Masculinity, Reform, and Clerical Culture: Narratives of Episcopal Holiness in the Gregorian Era', *Church History*, 72, 1 (2003), 25-52 (pp. 37, 38, 41-44, 48-52); Megan McLaughlin, *Sex, Gender, and Episcopal Authority*, pp. 221-230; Gary Macy, pp. 111-113, 125-127; Simone de Beauvoir, p. 156.

²²⁴ Adam, 3. xxx (29); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, pp. 138, 139.

²²⁵ It is also possible that Adam was attempting to project the reforming ideals of his own day into his archdiocese's past, perhaps as a defence against the papacy's increasingly vigorous assertion of these ideals. Adam, schol. 42 (43) and 2. schol 53 (54), 2. lxxxii (77), 3. schol. 76 (77); Anne Llewellyn Barstow, *Married Priests and the Reforming Papacy: The Eleventh-century Debates* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1982); Megan McLaughlin, *Sex, Gender, and Episcopal Authority*, pp. 221-230; Uta-Renate Blumenthal, 'Pope Gregory VII and the Prohibition of Nicolaitism', in *Medieval Purity and Piety: Essays on Medieval Clerical Celibacy and Religious Reform*, ed. by Michael Frassetto (New York: Garland, 1998), pp. 239-268 (pp. 242-246, 248-253).

²²⁶ Adam, schol. 42 (43). Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 98. But far from successful, see Adam, 2. schol 53 (54), 2. lxxxii (77).

exclusion of outsiders elsewhere in the work, such as when he praises William the Conqueror's expulsion of the married clergy from England.²²⁷

Nonetheless, it is important to recognise that the tone of Adam's descriptions of named, historical women – whether good or bad – differed significantly from his descriptions of anonymous or imagined women. Named women fulfil a variety of roles in the *Gesta*. Some women are criticised to provide alibis for their husbands' misdeeds; others provide a useful narrative tool for explaining complex situations through their familial connections; and Adam freely acknowledged and praised the role of good and powerful women in his Church's history, primarily those who had donated land or founded monasteries.²²⁸ Yet Adam's descriptions of such historical women are largely detached from his abstract ideas about women. This is not to suggest that such descriptions were without prejudice, yet the underlying intuitions diverged considerably. It is when evoking the *idea* of women that Adam begins to directly elicit and exploit a sense of extreme difference; a moralised otherness.²²⁹ To an extent this is true of other categories of difference in Adam's work; that when separated from historical individuals, the sense of difference is far greater, and more liable to be exploited.

5.iv.c. Adalbert.

'The complex story of so many-sided a man.'²³⁰

The most sustained and comprehensive attempt to alienate in the *Gesta* is directed at its former archbishop, Adalbert. Adam draws on every major category of difference in his account of Adalbert's life to portray the former archbishop as alienated from both his original virtue, and what the archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen ought to be. Adam directs the sense of stigma associated with pagans, heretics, Jews, prostitutes, brigands and sorcerers onto the person of the archbishop, in a deliberate attempt to alienate and exclude with which there nothing comparable in the rest of the work.

Gesta episcoporum were crafted to legitimise and commemorate the bishopric, imbuing the institution with a sense of permanence, and commenting on the current state of the Church. Many appear to have been intended primarily for an internal audience, although

²²⁷ Adam, 3. lii (51).

²²⁸ Adam, 1. xxiii (25), 1. xxx (32), 2. xiii (11), 2. liv (52), 2. lxiii (61), 3. xv (14).

²²⁹ Adam, 1. xliv (46), 2. lxi (59), 3. xv (14), 3. xlvi (45), 3. xlix (48).

²³⁰ Adam, 3. lxxi (70); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 179.

some, such as the *Liber Pontificalis*, the archetype of the genre, circulated widely.²³¹ It is important to emphasise the extent to which Adam's *Gesta* described and legitimised the archdiocese to its own clergy. It was written at the behest of two archbishops, and Adam shows his concern for the clergy of the archdiocese throughout. In the first instance the *Gesta* was a history written for a community of no more than few dozen individuals, spread across the cathedral chapters in Hamburg and Bremen, and their collegiate churches.²³² It told them who they, what they should be, and how they should act. In the language of social constructionism, it reified the community in the minds of those whose role it was to enact it. But *Gesta* is very explicitly a work which makes claims on those outside this community; it is about power. As Rodney Barker has emphasised, a fundamental concern of the powerful is to legitimise their power *to themselves*.²³³ It is thus no coincidence that the most sustained criticism in the *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum* was focused on the most recent archbishop. Within the *Gesta*, and indeed the archdiocese itself, Adalbert's legacy was far more fundamental to the condition and self-perception of the archdiocese than the northern peoples, papacy, or even the Saxons.

Adalbert's legacy was toxic yet unavoidable. It was Adalbert who had originally called Adam to Bremen to write his history, but he had died before the work had been finished. Adam therefore completed his work during the pontificate of Archbishop Liemar, to whom the work was dedicated. Much of the *Gesta* can be seen as advice for Liemar in his new role as archbishop, and this is particularly true of Adam's account of Adalbert's pontificate, which was written at Liemar's request.²³⁴ Archbishop Adalbert had thrown himself into court politics under both Henry III and Henry IV, gaining extensive rights, properties and status for his diocese in the process. But Adalbert's career had been tumultuous; he had been expelled from court in 1066 and, despite regaining his position remarkably quickly, his ambition had cost his diocese dearly. At the time of his death in 1072 Adalbert left a Church which had increased access to royal wealth and power, but

²³¹ Michel Sot, *Gesta Episcoporum, Gesta Abbatum*, Typologie des Sources du Moyen Âge Occidental (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1981) remains the key text on *gesta episcoporum* (see esp. pp. 17-19, 33-37). See also, *Envisioning the Medieval Bishop*, ed. by Sigrid Danielson and Evan Gatti (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), esp. Sigrid K. Danielson, 'The Bishop's Presence: Depicting Episcopal Authority in the Early Middle Ages', pp. 127-156; *Patterns of Episcopal Power / Strukturen bischöflicher Herrschaftsgewalt im westlichen Europa des 10. und 11. Jahrhunderts*, ed. by Ludger Körntgen and Dominik Waßenhoven (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), esp. Theo Riches, 'The changing political horizons of *gesta episcoporum* from the ninth to eleventh centuries', pp. 51-62.

²³² Adam of Bremen, preface, 3. i (1), 3. iii (3), 3. xxiii (22), 3. xlvi (45), 3. lvii (56)

²³³ Rodney Barker, *Legitimizing Identities: The Self-Presentations of Rulers and Subjects*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 1-40. I have explored these issues in far greater depth in: Tim Barnwell, 'Power and Weakness: Hamburg-Bremen in the Ninth and Eleventh Centuries', pp. 434, 442, 445-450.

²³⁴ Adam, prologue, 3. i (1).

which had lost much material wealth and acquired many enemies, particularly the Saxon princes.²³⁵

Authors such as Bruno of Merseburg were scathing in their descriptions of Adalbert; Bruno claimed that Adalbert thought himself greater than Peter, for unlike Peter he had never abandoned his lord, and he accused Adalbert of publicly declaring at mass that only the king and himself remained of all the nobility.²³⁶ When Adalbert was granted the monastery of Corvey, the monks there forcibly resisted his rule, despite royal intervention.²³⁷ It is intriguing that Adalbert's own biographer, Adam of Bremen, did little to diminish the impression that Adalbert was an ambitious and hated man, especially when we realise that Archbishop Liemar continued to pursue many of the same policies as Adalbert.²³⁸ For although Adam defends aspects of Adalbert's career he does not try to disguise Adalbert's flaws, or to ignore the disastrous consequences which Adalbert's ambition had for his archdiocese. Instead, he presents Adalbert as a man of extremes, whose great virtues were ultimately corrupted by his insatiable desire for glory.

Adam dedicated the third book of his *Gesta* to describing Adalbert's pontificate. It is a remarkably nuanced and rhetorically sophisticated account. Adam drew upon a wide range of the literary models including Einhard, Suetonius, Sallust, Lucan, Juvenal and a selection hagiographical texts from the Rheims archives, as well using the rhetorical tools of paradox, exaggeration and juxtaposition to great effect.²³⁹ Scholars have been charmed by Adam's account of Adalbert's pontificate, to the point where many echo his choice language in their accounts of the period.²⁴⁰ Stephen Jaeger summed up the appeal of Adam's work well when he wrote that:

It is the peculiar gift of Adam of Bremen that he fills conventional schemata and categories of judgement with life. He is not 'original' in the modern sense, but the

²³⁵ See pp. 19-20, above.

²³⁶ Bruno of Merseburg, 2, 3.

²³⁷ Theodor E. Mommsen and Karl F. Morrison, pp. 139-141.

²³⁸ Erik Niblaeus, pp. 112-127; Henrik Janson, *Templum nobilissimum*; Volker Scior, pp. 60-64. Herbert E. J. Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII, 1073-1085* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 117, 120-127, 155, 157; Ian S. Robinson, 'Periculosus homo: Pope Gregory VII and Episcopal Authority', *Viator*, 9 (1978), 103-31 (pp. 109-113, 117, 129-131); Letter of Liemar of Bremen, in *Briefsammlungen der Zeit Heinrichs IV.*, ed. by Carl Erdmann and Norbert Fickermann, MGH Briefe der deutschen Kaiserzeit V, (Weimar: MGH, 1950), pp. 33-5, fn. 15.

²³⁹ The whole of Book Three is drenched with such allusions. Most have long been identified in the editions. The influence of the Rheims archive is less well known, and is currently being researched by Dimitri Tarat. Michael Gelting is also currently working on Adam's use of his literary sources. Unfortunately, this research has not yet been published (private correspondence).

²⁴⁰ For example, Edgar N. Johnson, pp. 147-179; Thomas N. Bisson, 'Princely Nobility in an Age of Ambition', in *Nobles and Nobility in Medieval Europe: Concepts, Origins, Transformations*, ed. by Anne J. Duggan (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), p. 105.

topoi and conventions with which he operates are imposed on a reality that is observed, experienced, and above all felt.²⁴¹

Jaeger's comments testify to the nature and effectiveness of Adam's literary strategy, but do not justify his acceptance of Adam's sincerity. Adam's literary finesse is evident, but this does nothing to support his credibility.

Adam's account must be handled with extreme care. It is saturated with a sense of the familiar. Adam exploited what were felt to be self-evident truths to craft a remarkably nuanced account of Adalbert's pontificate, in which the reader is encouraged to approach the subject as something familiar and comprehensible. Yet the *Gesta* does not present a coherent narrative of Adalbert's pontificate; it is paradoxical, inconclusive and strained. Adalbert is presented as both great man, and a terrible sinner. Yet through the intensive exploitation of what were felt to be fundamental categories and distinctions – the divisions between masculine and feminine, civilized and barbaric, rich and poor – Adam crafts an account of Adalbert's pontificate which appears dramatic, familiar and compelling. In doing so Adam's account of Adalbert acts as something of a guide to the more entrenched categories in the thought-world of Adam and his audience.²⁴²

Adam begins the third book by presenting a dense list of Adalbert's many virtues. He was 'noble, handsome, wise, eloquent, chaste', rich, successful, glorious, influential and temperate. He was zealous for mission to the pagans and for the welfare of his diocese, and faithful to both the king and the pope. He was well-educated, skilled in many arts, and was gifted with an excellent memory and exceptional eloquence.²⁴³ In short, he was everything which the archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen ought to be.²⁴⁴ However, even in the early chapters of the work Adam introduces some doubt into this picture, noting that, 'although he was such in the beginning, he seemed to fail toward the end.'²⁴⁵ He concludes that Adalbert's character was flawless,

²⁴¹ Stephen C. Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness: Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals, 939-1210* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), p. 69.

²⁴² Gerhard Theuerkauf, p. 121. Theuerkauf made the intriguing, and justifiable, suggestion that we regard the contradictions in Adam's account of Adalbert as a reflection of Adalbert's society, not his personality. 'Archbishop Adalbert is of a society whose practices do not fit together seamlessly, the conflicting requirements are attributable to the social order.'

²⁴³ Adam, 3. i (1) -3. iii (3); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 115.

²⁴⁴ Adam, 3. ii (2); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 115 'Moreover, in respect of the mission to the heathen, which is the first duty of the Church at Hamburg, no one so vigorous could ever be found.'

²⁴⁵ Adam, 3. i (1); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 115.

Except for one contravening fault, the ugliness of which beclouded all the prelate's grace. That fault was vainglory, the handmaid of the wealthy.²⁴⁶

Adam never denies Adalbert's original virtue; indeed, he goes out his way to emphasise it. Yet he also suggests that through a combination of Adalbert's own failings, the corrupting influence of his courtiers, the unjust opposition of his enemies, the deficiencies of his subordinates, and cruel fortune, Adalbert became a loathed and troubled man.²⁴⁷ As Book Three unfolds, Adalbert's failures and failing virtue increasingly dominate the account, particularly after the disastrous events of the 1066.²⁴⁸

Adam exploits his audience's sense of the right order of the world to emphasise the injustices of Adalbert's pontificate, presenting it as an inversion of what it should, and could, have been. Although Adam goes to great lengths to vilify the Saxons, he frames his attack in terms of Adalbert's failure as a bishop, 'he showed himself so hard hearted toward his diocesans, whom he should rather have loved.'²⁴⁹ He sarcastically remarks that Adalbert's administrator, a 'faithful and wise steward', together with his 'most holy deputies', abandoned their proper role and instead plundered the diocese, stealing from those they were appointed to aid.²⁵⁰ He laments that even nuns and frail women were stripped of their wealth, using groups near-synonymous with innocence and vulnerability to accentuate the sense of wrongdoing in the passage.²⁵¹ He juxtaposed the fate of such unfortunate groups with those he deemed to be their degenerate opposites, writing that the jewels donated to the Church by the pious noblewoman Emma had ended up in the hands of prostitutes, and that the gold intended for the clergy, widows and needy had instead gone to 'courtesans and brigands'.²⁵² Towards the end of his account, as his description grew ever more damning he claimed that:

We saw the door of his chamber, which at first had been open to every stranger and pilgrim, lately so closely guarded that legates on important business and persons of

²⁴⁶ Adam, 3. 2 (ii); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 116.

²⁴⁷ Adam, 3. ii. (2), 3. v (5), 3. xxviii (27), 3. xxxvi (35), 3. xxxvii (36), 3. xxxviii (37), 3. xli (40), 3. xlvi (47), 3. lv (54), 3. lvi (55), 3. lxii (61), 3. lxiii (62), 3. lxv (64), 3. lxvi (65), 3. lxxi (70).

²⁴⁸ Adam, 3. xlvii (46).

²⁴⁹ Adam, 3. lvi (55).

²⁵⁰ Adam, 3. lvii (56) Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, pp. 164, 165.

²⁵¹ Adam, 3. lviii (57) p. 165. Megan McLaughlin *Sex, Gender, and Episcopal Authority*, p. 116 'the poor widow epitomised for the clerical culture of the central middle ages maternal vulnerability.'

²⁵² Adam, 3. xlvi (45).

consequence in the world at times had to wait unwillingly a week before the doors.²⁵³

Here, Adalbert's acceptance of those he might have been expected to reject is contrasted with his rejection of those he was expected to welcome; in this way Adam uses the stranger, a figure defined only their status as an outsider, to illustrate Adalbert's own alienation from his former virtue.

Yet strangers could also be used to condemn Adalbert. Adam describes the strange and exotic people who gathered around him, 'the sycophants who flowed from different parts of the earth into his quarters as into a cesspool.'²⁵⁴ He lists magicians, soothsayers and alchemists amongst Adalbert's retinue along with prostitutes, actors and 'others of that sort'. According to Adam, Adalbert sought these people out *because* they were exotic and unusual, believing that this quality would add to his own reputation. But for Adam it was, at least in part, precisely this same quality which damned Adalbert's courtiers and, by association, Adalbert himself. For although Adam blames Adalbert's courtiers for many of his failings, he does not use them to defend Adalbert from criticism, as he might have done. Instead, Adalbert's courtiers are presented as symptom of his moral decline and failure.

Adam develops the stigma surrounding Adalbert's courtiers into an attack on Adalbert himself. Having denounced Adalbert's magicians and soothsayers, Adam finally voices the rumour that Adalbert himself may have taken up sorcery. Sorcery is closely connected with paganism in the *Gesta*. Accusations of sorcery were directed at those whom Adam deemed to be irredeemably damned, which invariably meant those who were in some way hostile to Hamburg-Bremen.²⁵⁵ To claim that the Archbishop himself may have been involved in sorcery suggested an unequivocal rejection of Adalbert's legacy, within the patterns of meaning established throughout the work. Sorcerers were nothing but damned in the *Gesta* and, as Adam seems to have realised, reputation is the only defence against such accusations, and Adalbert's reputation was poor, to say the least. Thus:

We saw the archbishop himself at that time sink so low in repute that he was said to have given himself up to the magic arts.²⁵⁶

²⁵³ Adam, 3. xxxix (38); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 147.

²⁵⁴ Adam, 3. xxxviii (37); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 145.

²⁵⁵ Adam, 2. xl (38), 2. lvii (55), 2. lxi (59), 3. xvii (16), 3. xxxix (38), 3. xlvii (46), 3. lii (51), 3. lxiii (62), 3. xvi (16), 3. xxxi (30), 3. xxxii (31); Ildar H. Garipzanov, 'Christians and Pagans', pp. 19-20.

²⁵⁶ Adam, 3. lxiii (62); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 169. On witchcraft accusations more generally, see Mary Douglas, *Risk and Blame*, pp. 83-97.

Having raised the possibility that Adalbert may have taken up sorcery, Adam immediately claimed that he did not believe such rumours, for Adalbert himself had often said that magicians and fortune-tellers must be punished with death. But then, having juxtaposed his accusation with Adalbert's former virtue, he undermines his own statement by quoting scripture, saying 'with the holy you will be holy, with the perverse you will be perverted'; a damning remark given his account of Adalbert's companions.²⁵⁷

Adam exploits his audience's sense of boundaries, of the right order of the world, to present Adalbert as a man of contradictions, alienated from his former self and virtue. We have already seen some of the contradictions which Adam employs in his account of Adalbert's life, and these can be seen as mirroring Adalbert's character: that his vicars robbed those they should have served; that the Church's wealth went to bandits and prostitutes while widows and nuns were impoverished; that Adalbert hated those he ought to have loved; and that he dabbled with the sorcery which he himself had previously condemned. As Adam came to describe Adalbert's decline in the second half of Book Three, his use of such juxtaposition intensifies. He writes that Adalbert established a canonry, only for the canons to turn into a gang of robbers; that he lost gold in order to gain it; that he warred against the nature of the land, planting gardens and vineyards on arid land.²⁵⁸ When describing Adalbert's final days, he presents these contradictions as evidence that Adalbert had lost his mind, saying that he spent his nights awake and days asleep, that he stopped listening to the truth and instead heard fables, that:

Towards the end he was so entirely changed from his own self and so impaired of his former virtue that none of his associates, nor he himself, could fully make out what he wished or did not wish.²⁵⁹

Adam concludes that 'his ways seemed altogether inhuman and alien to himself.'²⁶⁰

This sense of Adalbert's alienation, from what he had been and from what he ought to have been, is developed steadily throughout the third book, culminating in Adam's description of Adalbert's death. Here he presents Adalbert as deceived to the very last, convinced that he would live to usher in a new golden age, even when everything around

²⁵⁷ II Samuel 22.26-27; Psalm 18.26. cf. Adam, 3. lxiii (62); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 170. cf. Adam, 3. xxxvi (35), 3. xxxix (38), 3. xlix (48).

²⁵⁸ Adam, 3. xxvi (25), 3. xxxvii (36), 3. xlvi (45).

²⁵⁹ Adam, 3. lxii (61), Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 169.

²⁶⁰ Adam, 3. lxii (61), Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 168.

him pointed towards his imminent death. The language which Adam draws upon is that of paganism and conversion. He presents Adalbert as deceived, in the same terms as he describes pagans being led astray by the devil. He says that Adalbert was unmindful of his own salvation and ignored many warnings to convert. The irony and tragedy of Adalbert's fall from missionary bishop to deluded apostate is accentuated by Adam's use of a witch, the archetypal outsider figure in Adam's work, to make explicit Adalbert's need to repent.²⁶¹ Thus, having stigmatised Adalbert by drawing on the sense of otherness associated with magicians, prostitutes and others, and compounding this sense of exclusion by contrasting these groups with their acceptable opposites, Adam completes the process of Adalbert's alienation by portraying him as a magician and an apostate.

Had Adam ended his work there Adalbert would have remained a tragic figure, irredeemably excluded from his former virtue and faith. But in the final chapters of Book Three, Adam provides us with one final contradiction. After mourning Adalbert's death and describing his burial, he suggests an alternative account of Adalbert's last days.²⁶² In these chapters he proposes that Adalbert may have repented on his deathbed, and provides evidence of Adalbert's remorse for his sins, writing, 'if in some respects he sinned as a man, he repented many times of his mistakes as a good man.'²⁶³ Nowhere else in his work does Adam go to such great lengths to exclude and alienate as he does in his account of Adalbert, but ultimately Adalbert's final condition is left ambiguous and unresolved. Adam's contradictory accounts leave Adalbert both saved and damned, with no means to choose between the two.

In doing so Adam contrived an elegant solution to the problem of Adalbert's poisoned legacy. By emphasising Adalbert's vices and virtues, triumphs and failures, and refusing to provide a definitive resolution of these two extremes, Adam constructed an account which might be acceptable to all parties. Adam did not provide a clear narrative of Adalbert's life, but instead provided the fragments from which his readers might construct their own. He did not attempt to construct an acceptable compromise, but chose to exaggerate every aspect of Adalbert's character, providing a selection of explanations through which the reader might understand the events his pontificate. Crucially, Adam's account is drenched with *topoi* and appeals to the right order of things, imbuing his account with a sense of drama and familiarity while disguising the inconclusiveness of his own narrative.

²⁶¹ Adam, 3. lxii (61)- 3. lxv (64).

²⁶² Adam, 3. lxix (68)- 3. lxxi (70).

²⁶³ Adam 3. lxix (68); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 176. cf. Adam 3. ii (2).

Adam's account also provides a sophisticated tool for understanding the problems of Adalbert's career. Like Adam's description of the Prussians, the fragmentary nature of his description of Adalbert allows a far richer and more accurate account than if he had chosen to shape his narrative around a single understanding of Adalbert's pontificate. Adalbert probably *was* almost as varied and contradictory as Adam's caricature suggests. Such a conclusion is supported by sources outside the *Gesta*. Letters and charters from Adalbert's pontificate indicate the material success and grandiose claims of the diocese, while the opposition by the monks of Corvey and Adalbert's expulsion from court are suggestive of Adalbert's failures.²⁶⁴ Adalbert's letter to Anno of Cologne bears witness to his tact and diplomacy, while Bruno of Merseburg and Lambert of Hersfeld condemned him for a lack of it.²⁶⁵

Furthermore, the ambiguity of Adam's account made it a useful tool for understanding and negotiating Hamburg-Bremen's present. Many of Adalbert's policies are condemned in the *Gesta*. Adalbert's building work, fixation on the royal court, and plan to establish a Patriarchate are all presented as a symptom of Adalbert's deluded ego.²⁶⁶ Yet Adam also described these plans in some detail, and suggested that many nearly succeeded. He explicitly claims that Adalbert's plans to establish a Patriarchate and to enrich his see through royal favour came close to success.²⁶⁷ He also states that Adalbert was motivated by the desire to defend and glorify his see; the highest ideal within his history of the diocese.²⁶⁸ Adam knew that Adalbert had failed. This failure overshadows Adam's account, transforming Adalbert into a tragic figure. Yet Liemar faced many of the same challenges as Adalbert; the hostility of the Saxon princes, the demands of the royal court, the need to establish authority over the North and to defend and enhance the position of his see. The *Gesta* does not to present a coherent solution to these challenges. Instead, Adam uses a paradoxical account of Adalbert's pontificate to explore the many challenges facing the archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen, the possibilities for success, and the tragic risks and consequences of failure.

²⁶⁴ See pp. 19–20, above.

²⁶⁵ Adalbert of Bremen, *Epistola Adalberti Archiepiscopi*, ed. by Werner Trillmich and Rudolf Buchner, in *Quellen des 9. und 11. Jahrhunderts zur Geschichte der hamburgischen Kirche und des Reiches* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1961), pp. 500–506; Lambert of Hersfeld, an. 1073, an. 1076; Bruno of Merseburg, 2, 3.

²⁶⁶ Adam, 3. iii (3), 3. x (10), 3. xxvi (25), 3. xxviii (27), 3. xxxviii (37), 3. xxxix (38), 3. xlvi (45), 3. xlvii (46), 3. xlix (48), 3. lv (54), 3. lviii (57), 3. lix (58), 3. lxii (61), 3. lxxv (64).

²⁶⁷ Adam, 3. xxxiii (32), 3. lix (58), 3. lxi (60).

²⁶⁸ Adam, 3. ii (2).

5.v. Approaches to difference.

Adam's *Gesta* is characterised by diversity. His understanding of the groups discussed here is best characterised in terms of conceptual variety; each group was presented in a variety of often contradictory ways. Much the same might be said about those groups which have been given less attention in this study, having received extensive treatment elsewhere. Adam's depiction of the Danes, Swedes, Norwegians, Icelanders, Greenlanders, Rus, monstrous races and others, might also be usefully approached in terms of conceptual variety.

This chapter concludes by framing the question of otherness slightly differently, by underlining the variety of ways in which Adam could think about difference. The focus therefore shifts from analysing the content and uses of specific classifications, to understanding the different ways Adam approached categories of difference more generally. At issue are the various stances Adam adopted towards those classified as different, the framework through which he ordered and arranged his ideas about them. Sometimes Adam approached difference as something which needed to be driven out and rejected. Elsewhere he was more accepting. Occasionally he deliberately undermined the credibility of an individual category of difference. And, at times, he imagined a morality in which difference could be accepted as different. Other distinctions could be made between and beyond these classifications, but the purpose here is to illustrate the broad trends in Adam's *Gesta*. Even more than the fractures in Adam's understanding of individual concepts, the diverse ways which he approached difference reflects the fundamental and irreconcilable divisions in his thought.

5.v.a. Rejection.

At times Adam approached difference as something which must be condemned, rejected and destroyed. We have encountered numerous examples of this approach over the course of this chapter; a concept of paganism which necessitated its destruction through conversion or war, and the assumption that brigands, sorcerers and prostitutes could act as a byword for that which must be shunned or destroyed. This unequivocal hostility towards difference was integral to Adam's account of Archbishop Adalbert, where categories concomitant with a sense of hostility were used to express the paradoxical character of Adalbert's life and pontificate. Such unqualified hostility also characterised Adam's

references to sorcery and witchcraft, which are condemned far more consistently than pagans or paganism. In the *Gesta* sorcery was a byword for irredeemably bad behaviour and was usually synonymous with opposition to Hamburg-Bremen's authority; a far more problematic position for the Church than mere paganism.²⁶⁹

This sense of hostility towards a group or individual reduced to a single, negative classification is most visible when Adam envisaged the physical removal of those he classed as outsiders. These moments often draw on a biblical language of judgement, and appeal to a sense of purity profaned. Such appeals to authority and definitive boundaries reinforce the impression that these moments, more than most, have less to do with the people they claim to describe, than affirming a system of thought and the correct order of things.

Such descriptions occur throughout the work. Thus Adam claims that Olaf Tryggvason undertook a 'war for the suppression of idolatry' to destroy all the sorcerers and pagans in Norway; that the archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen repeatedly attempted to drive out the women 'co-habiting' with the clergy; that William the Conqueror 'avenged God' and expelled 'nearly all the clerics and monks who lived out of conformity with the rule', while Adalbert 'visit[ed] their iniquities with a rod', imprisoning, fining and berating those who failed to conform to canonical and social norms.²⁷⁰ Adam also claims that:

At this time our Archbishop is also said to have contemplated the renewal of a kind of golden age in his consulate, by extirpating from the city of God all who work iniquity, evidently especially those who had laid hands on the king or who plundered the churches.²⁷¹

Setting aside the complex political realities of the moment, and Adam's equally complex handling of Adalbert's legacy, the language here is that of purification. 'All who work iniquity' are defined solely by their wrong-doing, and their physical removal equated with a restoration and purification. The messy realities of lived experience are circumvented, and the earthly court is equated with the City of God.

It is tempting to dismiss this passage as a nothing more than another illustration of Adalbert's madness, not least as it is easy to assume that Adam that would have been sensitive to the theological problems inherent in equating any earthly institution with the

²⁶⁹ Adam, 2. xl (38), 2. lvii (55), 2. lxi (59), 3. xvii (16), 3. xxxix (38), 3. xlvi (46), 3. lii (51), 3. lxiii (62), 3. xvi (16), 3. xxxi (30), 3. xxxii (31); Ildar H. Garipzanov, pp. 19-20.

²⁷⁰ Adam, 2. schol. 42 (43), 2. schol 53 (54), 2. lxi (59), 3. xxx (29), 3. lii (51), 3. lvi (55), 3. lxi (59); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, pp. 96, 159, 163.

²⁷¹ Adam, 3. xlvi (46); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 154.

City of God.²⁷² However, there is nothing within the *Gesta* itself to suggest that Augustine had any great influence on Adam's thought. While we might infer such an awareness from the broader context of the work, this context should also alert us to the intense and uncompromising rhetoric of the period, and its use in the defence of sacral royal power. Furthermore, the recurrence of the theme of physically removing malefactors throughout the *Gesta* suggests that this aspect of Adam's thought must be taken seriously. Sometimes difference had to be driven out.

5.v.b. Acceptance.

Yet the *Gesta* is not characterised by such unqualified hostility. Adam used classifications with great flexibility. Sometimes groups such as pagans, barbarians and women were presented as synonymous with hostility and rejection, but this did not prevent Adam describing these same groups with little or no sense of hostility elsewhere. Often the existence of these groups is simply accepted. Such superficial neutrality was occasionally hinted at by Adam in his description of the North. He describes it as full of things which would seem incredible to his own people, as unexplored, and largely unknown until recent times.²⁷³ Significantly, he also suggests that:

Since much else may be seen there [Norvegia] that is entirely different and strange to our people, we leave it and other things to be fully described by the inhabitants of this land.²⁷⁴

Norway is acknowledged as strange and unknown, but this is accepted without apparent reservation. Its difference and independence are tolerated.

Indeed, being categorised as an outsider was not necessarily a barrier to virtue in Adam's mind. Women, barbarians and even pagans could all have their virtues. Svein Estrithson was described as a barbarian, yet praised extensively; noblewomen such as Ikia, Liutgart and Emma were all lauded for their charity; and the pagan Prussians, Swedes and inhabitants of Jumne were all recognised as having many virtues.

²⁷² Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, ed. by Bernard Dombart and Alphonse Kalb, CCSL 47–48 (Brepols, Turnhout, 1955).

²⁷³ Adam, 1. xliiii (44), 4. xi (11), 4. xix (19), 4. xxi (21), 4. xxxii (31).

²⁷⁴ Adam 4. xxxii (31), Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 213.

However, such praise did not necessarily break down any of these barriers; it could even reinforce them. For instance, Adam praised Prince Gottschalk's piety by noting that he was moved to preach the gospel personally. Yet he reinforced the division between lay and clergy while doing so, by noting that his zeal led him to forget his station.²⁷⁵ Furthermore, many of the groups Adam described were assumed to have their own models of virtue. For instance, the women whom Adam praised generally stayed within the bounds of what was perceived as acceptable feminine behaviour, although these boundaries might shift according to issues such as social status or Adam's narrative concerns.²⁷⁶ Those women who did not fit into the narrow patterns of feminine virtue were condemned as witches, harlots, manipulative Jezebels and semi-monstrous Amazons, or ignored entirely.²⁷⁷ Thus although Adam used the categories in his work in a wide variety of ways, including positive, negative and neutral representations of the same group, such variety did not in itself undermine the integrity of these categories. More than anything, the conceptual variety in the *Gesta* seems to reflect Adam's confidence in the validity of the categories he was using. Nonetheless, there were times when Adam did reject accepted categorisations.

5.v.c. De-legitimising a single classification: social class.

'You, a noble and distinguished man, can have no part with the lowly.'²⁷⁸

There is only one classification in the *Gesta* which Adam makes a sustained effort to undermine, to the point where, at times, it is presented as a defunct means of viewing the world. This is social class. More specifically (and less anachronistically), Adam rejected the relevance of nobility within the Christian order.

Assumptions about social class formed the backdrop to the *Gesta*. Like divisions based on gender, religion, age or political/ethnic groupings, social-economic divisions provided Adam with a useful and well-established means of making sense of the world. Throughout most of the *Gesta* Adam approached social class as we might expect. He assumed that noble origins were worth commenting upon, that nobles would behave differently to their social

²⁷⁵ Adam, 3. xx (19).

²⁷⁶ Adam, 3. xxxiv (33), 3. xlv (44). The Empress Agnes provides a good example of how Adam's standpoint could shift according to political/ social issues and his narrative aims. In one passage Adam freely acknowledged Agnes' authority to claim and control land, whereas elsewhere the troubles facing the empire are attributed to the rule of 'a woman.'

²⁷⁷ 2. xxxvi. (34), 2. lxi (59), 3. xxi (20), 3. xxx (29), 3. xlvi (45), 3. lviii (57), 3. lxiv (63), 4. xiv (14), 4. xvii (17), 4. xix (19), 4. xxxii (31).

²⁷⁸ Adam, 3. lxix (68); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 176.

inferiors, and be treated differently as well.²⁷⁹ Conversely, the poorest were treated as opportunities to display charity and humility; interactions in which inequality and the maintenance of inequality were integral.²⁸⁰ Adam occasionally hinted that the lower classes might be morally inferior to their superiors, but this was not a major theme in the *Gesta*, and was, in part, a reflection of his sources.²⁸¹

Adam also considered the issue of social class more directly, as part of his analysis of Adalbert's character and pontificate in Book Three. The understanding of nobility presented in this explicit consideration was, at times, markedly different from that implied by the majority of references to class in the *Gesta*. However, it is important to recognise that Adam's primary concern in these passages was to provide a means of understanding the nature and failures of Adalbert's character and pontificate. Ideas about class were one means of doing so. Accordingly, although Adam's aims were consistent, his approach to class was not.

Many of Adam's references to class in the third book fit into the pattern of contradictions, juxtapositions and inversions through which Adam characterised Adalbert's pontificate, which have been explored above. Adam displays Adalbert's pride by claiming that he would bow to beggars but not to princes; that by the end of his life even 'legates on important business and persons of consequence in the world' were kept waiting at his door for weeks on end.²⁸² He illustrates the archdiocese's misfortune in terms of a collapse of the social order, describing the 'formerly rich people, [who] went begging from door to door', and the treasures which had been gifted to the Church by 'the most noble, senatorial lady, Emma' being melted down, and their jewels being given to courtesans.²⁸³ In this way, Adam inverts the right order of the world to condemn Adalbert's pontificate and character.

Adam also condemned Adalbert's character more directly, adopting a different understanding of class to do so. Adalbert's great pride in his noble ancestry is a recurring theme in the third book, and is attested elsewhere. Adam explicitly identified this pride as one of the sources of his failure.²⁸⁴ Adalbert was cursed with vainglory, 'the handmaid of the

²⁷⁹ Adam, 1. vi (6), 1. viii (8), 2. i (1), 2. ix (8), 2. lxvi (64), 2. xxvi (23), 2. xxxi (29), 2. xxxvi (34), 2. lxxv (73), 3. ii (2), 3. xxxviii (37), 3. xl (39), 3. liii (52), 3. lviii (57), 3. lxix (68), 4. ix (9), 4. xl (39).

²⁸⁰ Paulo Henrique Pachá, 'Gift and conflict: Forms of Social Domination in the Iberian Early Middle Ages', *Networks and Neighbours*, 2, 2 (2014), 288-324 (pp. 297-303). cf. Adam, 3. xl (39).

²⁸¹ cf. Adam, 1. vi. (6), 1. viii (8); Tacitus, ix, 9-11.

²⁸² Adam, 3. ii (2), xxxix (38); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 147.

²⁸³ Adam, 3. xlvi. (45), 3. viii (57); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, pp. 153, 166.

²⁸⁴ Adam, 3. ii. (2), 3. iii (3), 3. xxxviii (37), 3. xxxix (38), 3. xl (39), 3. lxix (68); Lambert of Hersfeld, an. 1073, an. 1076; Bruno of Merseburg, 2, 3.

wealthy'.²⁸⁵ Adam claims that Adalbert liked to berate those around him, especially 'for the meanness of their origin[s]'. Whereas he distributed his own wealth, they sought after the wealth of others; 'this was the clearest indication of his nobility.'²⁸⁶ Adam was describing the dynamic which underpinned, maintained, and justified the socio-economic divisions of his day, and Adalbert's conspicuous identification with this order, combined with his ultimate failure, leads Adam to criticise the order itself.

Towards the end of the third book, Adam again returns to the theme of Adalbert's pride and nobility, writing:

He was a very proud man, he antagonized many people because of his arrogance. For this reason, too, and because he gloried in his noble rank, he made a remark which it were better he had not uttered; namely, that all the bishops who had presided before him had been obscure and ignoble persons, that he alone stood out by right of his family and wealth... As he boasted more than once to this effect, he is said to have been terrified by an ominous vision.²⁸⁷

Adalbert was confronted by a vision of all of his archiepiscopal predecessors performing mass together. His own offering having been rejected, he was told by Archbishop Alebrand-Bezelin that 'you, a noble and distinguished man, can have no part with the lowly.'²⁸⁸ Both Alebrand-Bezelin's words and his refusal to accept Adalbert's offering had ominous salvific implications. Suitably chastised, Adalbert repented and 'with many a sigh he made it known that he was not worthy of the company of holy men.'²⁸⁹

The primary purpose of the account was to suggest that Adalbert repented towards the end of his life. Adam explicitly introduces the vision in these terms.²⁹⁰ Adalbert's pride is the focus of Adam's criticism, yet this was bound up with his pride in his nobility, in this

²⁸⁵ Adam, 3. ii. (2); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 116.

²⁸⁶ Adam, 3. xl (39); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 148.

²⁸⁷ Adam, 3. lxix (68); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 176.

²⁸⁸ Adam, 3. lxix (68); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 177.

²⁸⁹ Adam, 3. lxix (68); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 177.

²⁹⁰ Adam, 3. lxix (68), 3. lxx (68). Adam's account of Adalbert's vision maintains his complex and dramatically fluctuating approach to Adalbert's character. Within a *gesta episcoporum* good bishops were supposed to celebrate, preserve and continue the traditions of their predecessors; yet Adalbert does precisely the opposite. He severs himself from his predecessors, underlining his separation from his Church, and failure as an archbishop. Adam claims that Adalbert repented, but it is unclear whether he was ultimately reconciled with his forebears. Written within and for the clerical community of Hamburg-Bremen, this episode appears to reflect the continuing strength and polarisation of debates about Adalbert's legacy amongst the clergy there. cf. Helmut Flachenecker, 'A Clergyman out of Control: Portrait of a Bishop Around the Year 1000', *Concilium medii aevi*, 17 (2014), 1-9 (pp. 8-9).

passage and elsewhere.²⁹¹ To undermine Adalbert's pride, Adam places his grandiose claims within a context in which such standards were immaterial. In the company of his saintly forebears, removed from earthly concerns, Adalbert's nobility was irrelevant, and his pride a dangerous liability.

It is difficult to imagine that Adam did not recognise the implications of his account of Adalbert's vision. At the very least, it elevated spiritual and ecclesiastical distinctions over social rank. But the implications appear stronger than this; Adalbert's rank becomes an irrelevance, and a potential obstacle to salvation. Momentarily, social rank is presented as a spiritual liability. That Adam recognised that he was presenting an inversion of things may be hinted at by his use of the phrase, 'you can have no part with the lowly.' This echoes Jesus' warning to Peter, that 'unless I wash you, you have no part with me' in John 13.8.²⁹² Peter had tried to prevent Jesus washing his feet, insisting that he ought to wash Jesus' feet instead.²⁹³ Jesus' reply inverts the established order of things, with the master taking on the role of the servant. Adam's learning and literary culture would have made him highly sensitive to the parallels between this account and Adalbert's vision, where the lowly are elevated, and the proud are humbled.

Adam did not consistently reject the legitimacy and standards of nobility throughout the *Gesta*. Only one passage hints at a similarly sceptical attitude towards nobility, where Adam remarks that Archbishop Lievizo was 'acceptable to all, even to the princes—which is difficult.'²⁹⁴ Otherwise such comments are restricted to his account of Adalbert's vision. The peculiar context of this episode must therefore be considered. Throughout the wider passage Adam was explicitly concerned with presenting Adalbert as a good and repentant man. His account of Adalbert's vision allowed him to respond to criticisms of Adalbert's excessive pride in his nobility; a charge voiced by himself and others. Adam's moralising concerns are evident in the fallacy which underpins the account; for not all of Adalbert's predecessors were as lowly as he suggests in this passage.²⁹⁵

We may also be able to connect the account with Adam's addressee, Archbishop Liemar. We know relatively little about Liemar; he was appointed as archbishop at a young age, remained a staunch supporter of Henry IV throughout his career, and this led him into a direct, and vehement, confrontation with Gregory VII. Liemar's great pride in his episcopal status is explicitly stated in his letter to Bishop Hezilo of Hildesheim, where he

²⁹¹ Adam, 3. ii. (2), 3. iii (3), 3. xxxviii (37), 3. xxxix (38), 3. xl (39), 3. lxix (68).

²⁹² John 13.8 (NIV).

²⁹³ See John 13.1-17.

²⁹⁴ Adam, 3. lxvii (65); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 101.

²⁹⁵ Adam, 2. i (1), 2. xlvii (45).

famously complained that, ‘this dangerous man [i.e. Gregory VII] wants to order bishops about as though they were his bailiffs.’²⁹⁶ Whether Liemar’s pride in his episcopal rank extended to a sense of his own nobility is less clear. Liemar was probably not a *ministerialis*, as has been suggested, but from a noble family from Bavaria.²⁹⁷ So it is possible that Adalbert’s vainglory was imitated by his successor. Thus Adam’s warning against the dangers of pride in one’s rank must be viewed both in the context of Hamburg’s immediate past, and its turbulent present.

5.v.d. De-legitimising multiple classifications: charity.

A wider rejection of categories of difference can be seen in Adam’s notion of charity, or hospitality. Adam’s concern for charity is visible throughout the whole work.²⁹⁸ Adam regularly used it as a point of reference for judging those he described. Thus the archbishops were judged by their care for the xenodochium, and the Prussians, Swedes, and people of Jumne were all praised for their willingness to care for strangers.²⁹⁹ Conversely, the Saxons were condemned for their xenophobia.³⁰⁰

For Adam, charity and hospitality were almost indistinguishable. Adam was concerned not so much with care for the poor as caring for strangers. This is implicit in many of his remarks on charity, and is made explicit in his description of the Icelanders. Adam claimed that they:

Have many meritorious customs, especially charity, in consequence of which they have all things in common with strangers as well as natives.³⁰¹

The sense that charity is directed towards unknown persons is reinforced by Adam’s choice of biblical allusions when advocating charity. He records Rimbert paraphrasing Matthew twenty-five, saying ‘we must not be slow in coming to the help of all the poor, because we

²⁹⁶ Liemar of Bremen, *Epistola*, pp. 33-35; ‘A Letter from Archbishop Liemar of Bremen to Bishop Hezilo of Hildesheim’, trans. by Graham. A. Loud (Leeds Medieval History Texts in Translation Website, University of Leeds, 2000) <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/history/weblearning/MedievalHistoryTextCentre/medievalTexts.htm> [accessed 24/08/ 2014]; Herbert E. J. Cowdrey, pp. 114, 117, 120, 123, 126, 240, 282, 419, 454-455; Ian S. Robinson, ‘Periculosus homo: Pope Gregory VII and Episcopal Authority’, *Viator*, 9 (1978), 103-31.

²⁹⁷ Ian S. Robinson, *Henry IV of Germany 1056-1106* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), pp. 358, 359.

²⁹⁸ Gerhard Theuerkauf, pp. 134-135. Curiously, while Theuerkauf recognises that Adam portrays charity as a virtue accessible to all, including pagans, he also maintains that Adam was restricted to a very narrow and hostile understanding of pagans. It is the only discordant note in an otherwise wonderful article.

²⁹⁹ Adam, 1. xxx (32), 1. xliv (46), 2. xiv (12), 2. xxix (27), 2. xxii (19), 4. xviii (18), 4. xxi (21).

³⁰⁰ Adam, 3. lvi (55).

³⁰¹ Adam, 4. xxxvi (35); Francis Tschan and Timothy Reuter, p. 299.

do not know who is Christ or when he will come to us.³⁰² Similarly, he alludes to Hebrews thirteen when he notes that, by hospitality, some have entertained angels without knowing it.³⁰³ Tied in with this sense of charity is Adam's rejection of greed. Those who 'sought things that were of themselves' are condemned whilst Adam esteems those who are content with what they had.³⁰⁴ The Icelanders are praised for living in 'holy simplicity', being able 'to say, along with the Apostle, "having nourishment and some kind of covering, we are content."³⁰⁵ Archbishop Lievizo is praised for rarely going to court because he was content with what he had.³⁰⁶

The anonymising aspect of Adam's concept of charity represents an important point of contrast to his other, less accommodating, approaches to difference. Charity provided a framework which allowed the acceptance of difference, as different. Adam's numerous comments on charity do not directly undermine any specific classification. Indeed, by using charity as a means of judging various groups it could, at times, reinforce them. Yet by insisting on anonymity as a fundamental aspect of charity, Adam envisaged an understanding of difference which precluded categorisation. Within this model of charity there was no place for the divisions of gender, class, ethnicity, and religion which dominate so much of the work. Adam does not reject these categories directly, but approaches difference within a framework in which such divisions were obsolete.

Adam's interest in charity is a major theme throughout the whole of *Gesta*. Yet it is not representative of the approach taken in the majority of the work. Most of the time Adam approached difference as something to be described, known and judged accordingly. It is hard to imagine how he could have done otherwise. Yet the disparities between these approaches – in which difference is accepted, rejected, contested, or transcended – represent the most profound and insurmountable divisions in Adam's thought.

5.vi. Conclusion.

Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum* was inextricably bound up with issues of identity, classification and difference. His discussions of the northern world

³⁰² Adam, 1. xlv (46); Matthew 25.35-40.

³⁰³ Adam, 3. xxxix (38); Hebrews 13.2.

³⁰⁴ Adam 3. lvii (56) Philippians 2.21 'For they *all seek the things that are of themselves*, not the things that are of Jesus Christ.' Also I Corinthians 13.5 'Charity is not ambitious, *does not seek for itself*; is not provoked to anger, devises no evil.' (NIV).

³⁰⁵ Adam, 4. xxxvi (35); I Timothy 6.8.

³⁰⁶ Adam, 2. xxix (27).

are remarkable, and have attracted much attention. Detailed surveys of Adam's description have been provided by David Fraesdorff and Volker Scior, amongst others, and there has been no attempt to replicate their work here. The results of such scholarship have largely been accepted. The North was indeed barbarous, pagan and other, and the idea of paganism as Christianity's inverted other was deeply entrenched in Adam's thought. The aim in this chapter has been to qualify and develop these conclusions, not reject them.

Two main concerns underlie the approach adopted here. Firstly, that we should not limit discussions of otherness and identity to Adam's descriptions of the northern peoples. The most sustained and intensive uses of the language of otherness are not associated with the pagan North, but with Christians who threatened the claims and authority of Hamburg-Bremen; the Swedes at Uppsala, married clergy, the Church's Saxon diocesans, and Archbishop Adalbert. This internal focus also influenced Adam's description of outsiders such as the Polabian Slavs, who are often depicted as proto-Christians and potential converts. The North was barbarous, but it also needed to appear redeemable.

Secondly, it is important to recognise just how fragmented and contradictory the *Gesta* is. Numerous factors contributed to the conceptual fragmentation of Adam's work, including ideas of literary style and authority, partial and contradictory sources, an ever-changing situation, and an exegetical mindset and acceptance of paradox. The *Gesta* is not consistent; not least as Adam himself did not prioritise consistency. The same groups and individuals are characterised in a variety of contradictory ways, sometimes in the same passage. Christians behave like pagans, tyrants like kings, and the inhabitants of the monstrous North are often remarkably humane.

There is little justification for approaching the *Gesta* with the expectation of consistency. And yet we cannot do otherwise, for meaningful analysis entails developing coherent patterns and connections. The expectation of variety, and a greater tolerance of contradictions, may provide a way forward. Thus Adam's descriptions of Archbishop Adalbert and the Prussians were contradictory, yet nuanced and accurate nonetheless. Similarly, the various analyses of Adam's work should not be expected to form a coherent whole. They do not, and expecting them to do so ignores the limitations inherent in our own thought. Tolerating a variety of perspectives along with the ensuing contradictions enriches our thought while reminding us of its limitations. Adam's *Gesta* hints at an approach to knowledge which is remarkably tolerant of the variety and contradictions, which are inevitable byproducts of our inability to fully comprehend a world which is wholly Other. In Bruno of Querfurt, we encounter an author who addressed this problem more directly.

6. Bruno of Querfurt.

6.i.a. Introduction.

It is indicative of the nature of Bruno's works that we are able to say far more about what Bruno thought and felt about the events he described, than we can about the events themselves, especially those relating to Bruno himself. It is possible to sketch out the broad outlines of Bruno's life, but the details must remain obscure. Bruno of Querfurt was born into a noble Saxon family in 974. He was educated for a career in the church, joining the court of Otto III as a chaplain in 989. He was inspired by the martyrdom of Adalbert of Prague in 997 to adopt an extreme form of eremitical-monasticism under the tutelage of Romuald of Ravenna. Romuald was a charismatic but rather unstable leader, and troubles within the community appear to have contributed to Bruno's decision to leave the hermitage at Pereum to join the Great Polish Hermitage envisaged by Otto III and Bolesław Chrobry. Having persuaded a number of his companions to join him, they set out for the hermitage in 1001 while he remained behind to acquire a papal mandate for the mission. However, Bruno was delayed by the conflicts that broke out following the death of Otto III in 1002, and the brothers were killed by thieves in 1003, before Bruno was able to join them.¹

Bruno appears to have spent much of the remainder of his life as a missionary working amongst the Rus, Black Hungarians, Poles, Petchenegs, and Prussians, although locating these missions with any geographical or chronological precision is problematic. He was martyred in 1009, at the age of 35, while working as a missionary. It remains unclear whether he was working amongst the Rus or the Prussians at the time, as our sources

¹ *Vita Quinque*, 2-5, 10, 13; Bruno, *Epistola*, pp. 97-99, 106; *Passio Adalberti*, 17; Thietmar, vi. 94-95; Peter Damian, *Vita Romualdi*, ed. by Giovanni Tabacco, *Fonti per la storia d'Italia*, 94 (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1957), 26-30; Marina Miladinov, *Margins of Solitude: Eremitism in Central Europe Between East and West* (Zagreb: Leykam International, 2008), pp. 74, 77-86; Marina Miladinov, 'Preface to the Life of the Five Brethren', in *Saints of the Christianization Age of Central Europe (Tenth-Eleventh Centuries) Vitae sanctorum aetatis conversionis Europae Centralis (Saec. X-XI)*, ed. by Gábor Klaniczay (Budapest: CEU, 2012), pp. 185-193 (pp. 186-188); Reinhard Wenskus, *Studien zur historisch-politischen Gedankenwelt Bruns von Querfurt* (Münster-Köln: Böhlau, 1956), pp. 1-6; Heinrich G. Voigt, *Brun von Querfurt. Mönch, Eremit, Erzbischof der Heiden und Märtyrer* (Stuttgart: Steinkopf, 1907); Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 231-233; Ian N. Wood, 'Shoes and a Fish dinner: the Troubled Thoughts of Bruno of Querfurt', in *Ego Trouble: Authors and their Identities in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Richard Corradini and others (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010), pp. 249-258; Ian N. Wood, 'The Hagiography of Conversion', in *Saints of the Christianization Age of Central Europe (Tenth-Eleventh Centuries) Vitae sanctorum aetatis conversionis Europae Centralis (Saec. X-XI)*, ed. by Gábor Klaniczay (Budapest: CEU, 2012), pp. 1-16 (pp. 14-17); Darius Baronas, 'St Bruno of Querfurt: The Missionary Vocation', *Lithuanian Historical Studies*, 14 (200), 41-52.

disagree. These disagreements may stem, in part, from a struggle over Bruno's legacy following his death. Bolesław Chrobry ransomed his body, and his death was commented on by the *Quedlinburg Annals*, his cousin Thietmar, and his purported companion and co-missionary, Wibert.² Peter Damian would later include a substantial account of Bruno's life in his *Vita Romualdi*, although it was heavily refracted through his own, harsher ascetic ideals.³ Initial efforts to cultivate a Bruno-cult appear to have foundered, and Bruno's later reputation was relatively modest, inspiring no dedicated works of hagiography.⁴ Bruno himself wrote three works that we know of: the *Vita vel passio Benedicti et Iohannis sociorumque suorum*, *Passio Sancti Adalberti Martiris Christi*, and *Epistola ad Heinricum Regem*.⁵

Bruno's writings frequently appear in the historiography of political and ecclesiastical history, but studies of his literary strategies or ideas about otherness, identity, mysticism and mission are rarer, especially in English.⁶ Ian Wood, Marina Miladinov, Cristian-Nicolae Gaşpar and Darius Baronas are some of the notable exceptions to this tendency, and aspects of their arguments are discussed below.⁷ The following chapter presents a close reading of Bruno's three works, but the analysis is weighted more towards locating these texts within wider themes and debates, than historiographical issues, which simply do not exist to the same extent as the for the Hamburg-Bremen material, where these issues have been considered far more extensively. Bruno is known for his striking remarks about the church and state, but he is less frequently approached as an accomplished

² *Annales Quedlinburgenses*, ed. by Martina Giese, MGH SRG, 72, an. 1009; Thietmar, vi. 94-95; Peter Damian, *Vita Romualdi*, 27; Wibert, *Hystoria de predicatione Episcopi Brunonis cum suis capellanis in Prussia et martyrio eorum*, ed. by Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS, 4, 579-80; Miłosz Sosnowski, 'Anonimowa Passio s. Adalberti martiris (BHL 40) oraz Wiperta Historia de predicatione episcopi Brunonis (BHL 1471b) – komentarz, edycja, przekład', in *Rocznik Biblioteki Narodowej*, 43 (2012), 5-74; Darius Baronas, 'The year 1009: St Bruno of Querfurt between Poland and Rus' *Journal of Medieval History*, 34, 1 (2008), 1-22.

³ Peter Damian, *Vita Romualdi*, 26-30.

⁴ Marina Miladinov, 'Preface to the Life', p. 183; Marina Miladinov, *Margins of Solitude*, pp. 182-183; Darius Baronas, 'The year 1009'; Nora Berend, Przemysław Urbańczyk and Przemysław Wiszewski, *Central Europe in the High Middle Ages Bohemia, Hungary and Poland, c.900-c.1300* (Cambridge: CUP, 2013), pp. 367, 368.

⁵ Referred to here as: Bruno, *Vita Quinque, Epistola, Passio Adalberti*. *Passio Adalberti* refers to the *Longior* version, although the *Brevior* version can be assumed to be largely the same unless otherwise specified.

⁶ For instance, see Reinhard Wenskus, *Studien*; Heinrich G. Voigt, *Brun von Querfurt*; Hubertus Seibert, 'Herrscher und Mönchtum im spätottonischen Reich. Vorstellung - Funktion - Interaktion', in *Otto III. - Heinrich II. Eine Wende?*, ed. by Bernd Schneidmüller (Stuttgart: Sigmaringen, 1997), pp. 205-266; Jan Tyszkiewicz, 'Bruno of Querfurt and the resolutions of the Gniezno convention of 1000. Facts and problems', *Quaestiones mediæ aevi novae*, 5 (2000), 189-208; Wolfgang Eggert and Barbara Pätzold, *Wir-Gefühl und Regnum Saxonum bei frühmittelalterlichen Geschichtsschreibern* (Weimar: Böhlau 1984), pp. 275-277; Johannes Fried, 'Gnesen - Aachen - Rom. Otto III. und der Kult des hl. Adalbert. Beobachtungen zum älteren Adalbertsleben', in *Polen und Deutschland vor 1000 Jahren. Die Berliner Tagung über den „Akt von Gnesen“*, ed. by Michael Borgolte (Berlin: Akademie Verlag 2002), pp. 235-72.

⁷ Marina Miladinov, *Margins of Solitude*; Ian N. Wood, 'Shoes and a Fish dinner'; Darius Baronas, 'St Bruno of Querfurt'.

author and mystic whose works are a rich source for the study of otherness and identity in the Middle Ages.

6.i.b. The Author.

This chapter will survey Bruno's three surviving works in turn, highlighting key themes before moving on to a close analysis of the divisions and boundaries in Bruno's thought. Approaching each text individually is an important means of acknowledging the peculiarities of each, yet the striking unity of Bruno's thought must also be emphasised. Bruno's works are deeply personal and reflective. Almost uniquely for an early medieval text, the author's own personality is amongst the most rewarding and justifiable forms of analysis. For most of the major themes in Bruno's work it is difficult to avoid returning to the subject of Bruno's personality and thought. Bruno was not – and could not have been – detached from the wider social, political and literary context from which his work emerged. Yet the reflective and confessional nature of his works, combined with Bruno's internalisation of the eremitic and individualistic ideals current at the beginning of the eleventh century, allowed him an unusual degree of freedom in shaping the form and content of his works around his own thoughts and interests. This is in marked contrast to the Hamburg-Bremen tradition which idealised authorial anonymity, and where so many aspects of the works appear in spite of the authors' own experiences, attitudes, and aims.

6.i.c. Martyrdom.

'Alas, bitter death!'⁸

One of the most conspicuous consequences of Bruno's willingness to shape his works around his own ideals is the prominence of death and martyrdom. Bruno's preoccupation with death and martyrdom is well-known.⁹ In part, it was a natural consequence of Bruno's decision to compose two works of hagiography centred on martyrs. But this decision was far from neutral, and the earlier version of the *Passio Adalberti* written by John Canaparius illuminates Bruno's peculiar fixation on death. Bruno changes Canaparius' picture of

⁸ *Vita Quinque*, 7, p. 231.

⁹ Marina Miladinov, *Margins of Solitude*, pp. 71, 81; Phyllis G. Jestice, *Wayward Monks and the Religious Revolution of the Eleventh Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 80, 85; Ian N. Wood, 'Shoes and a Fish dinner'.

Adalbert from a saint who was martyred, to a martyr whose sanctity was fulfilled, if not constituted, in his martyrdom.¹⁰

Many of the most important figures in Bruno's life had died, often prematurely, and his preoccupation with martyrdom was, in part, a reflection of this. His move to a life of asceticism had been inspired by the martyrdom of Adalbert of Prague, and it was Bruno's shock at the murder of the priest Rothulf which prompted him to finally make his journey to Rome. The unexpected deaths of Otto III and Sylvester – both enthusiastic sponsors of the Adalbert cult and Polish mission – was a disorientating and discomfiting experience, and not only for Bruno.¹¹ The *Vita Quinque* is, amongst other things, a direct response to the death of two of Bruno's closest friends, and his profound grief is tangible throughout.¹²

But Bruno's fixation on martyrdom was not simply the result of morbidity or trauma, although it was certainly both of these things. It tied into a complex web of ideas about asceticism, sanctity and salvation. There were times when Bruno felt that nothing but martyrdom could assure salvation.¹³ Martyrdom was 'a safe thing and a unique glory, a "rare bird of the lands."' ¹⁴ Yet despite Bruno's desperate desire for salvation, he had no certain means of securing martyrdom and, as he told Henry II, he did not wish to die.¹⁵ Underlying all of Bruno's writings was an unresolved tension between Bruno's fear of death and his desire for martyrdom.

6.i.d. Overview of argument.

The exceptionally personal nature of Bruno's writings brings us closer to the psychological realities of mission than any other early medieval text. There are moments in each of Bruno's works where he imagines the experience of a missionary confronted by a pagan audience, doing so with remarkable sensitivity to the hopes and fears of both.¹⁶

¹⁰ Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 215-220. cf. *Passio Adalberti*, 24-34; John Canaparius, *Passio Sancti Adalberti Martiris Christi*, ed. by Jadwiga Karwasinska, MPH n.s. 4.1. (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawn Naukowe, 1962), pp. 3-47; trans. by Cristian-Nicolae Gaşpar, in *Saints of the Christianization Age of Central Europe (Tenth-Eleventh Centuries) Vitae sanctorum aetatis conversionis Europae Centralis (Saec. X-XI)*, ed. by Gábor Klaniczay (Budapest: CEU, 2012), pp. 96-181 (28-30). Canaparius' version of the *Passio*, as reconstructed by Jadwiga Karwasinska, will be referred to as the *Vita Prior*. Chapter numbers refer to the chapters in Karwasinska's edition, while page numbers refer to Cristian-Nicolae Gaşpar's translation.

¹¹ *Vita Quinque*, 7, 8, 10, 13; *Passio Adalberti*, 7, 12, 27, 34; Ian N. Wood, 'Shoes and a Fish dinner', pp. 256-258.

¹² *Vita Quinque*, 3, p. 217.

¹³ *Passio Adalberti*, 30-33.

¹⁴ *Passio Adalberti*, 31. cf. Juvenal, *Saturae*, ed. by Jacobus Willis (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1997), vi. 165.

¹⁵ Bruno, *Epistola*, p. 100.

¹⁶ *Vita Quinque*, 10; *Passio Adalberti*, 25, 26; Bruno, *Epistola*, pp. 98-100.

However, describing such dramatic encounters was rarely Bruno's primary goal, and these descriptions come entangled in a web of other concerns. Bruno's focus was on the boundaries and divisions within Christendom; between heaven and earth, the saved and the damned, clergy and laity, slave and free, men and women, the bishop and his flock. The aim in this chapter is to reflect the contours of Bruno's thought and, insofar as it is possible, avoid focusing on those issues prioritised by modern intuitions about otherness and identity. Thus Bruno's attitudes towards ethnic, political and religious others will be analysed as part of a wider agglomeration of ideas which framed, shaped, and often overshadowed these attitudes.

We must also recognise the diversity in Bruno's thought. Bruno's worldview was ordered around fixed points and certainties, and such certainty was at least as significant as the explicable schemes which it underpinned. When we approach Bruno's thought as a whole, it becomes increasingly difficult to assume the existence of a consistent and coherent worldview. Like Adam of Bremen, Bruno presents us with a worldview which is fragmented and contradictory, although his reasons for doing so were more personal than literary. A significant part of the emotional trauma which is evident in Bruno's works stemmed from his inability to resolve these contradictions. Yet much of the richness and rhetorical power of Bruno's writings grew out of these same contradictions, and the certainties which underpinned them.

6.ii. *Vita vel passio Benedicti et Iohannis sociorumque suorum.*

6.ii.a. Overview.

The *Vita vel passio Benedicti et Iohannis sociorumque suorum* is, above all else, an account of the martyrdom of the five brothers: John and Benedict, who had travelled from the hermitage at Pereum to join the Great Polish Hermitage; the Polish novices Matthew and Isaac; and their cook, Cristinus.¹⁷ It survives in a single manuscript, discovered by Otto Kade in 1845. The manuscript has been dated to the mid-twelfth century, and tentatively connected with Saxony, possibly Magdeburg.¹⁸ Its limited dissemination may be connected to the personal nature of the work, which may simply have never been intended for a large

¹⁷ Often known as the *Vita quinque fratrum eremitarum*, it will be referred to here as the *Vita Quinque*.

¹⁸ Marina Miladinov, *Margins of Solitude*, p. 95; Marina Miladinov, 'Preface to the Life', pp. 192, 193.

audience.¹⁹ It may also be associated with the brothers' shifting reputations. Initially interred at the Hermitage itself, their bodies were moved to Gniezno before being taken to Bohemia by Duke Brětislav I in 1039, and separated in 1131. These shifts in ecclesiastical and political affiliation affected understandings of the brothers, particularly Cristinus, but even while their bodies remained in Gniezno they were increasingly understood to be the companions of Adalbert of Prague.²⁰ Bruno's account would have had little resonance in this context, even if it was known.

Bruno is believed to have composed the *Vita Quinque* while staying at the Great Polish Hermitage. The level of detail about the Great Polish Hermitage strongly suggests that Bruno had visited there by the time of composition, and if he did not compose the work there, he certainly had it in mind when writing. However, the location of the Hermitage remains unknown, and the details of Bruno's own biography cannot be reconstructed in any detail.²¹ Reinhard Kade suggested that the work was composed during Bruno's second visit to the Hermitage in 1008 or 1009, while Walerian Meysztowicz posited 1005 or 1006, during Bruno's first visit.²² Neither visit is verifiable, however, and there is little reason to date the work any more precisely than to somewhere between 1004 and 1009.²³ Indeed, the search for a definitive date may in itself be misleading. The twenty-first chapter appears somewhat provisional, and the final chapters, which are dedicated to an annalistic list of the miracles which followed the brothers' deaths, diverge significantly in structure, tone and content from the rest of the work, and may therefore have been a later addition.²⁴ The *Vita Quinque* does visibly conclude and can be considered to be complete or at least near completion, yet we should be cautious about attempting to pin down its moment of composition too precisely.²⁵

Bruno's *Vita Quinque* describes the life, death and afterlife of two of Bruno's spiritual brothers, John and Benedict. Bruno traces their lives from their conversion to a life of Romualdine eremiticism in Italy, to their journey to the Great Polish Hermitage, which

¹⁹ Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 236.

²⁰ Marina Miladinov, *Margins of Solitude*, pp. 182, 183.

²¹ The most likely location is Miedzyrzecz/ Meseritz in western Poland. Kazimierz near Gniezno has also been suggested. Marina Miladinov, 'Preface to the Life', p. 185.

²² Marina Miladinov, *Margins of Solitude*, p. 95; Marina Miladinov, 'Preface to the Life', p. 192, 193; Walerian Meysztowicz, 'Szkice o świętym Brunie-Bonifacym', *Sacrum Poloniae Millennium*, 5 (1958), 445-501 (pp. 480-485); Reinhard Kade, 'Beschreibung eines Legendars', *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde*, 8 (Hanover: Hahn, 1883), pp. 365-367; Reinhard Wenskus, *Bruno von Querfurt*, p. 3.

²³ The brothers were killed at the end of 1003, so the work is unlikely to have been begun until 1004 and some sections cannot have been completed before 1004. cf. *Vita Quinque*, 8, 9, 10, 13, 17, 18.

²⁴ *Vita Quinque*, 14-32; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 233-236.

²⁵ *Vita Quinque*, 32.

they intended to use a base for missionary operations amongst the neighbouring Slavs; to their martyrdoms at the hands of Polish robbers, who killed them together with two of their Slavic brethren and the local cook, in hope of stealing the gold which the brethren did not, in fact, have.²⁶ The work concludes by describing some of the miracles associated with the brothers following their deaths.²⁷

The story is a tragic one, and one in which Bruno himself plays a key role. Benedict, the greatest of the five martyrs, had shared a cell with Bruno in their hermitage at Pereum, outside Ravenna, and it was only at Bruno's suggestion that Benedict joined the mission, despite his own misgivings.²⁸ Bruno's grief at the death of the one whom he describes as the 'other half of my soul' is tangible throughout the work, and this grief is accentuated by Bruno's conviction that he himself was responsible for much of Benedict's suffering.²⁹ Once Benedict and John had arrived in Poland, they were unable to begin their mission until Bruno secured papal permission for them to do so. But with the unexpected death of Otto III in January 1002, and subsequent succession crisis and conflict with Bolesław Chrobry, Bruno delayed for a long time, uncertain of how he would get to Poland in the middle of this upheaval, and unable to do so when he eventually tried.³⁰ Ultimately, Bruno was only able to reach the Great Hermitage after the brothers had been killed, and he torments himself about this throughout the work, reflecting on the doubts and indecision which caused him to delay, and the anxiety and despair which the brothers must have felt; troubled by his delay, and unable to fulfil the mission for which they had travelled so far.³¹

6.ii.b. The personal, confessional, and reflective context of the work.

The immediate context for Bruno's *Vita Quinque* was reflective, spiritual and intensely personal. Bruno was writing in a cell, reflecting on the lives and loss of his brothers. If he was alone, it was because he had found no replacement for his spiritual brother, Benedict, 'the other half of my soul.'³² Bruno reflects on his own weaknesses, blaming himself for the deaths of the five brothers.³³ He describes precisely where the

²⁶ *Vita Quinque*, 1, 6, 10, 13; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 233-236.

²⁷ *Vita Quinque*, 14-32.

²⁸ *Vita Quinque*, 3.

²⁹ *Vita Quinque*, 3 (p. 217), 4, 7, 9-12.

³⁰ *Vita Quinque*, 9, 10.

³¹ *Vita Quinque*, 10, 11, 12.

³² *Vita Quinque*, 3, p. 217.

³³ *Vita Quinque*, prologue, 3, 4, 7, 9-12.

brothers were killed, imagining their thoughts and words as they died, and how their bodies lay in death.³⁴ Thus he describes Benedict's death:

He slew ... with one big blow in the midst of the forehead, that precious pearl, blissful Benedict, as he hastened towards the others, so that a high stream of blood reddened the walls of the corner and, as can be still seen today, coloured the house all over in a gush, creating beautiful stains.³⁵

Bruno was writing in the place where the brothers had been killed, and which continued to be defined by them. Their bodies rested in the church, and Bruno anticipated further miracles and divine intercession.³⁶ This was an institutional landscape, but it was primarily a personal and spiritual one.

The preface to the *Vita Quinque* begins:

Help me, o God, so that I may have the power to relate great things though small in wit; let the word, the reason, and the feelings arise; let my mouth speak and tell the saintly deeds of the saints who, with their white hearts and good work, achieved the golden end of crimson martyrdom!³⁷

These opening lines provide a useful guide to Bruno's aims in the *Vita Quinque*. He introduces the vivid imagery and various senses through which he would describe the lives and the deaths of the saints. Significantly, the entire preface takes the form of a prayer. Bruno confesses his unworthiness and appeals for divine aid. He seeks help for the writing process, but his principal concern is that he might think and act correctly, and be granted salvation. Bruno frames the act of writing itself as a spiritual exercise, appealing to the prophetic Word for inspiration.³⁸ Medieval prefaces are notoriously laden with idealising rhetoric, but in Bruno's case the idealism appears justified by the subsequent work.³⁹

³⁴ *Vita Quinque*, 13.

³⁵ *Vita Quinque*, 13, p. 269.

³⁶ *Vita Quinque*, 13, 25, 29, 32.

³⁷ *Vita Quinque*, prologue, p. 197.

³⁸ *Vita Quinque*, prologue.

³⁹ Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 233.

6.ii.c. Mysticism and the Absolute Other.

'Fear and trembling seized me and made all my bones shake.'⁴⁰

In the thirty-second chapter of the *Vita Quinque* Bruno sets out what he describes as a 'brief rule' which John had received from Romuald.⁴¹ This appears towards the end of the work, where Bruno's concerns become more didactic, setting out the ideals of the eremitic life and reinforcing them with suitable miracle stories. Bruno writes:

He received this brief rule from Master Romuald, which he took great care to observe in his own life: 'sit in your cell like in Paradise; throw the entire world behind your back, out of your memory, and take heed of your thoughts as a good fisherman does of fish. The one way is in the Psalms: do not stray from it... do your best to sing Psalms in your spirit and understand them by your mind, now in this place, now in another; and if you should begin to wander off while you are reading, do not give up, but hurry to amend it by understanding; before all things place yourself in the presence of God, with fear and trembling, as one who stands before the face of the Emperor; destroy yourself utterly and sit there like a chick, content with God's mercy, since if its mother would not feed it, it would not know what to eat nor have anything to eat.'⁴²

Bruno imagines a Christian mysticism. More than any other author considered in this thesis, Bruno displays a sense of the Other as unknowable and beyond comprehension. A sense of the Otherness of God, a form of understanding and existence based on something other than reason was, to some extent, built into Christianity. From the systematic exploration of the absurdity of everything by Qoheleth, to the prophetic Word and Job's silence before a God he cannot answer, the Old Testament is replete with references to a God beyond human understanding who is to be approached with fear and trembling.⁴³ The virtues of the New Testament – faith, hope and love, and a covenant of grace, not law –

⁴⁰ Job 4.14 (NIV).

⁴¹ *Vita Quinque*, 32.

⁴² *Vita Quinque*, 32, pp. 310, 311.

⁴³ For instance, Exodus 12.21, 19.12-23, 24.15-18; Psalm 2.11, 65.8, 66.3, 119.120; Isaiah. 57.15, 66.1-2, 5; Jeremiah 5.22; Habakkuk 3.2; Job 4.14, 11.7-9, 38-41; Ecclesiastes 1.2, 1.14, 1.17, 2.11, 5.10, 12.8.

similarly reflected an understanding of relations with God and people characterised by something other than reason.⁴⁴

These supra-rational aspects of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, while essential to a dogma based on revelation, were not consistently conspicuous in Christian literature. In part this reflects the difficulties inherent in any attempt to describe what is felt to be indescribable, but it is also indicative of the theological and epistemological self-confidence of most early medieval authors. Few appear to have doubted their ability to reconcile dogma and the divine. The authority of the prophetic Word underpinned much of Rimbert's defence of Hamburg-Bremen, but Rimbert himself had little cause to explore the nature of this authority, and there are only glimpses of such a concern in the fragments of Anskar's visions which he preserves.⁴⁵ Similarly, although Adam of Bremen drew on the authority of the supra-rational aspects of Christian thought to support his scheme of things, he rarely engaged with them as alternative modes of thought. Only occasionally, when considering the mystery of God as revealed in nature, or the transcendental character of charity, does he reflect on the Otherness of God or people.⁴⁶

Bruno was far more concerned with reflecting on the supra-rational aspects of Christianity. In his more mystic moments he moves beyond dogma and imagines a relation with God in which knowledge and the self have no part. He focuses on the mystery of God, dismissing everything but the love and mercy of God as nothing.⁴⁷ He pursued the command to 'destroy yourself utterly and sit there like a chick, content with God's mercy.'⁴⁸

It is important to emphasise this mystic strand of Bruno's work, in which he attempted to approach the Other, as Other. Overlooking this aspect risks artificially limiting our subject-matter to an unjustifiably narrow understanding of otherness and identity. Otherness is most usefully approached as part of a dichotomy. Its most conspicuous half is the Other as subsumed into the self; the feminine, the colonised, the subaltern. But to limit our investigation to only this form of relation is to reduce the history of identity and otherness to one in which the sole dynamic is, 'each consciousness pursues the death of the other.'⁴⁹ There are sound philosophical grounds for doing so, but these may, nonetheless, be flawed. Bruno himself was deeply convinced of the possibility of a direct, mystic relation

⁴⁴ For instance, I Corinthians 2.1-5, 13.12; II Corinthians 5.7; Galatians 3.23, 3.9; Romans 1.17, 4.16-22; Hebrews 11.4, 12.18-21.

⁴⁵ Rimbert, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 25, 27, 29, 35 – especially the vision in chapter three. See Walther Lammers, pp. 551, 554.

⁴⁶ Adam, 4. xlii (40). See above.

⁴⁷ *Vita Quinque*, 11, 12, 13, 31.

⁴⁸ *Vita Quinque*, 22, pp. 310, 311.

⁴⁹ Georg W. F Hegel, pp. 113-114.

with the Other and, irrespective of our view of the reality or nature of such a relation – rational analysis is hardly well equipped to judge a non-rational phenomena – Bruno’s mysticism provides an important counterpoint to his more conventional approach to others.

There are other, more direct consequences of Bruno’s interest in mysticism. By embracing the rejection of the self and all earthly knowledge, Bruno was incorporating a built-in qualification to rest of the ideas presented in the *Vita Quinque*. The endorsement of this mode of relation, of being, challenges the validity of interactions based on more mundane forms of relation. It introduces an authoritative point of reference lying beyond the remit language and reason, raising questions about the apparent reliability and longevity of the alternative approaches imagined elsewhere in the *Vita Quinque*, from a standpoint which these ideas were ill-suited to oppose. Occasionally, Bruno is explicit about the consequences of prioritising such supra-rational relations; he writes of the irrelevance of earthly wars, of the emptiness and misery of everything, and warns that monks should never judge.⁵⁰ ‘There is but a single blessed thing, namely the holy fear of the Lord.’⁵¹

The influence of this form of relation should not be overstated. This was just one of the many different approaches to the Other imagined by Bruno throughout the *Vita Quinque*, albeit qualitatively different to these other relations. Even those occasions where Bruno explicitly rejects the world and worldly knowledge should not be assumed to reflect a direct rejection of conventional forms of relation. Dogma could be just as subversive as mysticism.⁵² Indeed, Bruno’s world-rejecting Christian identity produced more sustained criticisms of earthly knowledge than his mysticism, as will be discussed. In part, this reflects the difficulties inherent in discussions of mysticism. Describing a moment of uninhibited communion with the Other was not the same as being in it. It also reflects the interaction of Bruno’s wider ideas with the mystic moments he sought in his cell. Bruno’s desire for a relation with God which transcended earthly knowledge led him to criticise the latter, both implicitly and explicitly, but it also played an important role shaping some of these same worldly ideas. Dogma and mysticism were qualitatively different but could, at times, be conceived of as mutually affirming.⁵³ Yet this relationship was an uneasy one, and Bruno was not blind to the implications of basing a system of knowledge on something ostensibly beyond knowledge. It was a problem encountered most visibly in the *Passio Adalberti*, and will be discussed in greater detail below.

⁵⁰ *Vita Quinque*, 11, 12, 13, 31.

⁵¹ *Vita Quinque*, 8, pp. 256, 277.

⁵² *Vita Quinque*, 4, 7, 9, 11, 13, 32; *Passio Adalberti*, 11, 13, 18, 20, 32, 33.

⁵³ *Passio Adalberti*, 27, 34; *Vita Quinque*, 11, 26, 31.

6.ii.d. Asceticism and the three orders.

Bruno's ascetic identity was central to the way he imagined himself and others in the *Vita Quinque*. His sense of asceticism was founded in the hybrid model of monastic eremiticism associated with the Romualdine hermitage at Pereum, and later with the Great Polish Hermitage.⁵⁴ These institutions later became incorporated into the mythologies of the Camaldolese order, although this should not lead us to overstate the uniformity and stability of this tradition.⁵⁵ Bruno's idealised model of spiritual progression is particularly prominent. Throughout the *Vita Quinque* Bruno set out an understanding of spiritual development beginning with 'conversion' to the monastic life, progressing to eremiticism and ending, ultimately, in martyrdom.⁵⁶ Thus when he describes the foundation of the Great Polish Hermitage, he writes:

The glorious emperor planned to send brethren from the hermitage... to Slavonia, in order that they might construct a monastery on Christian territory, bordering on pagan lands... in this way, there would be three benefits for those who sought the way of the Lord: for those who had only recently come from the world, a desirable cenobium; for those who were already mature and thirsted for the living God, golden solitude; and for those desiring to be dissolved and to be with Christ, the evangelization of the pagans.⁵⁷

Similar statements can be found throughout the *Vita Quinque*, and Marina Miladinov has analysed this 'tripartite scheme' in great detail, presenting it as *the* point of reference for understanding Bruno's life and thought.⁵⁸ I am doubtful whether this scheme was quite as coherent or pervasive as Miladinov suggests, yet her analysis is exhaustive, and wholly justified in its focus on this aspect of Bruno's thought.

⁵⁴ *Vita Quinque*, 2; Peter Damian, *Vita Romualdi*, 27, 28, 30; Marina Miladinov, *Margins of Solitude*, pp. 94-114; Marina Miladinov, 'Preface to the Life', pp. 185-190; Phyllis G. Jestice, pp. 82-83; Bernard F. Hamilton, 'S. Pierre Damien et les mouvements monastiques de son temps', *Studi Gregoriani*, 10 (1975), 179-195; Peter-Damian Belisle, 'Overview of Camaldolese History and Spirituality', in *The Privilege of Love: Camaldolese Benedictine Spirituality*, ed. by Peter-Damian Belisle (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2002), pp. 3-28; Alexis P. Vlasto, p. 128; Gerd Althoff, *Otto III*, trans. by Phyllis G. Jestice (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), pp. 126-127; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 233-234.

⁵⁵ Marina Miladinov, 'Preface to the Life', p. 188.

⁵⁶ *Vita Quinque*, 2, 4, 7.

⁵⁷ *Vita Quinque*, 2, pp. 210, 211.

⁵⁸ Marina Miladinov, *Margins of Solitude*, pp. 72, 83-85.

This tripartite scheme represents one of Bruno's central models for understanding the relationship between the individual and the group. It followed the logic of Romualdine eremiticism, which in turn echoed the principles of the *Benedictine Rule* and the Desert Fathers.⁵⁹ In the first instance, it privileged the monastic life. The movement from the laity to monasticism was a 'conversion' comparable to baptism into Christianity, which was, itself, part of a lifelong process of conversion.⁶⁰ The monastery was a safe place, insulated against the troubles and temptations of the world.⁶¹ In the company of spiritually-minded fellows, one was able to grow. Thus Bruno idealises the mutual love and obedience amongst the five brothers, and Adalbert's time in the monastery of Saints Alessio and Boniface, which he describes in the *Passio Adalberti*.⁶²

However, the group was nonetheless treated as both safer than, and inferior to, the isolated individual. The individual could be enriched in good company or demeaned in bad, but the isolated individual struggled alone. The possibilities for both good and evil were greater for the individual removed from the social checks of the group.⁶³ Such intuitions underpinned eremiticism. For Bruno, the lonely self-denial of the hermit found its purest expression in physical martyrdom.⁶⁴ The elements in this 'theology of martyrdom' were not new in themselves, and Miladinov has traced the influences which intersected and interacted in Bruno's understanding of asceticism and martyrdom.⁶⁵ But the configuration of these ideas, and especially the intensity and style in which Bruno expresses them, was unusual.

6.ii.e. The primacy of the saints.

At the pinnacle of Bruno's tripartite scheme were the martyred saints. The veneration of the martyrs was ancient and ubiquitous, yet it was also varied and evolving, and Bruno's understanding of it should not be assumed to be representative of general trends.⁶⁶ Thus Henry II appears to have expressed alarm, bordering on outright derision, at

⁵⁹ Marina Miladinov, *Margins of Solitude*, pp. 72, 79-83, 99; Phyllis G. Jestice, pp. 76, 86, 155-159.

⁶⁰ *Vita Quinque*, 7, 9.

⁶¹ *Vita Quinque*, 9, 11, 13.

⁶² *Passio Adalberti*, 13, 14, 17.

⁶³ *Vita Quinque*, 2, 4, 7, 10, 32.

⁶⁴ *Vita Quinque*, 2, 4, 7, 10, 32.

⁶⁵ Marina Miladinov, *Margins of Solitude*, 72, 79-83, 99. cf. Phyllis G. Jestice, pp. 141-159.

⁶⁶ Marina Miladinov, *Margins of Solitude*, pp. 110-114; David A. Warner, *The Cult of Saint Maurice: Ritual Politics and Political Symbolism in Ottonian Germany* (Los Angeles: University of California, 1989); Robert Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things? Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), pp. 27-56.

Bruno's preoccupation with death, perhaps as a consequence of reading the *Vita Quinque*.⁶⁷ Nor should we assume that Bruno's ideas about the saints and martyrs were internally coherent or consistent with other aspects of his thought; for they were not.

A key point of conceptual dislocation was the status of martyrs relative to other groups within Christendom. When explicitly concerned with his 'tripartite scheme', Bruno affirmed that any of these states was sufficient for salvation.⁶⁸ But Bruno also emphasised that martyrdom was the most desirable and glorious of these states.⁶⁹ At times, this reverence for martyrdom manifested itself as a belief in the *unique* status of martyrdom. Bruno writes that life, even life as a hermit, is futile and shameful if removed from the opportunity for martyrdom.⁷⁰ Describing his ill-fated attempts to persuade Benedict to leave the hermitage at Pereum, he recalls his words, 'let us rather depart before we die without a cause in this swamp.'⁷¹ 'This swamp' was one of the most prestigious religious institutions during Otto III's reign, attracting royal wealth and favour, and the services of educated aristocrats, such as Bruno himself.⁷² Such sentiments, presenting martyrdom as unique, even in salvific terms, can be found frequently throughout the *Vita Quinque* and Bruno's other works.⁷³ It is in such moments that we must note the conceptual dislocation in his thought, the point at which we are forced to distinguish one idea from another, where a sense of the superiority of martyrdom blurred into a belief in its uniqueness.

Bruno's veneration of martyrdom was reflected in his tripartite scheme, but it was not restricted to it. His ideas about martyrdom were varied and unresolved, and at times took forms which undermined and altered the tripartite scheme he described. The scheme can appear as a collection of different, yet fundamentally secure, routes to salvation; or a roadmap towards salvation, of which only the final aspect, martyrdom, is secure.⁷⁴ Either reading is possible from Bruno's work, and the two approaches appear to have co-existed in Bruno's own mind.

Such conceptual variety stemmed, in part, from the ubiquity of the saints in Bruno's thought. The saints, and especially martyred saints, were central to how Bruno understood

⁶⁷ Bruno, *Epistola*, pp. 97-98.

⁶⁸ *Vita Quinque*, 4, pp. 232-233. Thus he wrote, 'the three supreme goods, of which one would suffice for salvation, namely the monastic habit, the hermitage, and martyrdom.'

⁶⁹ *Vita Quinque*, 2, 4, 7, 9, 10, 32.

⁷⁰ *Vita Quinque*, 2, 9; *Passio Adalberti*, 20, 29, 31-34.

⁷¹ *Vita Quinque*, 2, pp. 214, 215.

⁷² *Vita Quinque*, 2; Peter Damian, *Vita Romualdi*, 30; Marina Miladinov *Margins of Solitude*, pp. 97-101; Gerd Althoff, *Otto III*, pp. 126-127.

⁷³ *Vita Quinque*, 2, 9; *Passio Adalberti*, 20, 29, 31-34.

⁷⁴ *Vita Quinque*, 2, 4, 7, 9, 10, 32.

⁷⁴ *Vita Quinque*, 2, 4, 7, 9, 20, 29, 31-34.

the world, and it is difficult to imagine a meaningful reconstruction of Bruno's worldview which did not include them. Given this combination of conceptual variety and conviction, Bruno's attitude towards the saints can usefully be described as institutionalised. The immovable quality of the saints and martyrs in Bruno's thought might be illustrated through the sheer volume of references to such individuals and their actions in his writings, or by the prominence, authority and conviction of these references.⁷⁵ Bruno also explicitly discussed the nature of sainthood attained through martyrdom on numerous occasions, particularly in the *Passio Adalberti*, as will be discussed. But Bruno's institutionalised understanding of martyrs will be illustrated here through Bruno's curious use of Galatians 3.28.

In the third chapter of his letter to the Galatians Paul writes, 'There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'⁷⁶ Similar sentiments can be found throughout the New Testament.⁷⁷ Bruno echoes this verse in the thirteenth chapter of the *Vita Quinque*, reshaping it around his own aims and prejudices. He describes Cristinus, the cook, being buried separately from the brothers, until his sanctity was miraculously revealed and the clergy were prompted to rebury him alongside the others. He writes:

The revelation of his body was followed by such sudden torrent of rain that there was an unusually great flooding and the seculars that were working in the cloister fled from their work; and the monks who were worthy to touch him with their own hands placed him inside the church, next to his elders, so that he might not be separated from them in the tomb any more than during the lifetime, according to the words: For there is no distinction of the Jew and the Greek, slave or free: all are one in Christ.⁷⁸

It is dangerous to assume that we know what scripture meant to medieval readers. To a modern, western audience Galatians 3.28 hints at the erasure of social distinctions, and its interpretation has become a natural point of controversy in debates surrounding the role

⁷⁵ *Passio Adalberti*, esp. 7, 12, 19; *Vita Quinque*, esp. 11, 13-30; Bruno, *Epistola*, pp. 101-103.

⁷⁶ Galatians 3.28 (NIV).

⁷⁷ cf. John 17.11; Romans 3.22, 3.29; I Corinthians 7.19, 12.13; Galatians 5.6; Ephesians 2.14-15; Colossians 3.11.

⁷⁸ *Vita Quinque*, 13, pp. 280, 281.

of women in the church.⁷⁹ Many patristic and medieval commentators on Galatians 3.28 would have recognised the social implications of a literal reading of this verse, yet most were far more interested in exploring the spiritual implications of ‘being one in Jesus Christ’. This reflects the cultural and exegetical norms of the period, although it may also indicate misgivings about the social implications of a literal interpretation. Thus a number of commentators explicitly countered these implications, either by reaffirming the scriptural basis of social distinctions (Haimo of Auxerre), or by deferring their obliteration until the end of time (Augustine).⁸⁰

Bruno’s use of Galatians 3.28 was as much about reinforcing a sense of difference with the aura of biblical authority as it was about fostering a sense of unity. The verse serves to underline the common sanctity of Cristinus and the brothers, but it does so vis-à-vis the other groups described in the passage, and Bruno’s audience. This was a unity which reinforced difference, rather than transcending or obliterating it. Indeed, a sense of hierarchy permeates the whole passage. The clergy are superior to the laity, but all are inferior to the saints.⁸¹ Thus the stench of sinners is contrasted with the sweet smelling bodies of the saints.⁸² And while Bruno underlines the saints’ separateness, he also highlights the distinctions between them: Benedict precedes John; Matthew and Isaac are placed alongside them, but described as ‘novices’ and ‘disciples’; and Cristinus joins ‘his elders’ last of all. In death, they were ‘placed according to the right order.’⁸³

This use of Galatians 3.28 to emphasise spiritual divisions is unexpected. Most medieval commentators used the verse to emphasise Christian unity; through a common love of God, or the universal availability of baptism. Within the context of medieval exegesis Bruno’s maintenance of earthly divisions is less surprising, yet such an approach appears stranger within the context of Bruno’s own writings. Bruno regularly and explicitly rejected all (human) distinctions on the basis of his mysticism and the theology he

⁷⁹ Dale B. Martin, *Sex and the Single Savior: Gender and Sexuality in Biblical Interpretation* (Westminster: John Knox, 2006), pp. 71-90; Ben Witherington, ‘Rite and Rights for Women- Galatians 3.28’, *New Testament Studies*, 27 (1981), 593–604; Brigitte Kahl, ‘No Longer Male: Masculinity Struggles Behind Galatians 3.28?’, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 23, 79 (2001), 37-49.

⁸⁰ Haimo of Auxerre, *Commentarium in Epistolas Paulini*, PL 117, cols. 364-938 (v. 28); Haimo’s commentaries are listed in the *Patrologia Latina* (PL 116-118) as being written by Haimo of Halberstadt, but were shown to have been authored by the monk of Auxerre by Edward Riggenbach. Edward Riggenbach, *Die älteste lateinischen Kommentare zum Håbråerbrieff* (Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1907); Augustine, *Epistolae ad Galatas expositio*, PL 35, cols. 2105-2148 (col. 2125); John Riches, *Galatians Through the Centuries* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), pp. 188-213; Helene Scheck, *Reform and Resistance: Formations of Female Subjectivity in Early Medieval Ecclesiastical Culture* (Albany : SUNY Press, 2008), p. 95.

⁸¹ *Vita Quinque*, 13.

⁸² *Vita Quinque*, 13.

⁸³ *Vita Quinque*, 13, pp. 278, 279.

developed around this.⁸⁴ A literal reading of the verse would have complimented the subversive elements in Bruno's thought, and it is indicative of the breaches and blind-spots in Bruno's worldview that he declined to use it in such a way, instead drawing it into a passage which emphasised division.

6.ii.f. Divisions within Christendom.

The *Vita Quinque* is overwhelmingly concerned with divisions within Christendom. Bruno's remarks on mission are largely introspective, and the few pagans in the work are shadowy figures; 'unknown pagans' framed in terms of the brothers' spiritual aspirations, or rhetorical tropes used to express divisions within Christendom.⁸⁵ Foremost amongst these were the divisions between the saved and damned, and the martyrs and the rest; ideas imperfectly incorporated into Bruno's tripartite scheme. But many other boundaries are asserted and explored in the work. Bruno asserts the divisions between clergy and laity; monks, hermits and martyrs; the rich and poor; noble and common; male and female; and ethnic, linguistic and political groupings such as the Slavs, Bohemians and the Prussians.⁸⁶ There is a rich and evocative sense of place in the *Vita Quinque*. Bruno draws on the spiritual and aesthetic overtones of marshland, desert, wilderness and woodland.⁸⁷ He develops a strong sense of home and abroad, not least as a means of nurturing the sense of loss and exile experienced by the brothers, and we might also assume, Bruno himself.⁸⁸ Age was also a significant issue in the *Vita Quinque*, for Bruno was concerned to establish the spiritual maturity of John and Benedict, despite their youth.⁸⁹

When the *Vita Quinque* is approached as a whole, it becomes harder to ignore the momentary and fragmentary nature of Bruno's ideas. Taken as a whole, Bruno's thought was characterised by variety, fluidity, ambiguity and contradictions. It is only by restricting our focus to specific aspects of his thought that it becomes possible to ignore this. For instance, while Bruno affirmed and reinforced the distinction between clergy and laity, he also noted the paradox that such divisions could be transcended in martyrdom.⁹⁰ Monks and hermits were separated out from the rest of society, yet Bruno recognised distinctions

⁸⁴ *Vita Quinque*, 2, 9, 10, 11, 31, 32.

⁸⁵ *Vita Quinque*, 7, 9, 13, 32.

⁸⁶ *Vita Quinque*, 1, 4, 9, 11, 13, 26, 29.

⁸⁷ *Vita Quinque*, 2, 10, 13.

⁸⁸ *Vita Quinque*, 7, 10, 11, 13.

⁸⁹ *Vita Quinque*, 31, 32.

⁹⁰ *Vita Quinque*, 4, 13.

within these categories which complicated and undermined them.⁹¹ Rulers might be appointed by God, yet they were also called to abandon their rule for the eremitic life.⁹² Man was rational and beasts were not, yet animals might correct human folly.⁹³ We are dealing with a single worldview only insofar as it was unified in the person of the author; the *Vita Quinque* does not present a coherent scheme of thought.

Within the context of such conceptual variety and fragmentation, the institutionalised certainty surrounding labels such as ‘pagan’ or ‘martyr’ acted as reliable points of reference through which other, less certain, ideas could be negotiated. The issue is not so much one of conceptual clarity – Bruno’s ideas about the saints and pagans were far from clear – but of confidence. For instance, Bruno’s criticism of Otto III’s reign was framed, in part, by an appeal to a Christian/ pagan dichotomy. Bruno writes:

Rome was still the domicile of the Apostles and given by God. And still his native land, delightful Germany, was not dear to him, but he preferred the country of Romulus, which gorged with the deaths of those dear to him, and its adulterous charms. Indeed, he strove with vain effort to restore the dead beauty of the aging Rome, in the way of ancient and pagan kings.⁹⁴

Bruno juxtaposes Christian Rome with pagan Rome. It is an evocative image, and the general sentiment is clear; Otto had approached Rome in the incorrect manner. The sentiments to which he appeals were not uncommon; the idea of an apostolic, Christian Rome was ubiquitous, and a temporal understanding of paganism, which relegated paganism to the past, was also common.⁹⁵ However, the precise concepts were less reliable than the concomitant sense of certainty, and dichotomising structure of the thought. Bruno applies this certainty to his own interpretation of Otto’s reign, providing a clear structure and morality to a complex and ambiguous legacy. As Bruno appears to acknowledge, his was not an interpretation that Otto himself would have recognised.⁹⁶

But Bruno’s confidence was more consistent than the concept which it underpinned in this moment; for he was not always so disparaging about the pagan past. Later in the

⁹¹ *Vita Quinque*, 4, 9, 13.

⁹² *Vita Quinque*, 7, 9.

⁹³ *Vita Quinque*, 10, 22.

⁹⁴ *Vita Quinque*, 7, pp. 226, 227; Reinhard Wenskus, *Studien*, pp. 100-105, 121-125.

⁹⁵ *Vita Quinque*, 7. cf. *Passio Adalberti*, 16.

⁹⁶ *Vita Quinque*, 7, pp. 228, 229, ‘He read and did not understand, as the love of transitory things is wont to blind the minds of men.’

same passage Bruno supports his argument by referencing the Cumaean Sibyl, and throughout his works he references classical authors, occasionally acknowledging their pagan origins.⁹⁷ Bruno went out of his way to justify his use of the pagan Sibyl, and elsewhere he explicitly acknowledged the primacy of Christian literature. The structure of these thoughts varied. On the one hand the pagan past was made acceptable by stressing its compatibility with the present, while on the other it is located within a hierarchy of knowledge; and neither approach evoked the same dichotomising hostility appealed to in Bruno's condemnation of pagan Rome. What is striking is that Bruno was able to apply the pagan past to such rhetorical effect, *despite* this conceptual variety. He approached paganism with the same confidence with which he regarded the saints and martyrs, and this certainty both concealed and encouraged a variety of different ideas.

The strength of feeling and sense of certainty surrounding the boundaries of Christendom is evident in Bruno's description of the Bohemians. Bruno had already condemned the Bohemians at length in his *Passio Adalberti*, and used a short excursus in the *Vita Quinque* to reiterate the general outlines of his account.⁹⁸ Bruno chastises the Bohemians for being 'bad Christians' whose 'sacrilegious customs' and injustice drove their bishop, Adalbert of Prague, into monastic exile and, ultimately, martyrdom whilst working amongst the Prussians.⁹⁹ A sense of the boundaries of Christendom is implicit throughout; the Bohemians are condemned for their non-Christian behaviour, which forces Adalbert to substitute a Christian flock for a pagan one. But the effectiveness of these distinctions lies in the confidence with which they are asserted and accepted; they operate in spite of the concept they are being used to establish. The image is paradoxical; the Bohemians are Christian, yet their actions are not. The statement holds together because of Bruno's confidence in the permanence of the categories which he was using, and it is this confidence which allows him to formulate such a rhetorically powerful paradox.

The same institutionalised certainty surrounding the boundaries of Christendom – separate from any unified concept – is evident in Bruno's description of the brothers' killers. Bruno's account of the brothers' martyrdom is extremely complex, for he used the killers to explore an ambitious range of themes; they are presented as ruthless murderers, reliable witnesses, and subsequent converts.¹⁰⁰ In those moments where Bruno was eager to stigmatise the killers, he drew on a sense of the boundaries of Christendom to do so. They

⁹⁷ *Vita Quinque*, 7; *Passio Adalberti*, 5, 32.

⁹⁸ cf. *Vita Quinque*, 11; *Passio Adalberti*, 11, 15, 16, 23.

⁹⁹ *Vita Quinque*, 11, pp. 248, 249.

¹⁰⁰ *Vita Quinque*, 13.

were ‘perverse Christians’ who ‘neither feared nor hesitated to kill the righteous, which even the pagans shun to do because of their sense of right.’¹⁰¹ Like Bruno’s criticism of the Bohemians, the statement is paradoxical, made possible by a certainty which the concept itself belied.

6.ii.g. Mission as asceticism.

Although the *Vita Quinque* is focused on divisions within Christendom, Bruno’s narrative is structured around a mission, albeit one which was never fully begun, and Bruno does dedicate a small part of the *Vita Quinque* to reflections on possible encounters with pagans. Marina Miladinov has recently suggested that such moments should be understood as being wholly embedded in Bruno’s ascetic ideals, embodied in his tripartite scheme.¹⁰² This is reasonable, for mission and asceticism are closely intertwined in Bruno’s works. For instance, Bruno consistently pairs mission and martyrdom in the *Vita Quinque* and elsewhere, presenting both as opportunities for spiritual development.¹⁰³

Yet although Miladinov establishes the primacy of asceticism in Bruno’s thought, and analyses his ascetic ideals in scrupulous detail, she does not establish the ubiquity or dominance of these ideas. Such universality is left implicit, but provides the grounds for her critique of Ian Wood’s discussions of Bruno’s missionary ideals. Miladinov argues that:

For a ‘committed missionary’ whose ‘hagiography deals with strategies of mission’ as he was characterised by Wood, Bruno is far too concerned with the desirability of martyrdom.¹⁰⁴

Miladinov’s suggestion is that Bruno’s ideas about mission were wholly absorbed into his ascetic ideals, that a fixation on martyrdom precluded an interest in missionary strategy. This approach is problematic, for it glosses over the conceptual variety of Bruno’s works. Indeed Miladinov herself hints at the ‘versatile and contradictory’ ideas motivating missionaries, but ends by concluding that the primary influence on Bruno’s thought was the only influence.¹⁰⁵ This, it must be said, lies on the edge Miladinov’s study, which presents a

¹⁰¹ *Vita Quinque*, 13, pp. 264, 265.

¹⁰² Marina Miladinov, *Margins of Solitude*, pp. 70-77, 84-86.

¹⁰³ *Vita Quinque*, 2, 9, 10, 11, 32; *Passio Adalberti*, 24, 26.

¹⁰⁴ Marina Miladinov, *Margins of Solitude*, p. 84. cf. Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 214-220, 239-240; Ian N. Wood, ‘Shoes and a fish dinner’, pp. 250-254.

¹⁰⁵ Marina Miladinov, *Margins of Solitude*, p. 73.

justifiable and necessary reaction to historians who have focused on the lesser themes in Bruno's works, while understating the dominant issue in Bruno's thought, asceticism.¹⁰⁶ Nonetheless, the variety of Bruno's thought, including his ideas about missionary work, must be emphasised.

Mission is a relatively minor theme in the *Vita Quinque*, primarily because Bruno was describing a mission which never left Christendom. The brothers' intended mission provides the setting for their martyrdom and illustrates their virtuous intentions, but for the purposes of Bruno's hagiographical narrative, nothing more was needed. It is therefore striking that Bruno nonetheless spent part of the *Vita Quinque* reflecting on the nature of missionary work, by describing the brothers anticipating the planned mission.¹⁰⁷ Thus in the thirteenth chapter he writes:

'How much time,' they said, 'have we lost for nothing because of this! In vain have we sweated to learn the Slavonic language in order to render the entry to salvation more manifest to some unknown pagans; refraining from shaving, we have put ourselves in a pitiful state by letting our beards grow, though ready to shave our whole heads. Since change of dress does no harm as long as the good intention is there, we have decided to adopt clothes like theirs, as is the non-Christian custom, believing that the pagan people, thinking that the one who is not in variance with their customs is their friend, would grant us either the opportunity of preaching or proper martyrdom, and that it made no difference under what circumstances one is led to the good or directed towards salvation. But see, we have profited nothing, since we have not merited that the holy license granted by the Pope, on whose will all thoughts of such things depend, should come to us sinners.'¹⁰⁸

The passage is confessional; it was a personal reflection on the mindset of Bruno's closest companions, for whose suffering and death he blamed himself. It was also inspired by Bruno's ascetic ideals, and the brothers' forfeiture of their monastic appearance acts as a deeply symbolic and emotive means of signifying that the brothers were sacrificing the norms and comfort of the monastic life for their ascetic ideals.¹⁰⁹ The emphasis on the

¹⁰⁶ Marina Miladinov, *Margins of Solitude*, pp. 70-71.

¹⁰⁷ *Vita Quinque*, 9, 10, 13.

¹⁰⁸ *Vita Quinque*, 13, pp. 260, 261.

¹⁰⁹ Ian N. Wood, 'Shoes and a fish dinner', pp. 252-254; Robert Bartlett, 'Symbolic meanings of hair in the Middle Ages', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, n.s. 4 (1994) 43-60 (pp. 48, 60).

necessity of a papal mandate for mission must also be seen within the context of Bruno's wider narrative, for the brothers' delay made little sense without it.¹¹⁰

However, none of these factors undermines the significance of Bruno's decision to pursue these concerns through a consideration of the realities of mission. This was not something which he needed to do. Bruno was choosing to reflect on the psychological, practical and canonical aspects of missionary work. His personal interest in doing so is suggested by the reappearance of the same themes – the importance of language, appearance, and a papal mandate for missionary work – elsewhere in his writings.¹¹¹

Numerous concerns intersected in Bruno's remarks on missionary work and, as Miladinov has rightly emphasised, we must be careful not to isolate these descriptions from his wider thought. Yet it remains immensely difficult to account for Bruno's detailed and recurrent remarks on missionary work without reference to his own missionary interests and experiences. Darius Baronas has suggested that we see Bruno's interest in mission and martyrdom as a natural extension of his asceticism; that eremiticism naturally led into mission, which would in turn culminate in martyrdom.¹¹² This seems reasonable but, like Miladinov, he overestimates the coherence of Bruno's thought. Bruno was a committed missionary, aspiring martyr and convinced ascetic. These identities were interconnected and interacted with one another, but we should resist the temptation to smooth out the discrepancies between them. Each was different, and Bruno's attempts to organise his own identities are indicative of the fractures and dissonance in his thought.

6.iii. Bruno's *Epistola ad Heinricum Regem*.

6.iii.a. Overview of argument.

Bruno's *Epistola ad Heinricum Regem* provides us with his most sustained reflections on the relationship between Christian and pagan.¹¹³ Bruno describes his own mission

¹¹⁰ Darius Baronas, 'The Missionary Vocation', p. 51.

¹¹¹ Bruno, *Epistola*, pp. 98-100; *Vita Quinque*, 2, 9, 10, 11, 13; *Passio Adalberti*, 24-26, 29; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 214-220, 239-240; Ian N. Wood, 'Shoes and a fish dinner', pp. 250-254; Darius Baronas, 'St Bruno of Querfurt'.

¹¹² Darius Baronas, 'St Bruno of Querfurt', pp. 42-48.

¹¹³ Bruno of Querfurt, *Epistola ad Henricum regem*, ed. by Jadwiga Karwasinska, MPH n.s. IV.3 (Warsaw, Państwowe Wydawn. Naukowe, 1973), pp. 97-106. For recent discussions of Bruno's letter to Henry see: Wojciech Falkowski, 'The Letter of Bruno of Querfurt to King Henry II', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 43 (2009), 417-438; David A. Warner, 'Saints, Pagans, War and Rulership in Ottonian German', in *Plenitude of Power. The Doctrine and Exercise of Authority in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Robert C. Figueira (Aldershot: Ashgate,

amongst the Petchenegs, before condemning Henry's war on Duke Bolesław Chrobry and his alliance with the pagan Liutizi.¹¹⁴ Bruno's description of his mission to the Petchenegs is in many ways comparable to his account of Adalbert's confrontation with the Prussians in the *Passio Adalberti*, and will be analysed below. The focus here is on Bruno's utilization of the language of paganism in his efforts to persuade Henry to abandon his war with the Poles, and instead fight a war of conversion against the Liutizi

A sense of the fundamental division between Christian and pagan surfaces, at times, throughout all of Bruno's writings, and in Bruno's *Epistola ad Heinricum* we see Bruno applying this dichotomy to royal politics. Framed in terms of this Christian-pagan dichotomy the only appropriate action for Henry was to join with his fellow Christians in a fight to defeat and convert the pagan Liutizi. It is no coincidence that Bruno's most explicitly political account of Christian-pagan relations appears in a letter to a Christian king, in which Bruno's motivations were overtly political. It is important to note this context, not as a means of questioning Bruno's sincerity, but to recognise the framework within which these ideas operated. The stance adopted by Bruno in his letter should not be treated as wholly representative of Bruno's ideas, or those current in his society. In different circumstances Bruno could and did draw on different, and sometimes contradictory, ideas to those expressed in his letter.

The intention here is to draw out the complex realities and concepts obscured by Bruno's polarising rhetoric. Within this dichotomising structure everything is reduced to one of two things; it is either Christian or pagan, good or bad. The confidence with which this paradigm is presented, combined with the cumulative effect of sheer repetition, leaves little room for alternative understandings of events. Even now, Bruno's polemic retains something of its power; the concepts he appeals to are less familiar, but the polarising structure of the thought remains beguilingly effective. Yet Bruno's rhetoric was more complex than it appears, exploiting the conceptual blurring of political and religious faith, ideas of Christian kingship, and Saxon prejudice and self-interest. It also actively obscured the complex realities of the situation, both as a means of furthering Bruno's aims, and as a consequence of the internal logic of the rhetoric which Bruno used. The *Epistola ad*

2006), pp. 11-35; Przemysław Wiszewski, *Domus Boleslai: Values and Social Identity in Dynastic Traditions of Medieval Poland (c. 966-1138)* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 24-28; Andrzej Pleszczyński, *The Birth of a Stereotype: Polish Rulers and their Country in German Writings, c. 1000 A.D.* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 154-156; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 236-239.

¹¹⁴ Here referred to as the Liutizi, but the spelling varies widely both in the texts themselves and modern scholarship.

Heinricum was a masterpiece of medieval rhetoric not least due to Bruno's ability to distract from the shaky foundations of the argument he was making.

6.iii.b. Background.

Bruno's *Epistola ad Heinricum* provides an eloquent criticism of Henry's alliance with the pagan Liutizi in his war against the Polish Duke Bolesław Chrobry. The Polish Dukes (the Piasts) had maintained good relations with the Ottonians for a couple of generations, paying at least some tribute to the empire and supporting some of the Ottonians' wars, particularly against the Liutizi. The Polish dukes were also Christian; Duke Miesco had converted in 966, and left a large part of his kingdom to the papacy on his death, possibly as an attempt help secure his dynasty and kingdom.¹¹⁵ His successor Bolesław Chrobry similarly embraced the possibilities of Christianisation and, like Miesco, did so with at least one eye on political benefits of Christianity. Bolesław cooperated closely with Otto III, and was heavily involved in the Adalbert cult. He had ransomed Adalbert's body from the Prussians, enshrining it at Gniezno. This provided the setting for the Congress of Gniezno in 1000, where Otto and Bolesław affirmed their friendship, although it is uncertain precisely what this gesture was intended to signify. Bolesław gifted one of Adalbert's arms to Otto, and they oversaw the foundation of the Archbishopric of Gniezno, appointing Adalbert's brother Gaudentius-Radim as its first archbishop.¹¹⁶

This cooperation deteriorated after Otto's death in January 1002, although the specific reasons remain unclear. Bolesław's westwards expansion and his interference in the succession crisis following Otto's death were almost certainly key factors. Between 1003 and 1018 Bolesław and Otto's successor Henry II fought a number of wars against each

¹¹⁵ Thietmar, iv. 55, 56; Jerzy Strzelczyk, 'Bohemia and Poland: Two Examples of Successful Slavonic State Formation', *The New Cambridge Medieval History, III: c. 900-1024* ed. by Timothy Reuter (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), pp. 514-535 (pp. 523-526); Przemysław Wiszewski, pp. 4-11; Francis Dvorník, 315-318; Alexis P. Vlasto, pp. 113-119.

¹¹⁶ Thietmar, iv. 45, 46; Przemysław Urbanczyk and Stanisław Rosik, 'The Kingdom of Poland with an Appendix on Polabia and Pomerania between Paganism and Christianity', in *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy: Scandinavia, Central Europe and Rus' c. 900-1200*, ed. by Nora Berend (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 263-318 (pp. 281-291); Gerd Althoff, *Otto III*, pp. 169-176; Alexis P. Vlasto, pp. 125-128; *Polen und Deutschland vor 1000 Jahren. Die Berliner Tagung über den „Akt von Gnesen“*, ed. by Michael Borgolte and Benjamin Scheller (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2002); Johannes Fried, *Otto III. und Bolesław Chrobry, das Widmungsbild des Aachener Evangeliers, der "Akt von Gnesen" und das frühe polnische und ungarische Königtum* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2001), pp. 69-133.

other for control over the intervening territories, particularly Bohemia.¹¹⁷ Despite some initial successes, Henry II's war appears to have been unpopular, at least in some circles, and Bruno's letter is most the explicit testimony to this unpopularity.¹¹⁸

Bruno's letter is an appeal to Henry to return to the state of amiability which had existed between Otto and Boleslaw, in which the Poles and the empire had cooperated against the Liutizi. It is also, seemingly, an offer of peace. Bruno acknowledges that he writes as Boleslaw's *fidelis*, and suggests that Henry accept one of Boleslaw's sons as a hostage.¹¹⁹ Bruno's aims were overtly political and must be seen within the context of a wider political awareness, visible in the *Vita Quinque* and *Passio Adalberti* and discussed by Reinhard Wenskus and others.¹²⁰ It is tempting to speculate on the wider politicking surrounding the letter's creation, including Boleslaw Chrobry's role in its content and composition, but we must be cautious when doing so. The letter has not yet been dated precisely, and therefore our analysis rests on an awareness of the general tendencies in Boleslaw and Henry's relationship, rather than the nuances of a particular moment.

Bruno's politics were emphatically Christian, and the letter is as much a homily or sermon as a political treatise. Bruno begins by reflecting on his pious hopes for himself and the king, before moving on to describe his missionary work amongst the Petchenegs.¹²¹ This description sets up a Christian/ pagan dichotomy as the authoritative point of reference for the letter, as well as providing an example of the appropriate response to it. The King of the Rus sponsored Bruno's mission to the Petchenegs, and was rewarded by their (partial) acceptance of Christianity and (provisional) agreement to make peace with him.¹²² Bruno then applies this mode of thought to Henry's relations with Boleslaw and the Liutizi, appealing to the primacy of Christian ideals and the fundamental discord between Christian and pagan. To do so, he draws on the examples of Charlemagne and Constantine, biblical models and authority, and an intense level of rhetoric, concluding with an apparent justification of religious war and forcible conversion.¹²³

¹¹⁷ Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 227-231; Jerzy Strzelczyk, pp. 524-526; Herwig Wolfram, *Conrad II, 990-1039: Emperor of Three Kingdoms*, trans. by Denise A. Kaiser (University Park: Penn State Press, 2010), pp. 211-213; Gerd Althoff, *Otto III*, pp. 146-147.

¹¹⁸ Thietmar, vi. 33; Gerd Althoff, *Otto III*, pp. 146-147; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 229; Andrzej Pleszczyński, pp. 219-222; David A. Warner, 'Saints, Pagans, War', pp. 24-25.

¹¹⁹ Bruno, *Epistola*, pp. 99, 100.

¹²⁰ *Passio Adalberti*, 10, 12, 18; *Vita Quinque*, 7, 9; Reinhard Wenskus, *Studien*, pp. 91-201; Heinrich G. Voigt, *Brun von Querfurt*; Andrzej Pleszczyński, pp. 148-162.

¹²¹ Bruno, *Epistola*, pp. 97-100.

¹²² Bruno, *Epistola*, 100; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 236-238.

¹²³ Bruno, *Epistola*, 101-104; Andrzej Pleszczyński, pp. 154-157.

6.iii.c. Dating the letter.

Bruno's *Epistola ad Henricum* was written at some point between Henry's invasion of Poland in 1005, and Bruno's death in February/ March 1009.¹²⁴ It cannot be dated with any greater precision. Bruno refers to Henry's invasion being thwarted through the intervention of the five martyrs and Saint Adalbert, but he makes no mention of the peace which was agreed shortly after.¹²⁵ It may be possible to eliminate the period between 1005 and 1007 when Henry and Bolesław were nominally at peace, but the continued antagonism between the two should make us cautious about doing so. Bolesław created, used, and abandoned treaties quite freely throughout his career and, according to Thietmar, it was Bolesław's efforts to covertly undermine Henry which prompted the renewal of conflict in 1007.¹²⁶ Henry was no less cynical, and Thietmar claims that Bolesław believed Henry had attempted to have him murdered shortly after accepting his fidelity.¹²⁷ There may have been many occasions to send such a letter during this period.

Attempts to date the letter more precisely are problematic. It is often assumed to have been written in 1008 or 1009, based on Bruno's statement that he was currently travelling to work amongst the Prussians.¹²⁸ However, the details of Bruno's career are obscure. Bruno's final mission may have been to the Prussians, or he may have visited them earlier.¹²⁹ We do not know. A reference to an encounter with Henry's brother, Bruno of Augsburg, may suggest an earlier dating, for he is known to have been amongst the Hungarians in 1003 and 1004.¹³⁰ On the other hand, Bruno also mentions his missionary work amongst the Black Hungarians and Petchenegs, the success of the mission he dispatched to the Swedes, and the support his mission had received from Bolesław.¹³¹ All of these things took time. But neither point is conclusive, and the letter cannot be dated more precisely than to some point between mid-1005 and early-1009.

¹²⁴ cf. *Annales Quedlinburgenses*, an. 1009; Thietmar, vi. 94-95; Wibert; Darius Baronas, 'The year 1009'.

¹²⁵ cf. Bruno, *Epistola*, p. 103; Thietmar, vi. 27.

¹²⁶ Thietmar, vi. 33.

¹²⁷ Thietmar, v. 18.

¹²⁸ *Vita quinque fratrum eremitarum (seu) vita uel passio benedicti et Iohannis sociorumque suorum auctore Brunone Querfurtensi: Epistola Brunonis ad Henricum regem*, ed. by Jadwiga Karwasinska, MPH n.s. IV.3 (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawn. Naukowe, 1973), pp. 85-96.

¹²⁹ Darius Baronas, 'The year 1009'.

¹³⁰ cf. Bruno, *Epistola*, pp. 97-98; Thietmar, v. 32, v. 38, vi. 2, vi. 3.

¹³¹ Bruno, *Epistola*, pp. 98-100, 105-106.

6.iii.d. II Corinthians 6.14.

Bruno's letter is founded on the sense of a fundamental antagonism between Christian and pagan. This Christian-pagan dichotomy was integral to Christian identity and few authors appear to have been able to question it directly, at least within the clerical, literary class to which most authors belonged. Like Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii* and Adam's *Gesta*, Bruno's writings contain traces of alternative ways of imagining pagans, some of which undermined or contradicted this dichotomy.¹³² Yet there is no evidence that Bruno ever consciously rejected this notion, or was even able to do so. Judging by Bruno's decision to place this dichotomy at the centre of his appeal to Henry, he expected his audience to think similarly.

Bruno's letter is drenched in the language of this Christian-pagan paradigm. Henry and Bolesław, as well as the Swedes, Petchenegs, Rus, Liutizi and Bruno himself are all framed in these terms. It is no coincidence that much of Bruno's letter is concerned with mission. Bruno mentions the missions to the Swedes and Black Hungarians, describes his mission to the Petchenegs at length, and anticipates the conversion of the Liutizi and Prussians.¹³³ These references provide examples of correct Christian behaviour, but they also cultivate the Christian/ pagan dichotomy on which Bruno's argument rests.¹³⁴ The most direct appeal to this dichotomy appears midway through the letter:

Is it good to persecute a Christian people and hold a pagan people in friendship?
What concord hath Christ with Belial? What communion hath light with darkness?
In what way can the devil Zuarasiz and the duke of saints, your and our Maurice,
concur? ... Do you not think it a sin, O king, when a Christian head is sacrificed
under the banner of the demons – a thing which is horrible even to say?¹³⁵

Bruno frames Henry's alliance in uncompromising terms. He echoes the sixth chapter of II Corinthians, aware that Paul had provided an unambiguous answer to his

¹³² *Passio Adalberti*, 25, 26; *Vita Quinque*, 10, 13.

¹³³ Bruno, *Epistola*, pp. 98-100, 105-106.

¹³⁴ Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 236-238; Andrzej Pleszczynski, pp. 154-157.

¹³⁵ Bruno, *Epistola*, pp. 102,103; 'The Letter of Bruno of Querfurt to King Henry II: On His Alliance with the Pagans', trans. by William L. North, The MARS website, https://apps.carleton.edu/curricular/mars/assets/Bruno_of_Querfurt_Letter_to_Henry_II_for_MARS_website.pdf [accessed 25th August 2014], p. 5.

rhetorical questions; ‘do not be yoked together with unbelievers.’¹³⁶ Bruno extends Paul’s juxtaposition of opposites to encompass Henry’s alliance with the Liutizi, framing it in such a way that only one interpretation of events could appear as the correct, Christian response. In doing so, Bruno papers over innumerable complexities. Christian and pagan are presented as the sole categories of analysis, annulling all others.

Bruno must have been aware that a straightforward division of the Poles and Liutizi into Christian and pagan was problematic, at least on some levels. Bruno’s own works provides us with hints that the Christianisation of the Poles was far from complete, and this finds support elsewhere.¹³⁷ Nor were the Liutizi so unambiguously pagan. Despite the proclivity of Christian authors to describe the Great Slav Rising of 983 in terms of the wholesale destruction of Christianity, it seems that at least some Christians and elements of Christianisation remained after 983.¹³⁸ Describing the Liutizi as pagans was, at least in part, a reflection of the political enmity which followed the 983 rebellion.¹³⁹ Christianity was probably more of a *sine qua non* for the Polish elite, and ecclesiastical structures rather more haphazard amongst the Liutizi, but at least in terms of religious belief and practice, dividing the Poles and Liutizi into Christian and pagan was a clumsy summary, at best. Thietmar claimed that the second conflict between Bolesław and Henry began with the Liutizi rejecting Bolesław’s overtures for an alliance.¹⁴⁰ This incident, regardless of its accuracy, is almost certainly a better reflection of the realities of both the religious and political situation, than Bruno’s polarising rhetoric.

¹³⁶ ‘Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial[a]? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God.’ II Corinthians 6.14-16 (NIV).

¹³⁷ *Passio Adalberti*, 21, 24; Thietmar, viii. 2-3; Alexis P. Vlasto, 113-141. For a survey of the archaeological evidence, see Andrzej Buko, *The Archaeology of Early Medieval Poland: Discoveries, Hypotheses, Interpretations* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), esp. pp. xi-xii, 102-104, 108-110, 175-176, 208-210, 218-221, 304-305, 395-397, 418-422; Roman Michałowski, ‘Christianisation of Political Culture in Poland in the 10th and Early 11th Century’, in *Political Culture in Central Europe (10th-20th Century)* (Warsaw: Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences, 2005), pp. 31-40.

¹³⁸ Adam, 2. xiii (40)- 2. xlv(42), 2. xlvi(46), 3. xxiii (22), 3. li (50); Thietmar, iii. 17; *Ottoman Germany: the Chronicon of Thietmar of Merseburg*, trans. by David A. Warner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), p. 142 ‘And not only the heathen praised this sorrowful change, but also Christians!; Helmold, i. 16, i. 20; Roman Zaroff, ‘Perception of Christianity by the pagan Polabian Slavs’, pp. 82, 90-94; Alexis P. Vlasto, pp. 148, 149; Henrik Janson, ‘What made the Pagans Pagans?’, pp. 81-7; Christian Lübke, ‘The Polabian alternative: Paganism between Christian Kingdoms’, in *Europe around the year 1000*, ed. by Przemysław Urbanczyk (Warsaw: DiG, 2001), pp. 379-390; Christian Lübke, ‘Christianity and Paganism as Elements of Gentile Identities to the East of the Elbe and Saale Rivers’, in *Franks, Northmen, and Slavs: Identities and State Formation in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. by Ildar H. Garipzanov, Patrick Geary, and Przemysław Urbańczyk (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), pp. 189-204 (pp. 193-203).

¹³⁹ Henrik Janson, ‘What made the Pagans Pagans?’, pp. 81-87.

¹⁴⁰ Thietmar, vi. 33.

Furthermore, the correlation which Bruno develops between Paul's admonitions to the Corinthians and his own condemnation of the Liutizan alliance should not be treated as self-evident. Paul's own aims in this passage are unclear; his language is extremely vague, and his remarks in II Corinthians 6.14-18 appear so out of place that some commentators have, inevitably, suggested that the second half of the chapter may be an interpolation by a later editor.¹⁴¹ There is little obvious support for the kind of military, political conclusions which Bruno draws from the passage. Paul lived in a world where such a role for the Church was nigh unthinkable, and he explicitly states elsewhere that he expected the Corinthians to live alongside their pagan neighbours peacefully.¹⁴² Paul's words in this passage are ambiguous, and clearly defined concepts are less evident than the sharply dichotomizing structure of the sentiment. Within the thought-world of early medieval Europe, Bruno's conclusions were less unnatural, but his use of a familiar structure and vocabulary should not distract us from his particular aims.

A useful point of comparison is Alcuin's letter to 'Speratus'. In a well-known diatribe, Alcuin wrote:

It is proper to hear the reader, not the harpist; the sermons of the Fathers, not the songs of the heathens. What has Ingeld to do with Christ? The house is narrow, it cannot hold them both. The King of heaven will have no fellowship with so-called kings who are pagan and damned.¹⁴³

The structure of Alcuin's thought and the style of his rhetoric echoes Bruno's reworking of II Corinthians. Like Bruno, Alcuin used this dichotomy to frame his own approach as the only possible Christian response. Two points are relevant. Firstly, Alcuin's aims were quite different to Bruno's. The structure and underlying intuitions are the same, but the issues to which they are applied – correct monastic conduct, issues of orality and literacy – are not. Secondly, both Alcuin and Bruno adopted such a polarising approach precisely because other solutions were available. Both concealed and undermined conceptual variety by appealing to their audiences' certainty in the otherness of pagans.

¹⁴¹ Hans Dieter Betz, '2 Cor 6:14-7:1: An Anti-Pauline Fragment?', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 92 (1973), 88-108.

¹⁴² cf. II Corinthians 6.13, 7.2; I Corinthians 5.9-13.

¹⁴³ *Beowulf*, ed. and trans. by Roy Liuzza (Letchworth: Broadview Press, 1999), p. 158; Mary Garrison, 'Quid Hiniendus cum Christo?', in *Latin Learning and English Lore*, ed. by Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe and Andy Orchard (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2005), pp. 237-259.

6.iii.e. Bolesław as a *fidelis* amongst other *fideles*.

Bruno describes Henry's war on Bolesław as a 'persecution', and expresses his wish to 'convert him to you.'¹⁴⁴ Bolesław is presented as a potential faithful subject, a *fidelis*, the same term which was used to signify believers in the passage of II Corinthians cited by Bruno. Such resonance helped Bruno to integrate his particular aims in this moment into his wider scheme; reinforcing and being reinforced by Bruno's tenacious insistence on a world viewed through a single paradigm. It also reflected wider understandings of the term. '*Fidelis*' had both political and religious connotations, and these overlapped and interacted to varying degrees, depending on the situation. Bruno's use of the term '*fidelis*' exploits this ambivalence, offering to harmonise these various meanings in a manner which was both aesthetically and cognitively pleasing. The effect is reinforced by Bruno's decision to describe this process as a 'conversion'. The illusion of a single, unifying conceptual scheme is maintained, and the undeniably positive associations of faith and conversion become the face of a specific political agenda.

Bruno hoped that his letter would be heard and considered not only by Henry, but also by a wider public. Thus he wrote:

Let a king, who clings to what is just and good, view these things in his wisdom, and let the best of the bishops, counts, dukes see them when they give their counsel.¹⁴⁵

We do not know whether the letter ever received such an audience, making it difficult to assess the meaning and impact of its initial reception. However, this first audience may have been less significant than the broader public to which Bruno appealed; sometimes the king's following was simply 'there because it was there.'¹⁴⁶ Insofar as we can infer from our limited literary sources, a part of this audience is likely to have had reservations about Henry's war with the Poles, if only for his alliance with the Liutizi. Bruno's letter can be seen as exploiting, cultivating and reflecting such reservations.

By framing Bolesław as an unjustly persecuted *fideles*, Bruno presented the situation as one which had direct relevance to Henry's other *fideles*. The mundane realities of Ottonian lordship are often obscured by the high-minded rhetoric which justified them, yet

¹⁴⁴ Bruno, *Epistola*, pp. 101, 103, 105.

¹⁴⁵ Bruno, *Epistola*, p. 104; William L. North, p. 6.

¹⁴⁶ Karl J. Leyser, *Medieval Germany and its Neighbours 900-1250* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1982), p. 726.

a degree of fluidity and flexibility appears to have been built into the relationship between a lord and their *fideles*.¹⁴⁷ This relationship was changeable, and indeed the whole conflict between Henry and Bolesław can be seen as a violent re-negotiation of the limits and nature of Henry's lordship. Ottonian kings were supposed to chastise the wicked and war against pagans and bad Christians. Yet Bruno was claiming that Bolesław was neither. Indeed, he depicts Bolesław pursuing the very ideals which Henry was sworn to uphold.¹⁴⁸ A war against one's fellow *fideles* looked rather different to a war on an external enemy, especially when they claimed to be faithful.

Henry's other *fideles* also had less altruistic reasons to be concerned about Henry's conflict with Bolesław. Chastisement and mercy were both established courses which Henry might take, but either route had implications for his relationship with his other lords. One of the more direct implications for his relationship with his other *fideles* is suggested by Thietmar's claim that the Liutizi told Henry that, 'he could no longer rely on their loyal service if he continued to grant Bolesław his peace and favour.'¹⁴⁹ But there were wider, and subtler, implications as well. Henry's treatment of any one of his *fideles* impacted on his relations with the others. His war with Bolesław was one of the many factors in a web of calculations through which his *fideles* sought to understand and shape their relationship with the king. Bruno's letter acts to subtly remind Henry's *fideles*, and perhaps Henry himself, of the interconnectedness of all of his subjects. Nor should this be dismissed as mere polemic; Henry's harshness towards his *fideles* and his war with Bolesław did indeed contribute to the increased dissatisfaction and rebellion amongst the aristocracy during his reign.¹⁵⁰

Bruno's description of Bolesław as a loyal and Christian *fidelis* was also directed at Henry. Henry had received a thorough Christian education and, like his predecessors and

¹⁴⁷ Sean J. Gilsdorf, *The Favor of Friends: Intercession and Aristocratic Politics in Carolingian and Ottonian Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Karl Leyser, 'Ottonian Government', *The English Historical Review*, 96, 381 (1981), 721-753; Régine Le Jan, 'Continuity and Change in the tenth-century Nobility', in *Nobles and Nobility in Medieval Europe: Concepts, Origins, Transformations*, ed. by Anne Duggan (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), pp. 53-68; Levi Roach, 'Submission and Homage: Feudo-Vassalic Bonds and the Settlement of Disputes in Ottonian Germany', *History: the journal of the Historical Association*, 97 (2012), 355-379.

¹⁴⁸ Andrzej Pleszczyński, pp. 154-160; Karl Leyser, 'Ottonian Government', pp. 721-722; David A. Warner, 'Saints, Pagans, War', pp. 23, 26, 35.

¹⁴⁹ Thietmar, vi. 33; David A. Warner, *Ottonian Germany*, p. 260.

¹⁵⁰ Thietmar, v. 14, v. 18, v. 32-38, vi. 2, vi. 13, vii .63; Adam, ii. xlviii (46); Timothy Reuter, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages c. 800-1056* (London: Longman, 1991), pp. 199-208; Herwig Wolfram, pp. 33, 34; Gerd Althoff, 'Saxony and the Elbe Slavs in the tenth century', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History, III: c. 900-1024*, ed. by Timothy Reuter (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), pp. 267-292 (pp. 276, 277).

his rival Bolesław, framed his reign in emphatically Christian terms.¹⁵¹ Bruno was appealing to an image of Christian rule cultivated by Henry himself, and made a point of reminding Henry of the duties of a Christian king, labelling him ‘Catholic rector as well as the pious and active charioteer of the holy Church.’¹⁵²

But this approach did not guarantee success. There were alternative frameworks for understanding Henry’s war. Bruno himself warns against Henry understanding his actions in terms of ‘secular honour’, which could lead to quite different conclusions.¹⁵³ Vengeance, honour and paternal chastisement were all legitimate motives for an early medieval ruler.¹⁵⁴ Henry might also dispute Bruno’s characterisation of Bolesław’s actions. His actions following the death of Otto III in 1002 were not always that of a loyal *fdelis*.¹⁵⁵

Henry could similarly question Bolesław’s Christian credentials. The Ottonian kings presented themselves as duty-bound to fight pagans and bad Christians, but such ideological affectations could become self-fulfilling; the king’s enemies could be treated as pagans or bad Christians *because* they were the king’s enemies. Paganism was closely associated with enmity, and Henrik Janson has argued that it was political enmity rather than religious change which underlay the condemnation of the Liutizi as pagan following the uprising of 983.¹⁵⁶ Henry’s war on Bolesław could be seen as a Christian one, simply because Henry identified himself as a Christian king. This was how Thietmar presented the war, even though he recognised Bolesław’s Christianity and was deeply uncomfortable with the Liutizian alliance; Henry fought with the divine aid, Bolesław was ‘our persecutor’, and the Poles’ pagan past was suspiciously recent.¹⁵⁷ Bruno may have been acknowledging this problem when he wrote:

¹⁵¹ Andrzej Pleszczyński pp. 154–160; David A. Warner, ‘Saints, Pagans, War’, p. 29; John W. Bernhardt, ‘King Henry II of Germany Royal Self-Representation and Historical Memory, in *Medieval Concepts of the Past: Ritual, Memory, Historiography*, ed. by Gerd Althoff, Johannes Fried and Patrick J. Geary (Cambridge: CUP, 2006), pp. 39–70; Eliza Garrison, *Ottonian Imperial Art and Portraiture: The Artistic Patronage of Otto III and Henry II* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 113–165.

¹⁵² Bruno, *Epistola*, p. 98; William L. North, p. 2.

¹⁵³ Bruno, *Epistola*, p. 103.

¹⁵⁴ Sverre Bagge, *Kings, Politics, and the Right Order of the World in German Historiography* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 144–152. *Vita Quinque*, 7, pp. 229, 230 ‘For as it is generally fitting for such powerful men—or rather is believed to be fitting although it is not – he threatened and swore and vehemently maintained that he would not give up this dangerous course until he had seen the disgrace of the city and taken revenge on his enemies.’

¹⁵⁵ Thietmar, v. 9–10, 18, v. 30–33, 36–38, vi. 26–27, vi. 33–34, vi. 54–59, vi. 67, 69, vi. 90, 92, vii. 4, vii. 10, 12, 16–17–22, 50–51; Nora Berend, pp. 140–145; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 228–231.

¹⁵⁶ Henrik Janson, ‘What made the Pagans Pagans?’ pp. 81–7.

¹⁵⁷ Thietmar, iv. 28, 45, 55–56, 58, v. 37, vi. 2, 10, 11, 23–26, vii. 10, 60, vii. 72, viii. 2–3; Andrzej Pleszczyński, pp. 163–182; Sverre Bagge, pp. 127–136.

Would it not be better to have such a person as your faithful man, with whose aid and counsel you could receive tribute and make a sacred and most Christian people from a pagan one? O how I would like to have Lord Bolesław, about whom I am speaking, as a faithful subject, not an enemy.¹⁵⁸

Amongst Bruno's appeals for Henry to accept Bolesław as his *fidelis* is the suggestion that a pagan people might be made into a Christian one. From the wider context of the letter we might infer that this is a reference to the conversion of the Liutizi, which Bruno presents as a likely consequence of Henry's reconciliation with Bolesław. But the immediate context of this reference complicates such an analysis; Bruno was discussing Bolesław, and did not return to the subject of the Liutizi for some time. It may be that Bruno was referring to the Poles, and acknowledging the religious exclusion implicit in political enmity. The reference is ambiguous, but anything more explicit would surely have been anathema to his patron.

Bruno's insistence on Bolesław's Christianity and the Liutizi's paganism mirrored the self-representation and rhetoric of the royal court. Henry was a Christian king; if he was a good king, his enemies *had* to be pagans, or Christians who required chastisement. This conflation of political and religious enmity invited a self-contained and self-perpetuating logic; Henry's enemies were enemies because they were pagan, and pagan because they were enemies. This made Bruno's task significantly harder, for he could hardly deny Henry's claim to be a good Christian king.¹⁵⁹ But the tendency to conflate political and religious relations left him little room to acknowledge the disparity between Bolesław's religious and political affiliations. Nor could he easily argue for an equitable peace based on the current application of this logic at Henry's court; the logic was too self-contained, if Bolesław was an enemy of the Christian king, then this enmity must be justified. Instead, Bruno was forced to present an alternative vision of how Henry might fulfil his role as a good Christian king; the logic was the same, but the details were different. It is important to recognise that the logic of this rhetoric obscured the subtleties necessary for an easy transition from one application to another; it allowed no middle ground between Bruno's vision and Henry's. Hence Bruno barely acknowledges an understanding of Christian kingship which justified Henry's war on Bolesław, and which must surely have been current in Henry's court. Bruno

¹⁵⁸ Bruno, *Epistola*, p. 102; William L. North, p. 5.

¹⁵⁹ Bruno, *Epistola*, p. 102.

could not present his own view as merely preferable but instead, following the logic of the rhetoric, he presents his own understanding as the only possible application of it.

6.iii.f. Compel them to come in.

Bruno intermingles religious and political language and ideas throughout the letter. This convergence is most apparent in his suggestion that Henry convert the Liutizi by force. Bruno writes:

Although the Liutizi are pagans and worship idols, God did not put it into the heart of the king to conquer them in a glorious struggle for the sake of Christianity, that is, to compel them to come in, as the Gospel commands. Would it not be a great honour and the great salvation of the king to increase the church and to find the name of 'apostle' in the eyes of God, and to work so that the pagan might be baptized, and to offer peace to those Christians who help him to achieve this end.¹⁶⁰

Here and elsewhere, Bruno explicitly connects and conflates conquest and conversion. Bruno appeals to Henry to 'give peace to Christians in order to fight with pagans for the sake of Christianity.'¹⁶¹

As Hans-Dietrich Kahl, Reinhard Wenskus and Henrik Janson have recognised, the key issue is not that Bruno was promoting the use of violence as a means of securing converts.¹⁶² This idea was not new, nor was it thought of as new.¹⁶³ Bruno himself cites Constantine and Charlemagne as models for the kind of muscular Christian kingship he envisaged.¹⁶⁴ The greater problem is that Bruno's endorsement of forcible conversion does not sit comfortably alongside his approach to mission elsewhere. Even Bruno's description of missionary work within the letter itself seems to jar with this approach.¹⁶⁵ Bruno

¹⁶⁰ Bruno, *Epistola*, p. 105; William L. North, p. 6.

¹⁶¹ Bruno, *Epistola*, p. 105; William L. North, p. 7.

¹⁶² Henrik Janson, 'What made the Pagans Pagans?', p. 14; Hans-Dietrich Kahl, 'Compellere intrare', *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung*, 4 (1955), 161-193 (pp. 178-184); Reinhard Wenskus, p. 158.

¹⁶³ In terms of the rhetoric of Christian kingship, at least. I am not here concerned with the theological discussions of Christian violence which would permit, and eventually encourage, the use of force to convert the pagan. Bruno's letter is often drawn into debates about the origins of crusading ideology or the suppression of heretics. This is somewhat justifiable, but also risks missing the point. Bruno was thinking about Christian kingship, not canon law or missionary strategy. The modes of thought were different. We should not expect them to form a coherent whole.

¹⁶⁴ Bruno, *Epistola*, p. 104; Andrzej Pleszczyński pp. 154-160.

¹⁶⁵ Bruno, *Epistola*, pp. 98-100, 105-106.

consistently imagines missionary work in terms of small groups of missionaries attempting to convert pagans by persuasion, faith and guile.¹⁶⁶ The isolation and vulnerability of these missionaries is one of the most striking aspects of Bruno's accounts of missionary work. We are therefore presented with the problem of reconciling this modest and non-violent understanding of mission, with Bruno's appeal for Henry to fight the Liutizi for the sake of Christianity, with conversion as the desired outcome.

Henrik Janson's proposed solution is to frame the Liutizi's purported paganism in political terms; Christian authors described them as pagan because they had cut themselves off from the authority of the Christian empire and Church.¹⁶⁷ This distinguished them from other 'pagans' such as the Prussians or Petchenegs, who were yet to be incorporated into the political and ecclesiastical body of the Church. The Liutizi were political apostates, but because disobedience was freely associated with idolatry they were categorised as 'pagan'. Despite using this label, Bruno recognised that different measures were appropriate for apostates whose apostasy rested on their political and ecclesiastical independence from the empire.¹⁶⁸

There is much to be admired in Janson's analysis, and the aim of the remaining discussion of the *Epistola ad Heinricum* is to qualify and extend his solution, rather than reject it. Firstly, it seems prudent to ask why the Liutizi continued to be described as 'pagans' even after their alliance with Henry in 1003, even while the Poles' Christianity remained undisputed despite their political enmity, and the lack of widespread, developed Christianisation amongst them. Doing so foregrounds the Saxon origins and audience of allegations of Liutizian paganism. Secondly, it is important to evaluate what Bruno meant by the phrase 'compel them to come in.' Bruno's apparent support of violent conversion is not as sharply divided from the rest of his thought on mission as is often suggested. Nonetheless, it is preferable to approach Bruno's letter in terms of his ideas about Christian kingship, than his understanding of missionary strategy. Finally, it is important to reiterate the discrepancy between the confident simplicity of Bruno's rhetoric, and the complex realities which it concealed.

¹⁶⁶ Bruno, *Epistola*, pp. 98-100; *Passio Adalberti*, 24-26; *Vita Quinque*, 2, 11,13.

¹⁶⁷ Henrik Janson, 'What made the Pagans Pagans?', pp. 81-7.

¹⁶⁸ Henrik Janson, 'What made the Pagans Pagans?', pp. 81-7.

6.iii.g. Compel them to come in: the Liutizian alliance and the Saxons.

Bruno's straightforward division of the Poles and Liutizi into Christian and pagan belied a far more complex reality. In terms of religious practice, neither the Liutizi nor the Poles were unambiguously Christian or pagan, while in terms of political and ecclesiastical authority, the situation was similarly confused. According to Bruno's cousin Thietmar, in 1003 Henry:

Received representatives of the Redarii and the people known as the Liutizi and, calming these rebels with the sweetness of gifts and the joy of promises, turned them from enemies into friends.¹⁶⁹

Politically, at least, the Liutizi were now allies. It would not be difficult to conclude that they were therefore also Christian, yet our authors do not.

Part of the problem which scholars face is that the terms of this alliance remain obscure. Based on the continuing criticism of Liutizian paganism by authors like Bruno and Thietmar, we might conclude that a nominal return to Christianity did not constitute a prominent part of this alliance, which would mark a shift in emphasis from relations prior to 983 and the subsequent attempts to pacify the Liutizi. Bruno and Thietmar may have been objecting to the nature of the alliance Henry had formed with the Liutizi, rather than the alliance *per se*.¹⁷⁰

However, issues of religion and politics are so intermingled in these authors' writings that we cannot extract such a precise narrative from their universalizing rhetoric. The enduring image of the pagan Liutizi in the works of Adam of Bremen, Helmold of Bosau and others, combined with the limited and often problematic archaeological evidence, does suggest that there was a religious aspect to their criticism, founded in the realities of Liutizian society.¹⁷¹ Yet the realities of the Liutizi's religious beliefs and practices do not in themselves account for the strength or specificity of the rhetoric directed against them. The Poles were scarcely more Christian, and after 1003 the Liutizi were once again allies of the Christian empire.

Janson's suggestion that Bruno regarded the Liutizi as apostates rather than pagans seems reasonable, but it does not wholly account for the continued condemnation of

¹⁶⁹ Thietmar, v. 31; David A. Warner, *Ottonian Germany*, p. 226.

¹⁷⁰ Gerd Althoff, 'Saxony and the Elbe', pp. 278-279; David A. Warner, 'Saints, Pagans, War', p. 23.

¹⁷¹ See p. 160 fn. 148, above.

Liutizian paganism after 1003, nor why Bruno advocated conquest, rather than diplomacy, as a means of converting the Liutizi. Nor does it explain why the Poles did not, apparently, receive the same treatment; the war against Bolesław was framed as a Christian one, but there was little suggestion that Bolesław and his leading men were pagans.¹⁷²

Bolesław's interests were certainly a factor in Bruno's writings; war with the Liutizi was apparently preferable to war with Henry. Crucially, it was probably also preferable for many groups within the empire, particularly the Saxon nobility, to which Bruno and Thietmar belonged.¹⁷³ The ideological justifications for decades of conflict with the Liutizi should not be overlooked; ideology, including ethnic prejudice, glory and vengeance, mattered, and was not easily ignored or altered. The practicalities of enmity mattered as well. Imperial lordship and conflict with the Liutizi had been an essentially local, Saxon affair. Conflict with the Slavs was an established part of life for the Saxon elite; warring, establishing lordship, raiding, earning glory, claiming tribute and tithes, and avenging past defeats.¹⁷⁴ But Henry's friendship with the Liutizi forced an unsatisfactory end to this conflict. The Saxon elite were unable to continue pursuing lordship over the neighbouring Slavs by force, but without being compensated by more peaceful forms of lordship and tribute-taking, such as the tithe. It is significant that both Thietmar and Adam of Bremen blamed the greed of the Saxon lords in general, and their over-zealous tithing in particular, as causes of the rebellion of 983.¹⁷⁵

Old claims and old wars were left unfinished, and Henry's wars with Bolesław were a poor replacement for these. They were further away, involved fighting an erstwhile ally who was better placed to assist them against traditional enemies, provided fewer opportunities for lasting lordships and long-term tribute and, crucially, they were not going especially well.¹⁷⁶ For Bavarians such as Henry II, conflict with the Poles may have appeared inevitable as soon as Bolesław began interfering in neighbouring Bohemia. Perhaps Bolesław and the Poles could be freely described as pagans in Bavaria. But our main

¹⁷² Thietmar, iv. 28, 45, 55-56, 58, v. 37, vi. 2, 10, 11, 23-26, vii. 10, 60, vii. 72.

¹⁷³ With the crucial qualification that the Saxon nobility was not a homogenous group. Reactions to Henry's war with Bolesław varied, and the war can usefully be analysed in terms of the internal politics of the region and wider empire. The conflict reflected Henry's relationship with the different Saxon lords, favouring the Haldensleben and Wettin against the Billungs. Nonetheless, 'Saxon' is used here as a useful term to reflect broad, regional interests and the unifying element of the sources which continued to condemn the Liutizi as pagan. Andrzej Pleszczyński, pp. 219-222; Gerd Althoff, *Otto III*, pp. 147, Gerd Althoff, 'Saxony and the Elbe Slavs', p. 277.

¹⁷⁴ Gerd Althoff, 'Saxony and the Elbe Slavs', pp. 278-284.

¹⁷⁵ Adam, 2. xiii (40)- 2. xlv (42), 2. xlviii (46), 3. xxiii (22), 3. li (50); Thietmar, iii. 17; Helmold, i. 16.

¹⁷⁶ Thietmar, vi. 26-27, 67, 80; Herwig Wolfram, pp. 211-219 (esp. p. 212); Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 227-231; Gerd Althoff, *Otto III*, p. 147; Andrzej Pleszczyński, pp. 219-222; Jerzy Strzelczyk, pp. 525-526.

narrative sources are Saxon, and approached in terms of Saxon history, geography and politics the situation looked quite different. Henry's policies were an unwelcome inversion of the existing order of things. Saxon authors continued to express their distaste and regret at the losses of 983 for centuries, and Bruno must have been aware of such sentiments. His own Saxon origins might have been of little consequence had these sentiments not briefly aligned with the political aspirations of his patron. By proposing a return to the policies of Otto III's reign, Bruno set out a vision which would surely have been welcomed by many of Henry's Saxon lords.

6.iii.h. Compel them to come in: missionary theology or Christian kingship?

Bruno's choice of rhetoric obscures such complexities, reducing the issue to one of Christian/ pagan antagonism and Henry's God-given duty to 'compel them to come in, as the Gospel commands.'¹⁷⁷ This blending of spiritual, political and militaristic language and imagery was widespread, and drew heavily on biblical and monastic traditions.¹⁷⁸ Such interaction went both ways, and Bruno often described aspects of the spiritual life in political or militaristic terms, including mission.¹⁷⁹

Bruno was not the first person to use the phrase 'compel them to come in' to justify and express the use of political power to enforce Christian orthodoxy. The phrase is taken from the Luke's Gospel. Luke recalls a parable in which a great banquet had been prepared, only for the intended guests to make a series of (inexcusable) excuses when it was finally ready. The host responded by sending his servants out into the town to gather 'the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame'. When there was still room at the feast 'the master told his servant, "Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full." '¹⁸⁰ The passage is explicitly concerned with the resurrection, and while early readers are unlikely to have equated the host with an earthly ruler rather than God, it was not difficult for later authors to do so. The passage was central to Augustine's letter to Vincentius, in which he justified the involvement of earthly powers in enforcing

¹⁷⁷ Bruno, *Epistola*, p. 104; William L. North, p. 6. cf. Luke 14.23.

¹⁷⁸ Katherine Allen Smith, *War and the Making of Medieval Monastic Culture* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), pp. 71-111.

¹⁷⁹ *Passio Adalberti*, 13, 14, 19, 24, 28.

¹⁸⁰ Luke 14.15-23. cf. Matthew 22.1-14.

orthodoxy.¹⁸¹ Despairing of human nature, Augustine foresaw that many would idle in heresy unless compelled to change. Force could be justified by the eternal stakes:

You now see therefore, I suppose, that the thing to be considered when anyone is coerced, is not the mere fact of the coercion, but the nature of that to which he is coerced, whether it be good or bad.¹⁸²

Later authors would dramatically extend Augustine's interpretation of Luke fourteen to encompass crusades and inquisitions.¹⁸³

Unlike Augustine, Bruno did not dwell on the theological implications of Luke fourteen at length. His argument was based on the forceful assertion of powerful assumptions; the authority of scripture and the otherness of pagans. Bruno's aims were plainly stated; he desired Henry to end his war with Bolesław and renew his war on the Liutizi, confident that this would lead to their conversion.¹⁸⁴ But these ideas are not presented in any depth; we are dealing more with the rhetorical pursuit of very broad aims, than a coherent description of an alternative concept of mission. Bruno was far more concerned with imbuing his aims with a sense of righteousness, than exploring them in any detail. Bruno's suggestion that the Liutizi be 'compelled to come in' does indeed stand apart from many of his other comments on missionary work, as Janson and others have noted. However, we should be cautious about the conclusions we draw from this discrepancy.

Bruno's works do not allow us to reconstruct a coherent missionary ideology. In part, this is because despite Bruno's intense interest in the subject the nature of his writings meant that his remarks on missionary work were dispersed, fragmentary, and intermingled with other concerns. Yet while we can identify key themes in Bruno's missionary thought, the assumption that there is an underlying missionary ideology to be found may, in itself, be misleading. Bruno's remarks on mission hint at a variety of ideas and a degree of tension between these: between spiritual and material realities; the desire for martyrdom and conversion; the fundamental otherness of pagans and the empathy required for missionary work; and the political, social, ethnic, spiritual, cultural and ecclesiastical aspects of mission. The contrast which Janson and others identify reveals an important question, but the

¹⁸¹ Augustine, *Letter to Vincentius*, trans. by J.G. Cunningham, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Vol. 1*, ed. by Philip Schaff (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887), pp. 383-401; Augustine, *Epistolae*, PL 33, cols. 0321- 0357.

¹⁸² *Letter to Vincentius*, 16; J.G. Cunningham, p. 393.

¹⁸³ For instance, Jonathan Riley-Smith, 'Crusading as an Act of Love', *History*, 65 (1980), 177-92.

¹⁸⁴ Bruno, *Epistola*, p. 105.

dichotomising structure of this thought should not mislead us into assuming an unjustified coherence on either side of the equation.

Bruno's call for the conquest of a 'pagan' people was a little unusual in the context of his writings. Yet it seems preferable to approach this as an outlying point on spectrum of ideas about mission, rather than placing it in outright opposition to the more prominent themes in his works. It was not uncommon for Bruno to associate rulers with missionary activity; sending, receiving, and sponsoring missionaries.¹⁸⁵ In his letter Bruno describes the king of the Rus sponsoring his mission to the Petchenegs, and reaping the political dividends when the Petchenegs were converted.¹⁸⁶ Bruno says little about Bolesław's political ambitions for the missions of Adalbert and John and Benedict, but their failure gave him little opportunity to do so. However, Bruno is forthright about Bolesław's material support for these missions, and he hints at the political connotations of Adalbert's mission to the Prussians.¹⁸⁷ Bruno consistently recognised the political aspects of mission, and his recommendation that Henry 'compel them to come in' represents the bluntest expression of this.

Framed by Bruno's ideas of Christian kingship, his exhortation to 'compel them to come in' appears far less extraordinary. Bruno was writing to a king to suggest practical political steps; an alliance with the Poles with Bolesław's son as a hostage, and a renewal hostilities with the Liutizi. Accordingly, he draws on the language of Christian kingship:

Alas, our unfortunate age! After the holy emperor Constantine the Great, after Charles, that best exemplar of religion, there is now someone who persecutes the Christian, but almost no one who converts the pagan. For this reason, O king, if you give peace to Christians in order to fight with pagans for the sake of Christianity, you will be pleased on the last day when, with all else set aside, you shall stand in the sight of the Prince with lesser sorrow and greater joy because you shall be remembered as having done greater goods.¹⁸⁸

Bruno emphasises God's involvement in earthly affairs throughout his letter; legitimising the social order, and directing events in this world and the next. His account of his cooperation with the king of the Rus acted as an example of the behaviour of a good

¹⁸⁵ Bruno, *Epistola*, pp. 97-99; *Passio Adalberti*, 23, 24; *Vita Quinque*, 2, 11, 13.

¹⁸⁶ Bruno, *Epistola*, p. 99.

¹⁸⁷ *Passio Adalberti*, 23-25, 30; *Vita Quinque*, 2, 11, 13.

¹⁸⁸ Bruno, *Epistola*, p. 105; William L. North, p. 7.

Christian king and the concomitant rewards. He reinforces this by referencing Constantine and Charlemagne, juxtaposing their actions with his characterisation of Henry's rule. Specific aspects of these rulers' memories could be drawn upon to support Bruno's aims, such as Einhard's account of Charlemagne's Saxon war, or Rufinus-Jerome's depiction of Constantine's rivals as pagan persecutors.¹⁸⁹ The myth of both Charles and Constantine had been drawn into the image of Otto III's kingship, with his pilgrimage to Charlemagne's tomb, and his partnership with the second Pope Sylvester.¹⁹⁰ But the nuances of the comparison are less important than cumulative effect of Bruno's rhetoric, and the dichotomising structure of his thought. Charlemagne and Constantine provided the two main archetypes of good, Christian rule, to the point where their memories could be confused or conflated.¹⁹¹ Bruno incorporates the aura of these rulers into his binary scheme, reinforcing the impression that the only course for a Christian king was that which he recommended.

Glimpses of Bruno's understanding of Christian kingship can be seen in all of his works.¹⁹² Most strikingly, the tenth chapter of his *Passio Adalberti* bears a close resemblance to the section of Bruno's letter cited above, and it is likely that it provided some of the inspiration for Bruno's *Epistola ad Heinricum*. Reflecting on the tragedies of Otto II's reign, Bruno wrote:

They love your honour, O Christ, but not your gain. After the sainted and imperial Constantine, after the best Charles, exemplar of religion, few have undertaken to convert the pagans to the Christian name in the presence of God and men... alas! It is for our sins that the Christian is persecuted and almost no lord compels the pagans to come into the Church.¹⁹³

Bruno focuses on the same themes; spiritual and political success are connected, and Charlemagne and Constantine are held up as examples of good and successful Christian kings. Significantly, both here and in the surrounding passage, Bruno assumes a close

¹⁸⁹ Einhard, 7, 8; Samuel N. C. Lieu, 'Constantine in Legendary Literature', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, ed. by Noel Lenski (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), pp. 298-322.

¹⁹⁰ Thietmar, ii. 1, 45, iv. 47; Anne A. Latowsky, *Emperor of the World. Charlemagne and the Construction of Imperial Authority, 800-1229* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), pp. 59-98; Gábor Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses: Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe* (Cambridge: CUP, 2001), pp. 17-20, 56-58, 82-83, 111-112, 117-119, 171-172; Gerd Althoff, *Otto III*, p. 81-85.

¹⁹¹ Linda Seidel, 'Constantine 'and' Charlemagne', *Gesta*, 15 (1976), 237-239.

¹⁹² *Passio Adalberti*, 9, 10; *Passio Adalberti Longior*, 12, 18; *Vita Quinque*, 7.

¹⁹³ *Passio Adalberti Longior*, 10.

connection between converting and fighting the pagan.¹⁹⁴ Both were attributes of good Christian kings, and both were dependent on God's favour for success.

Bruno's first use of the phrase '*intrare compellat*' thus came in the context of Bruno's reflections on Otto II's reign, where he was explicitly considering what made or unmade a Christian king.¹⁹⁵ He did so with at least one eye on the current ruler, Henry II, whose own rule was consciously framed in Christian terms.¹⁹⁶ When he wrote directly to Henry, he appealed to the same cluster of ideas surrounding Christian kingship.

These notions overlapped and interacted with Bruno's ideas about mission, and Bruno certainly saw political power and mission as closely connected. In his letter to Henry his ideas about mission and kingship are intermingled, and Bruno gives no indication that he saw them as being in any way incompatible or contradictory. However, as Janson and others have observed, Bruno's suggestion that Henry use his political power to convert the Liutizi conflicted with his approach to missionary work elsewhere. In part, this reflects the peculiar position of the Liutizi, although this is likely to have as much to do with the political interests of Bolesław and the Saxons, as their status as pagans or apostates. But it also reflects the varied conceptual underpinnings of Bruno's rhetoric. There are moments in all of his works when Bruno was extremely sensitive to the realities of mission, but there are other moments, in the letter and elsewhere, when he viewed mission through the tropes and intuitions of Christian kingship. These approaches must be distinguished, even while we recognise their interconnectedness. Within Bruno's letter, both are largely integrated into the same dichotomising structure, using much of the same vocabulary, and drawing on similar legitimising points of reference. Bruno encases his arguments within a worldview which is presented as authoritative and simple; good and bad are juxtaposed, and Henry is presented with only one possible course of action. But underlying such polemical reductionism was a complex and contradictory amalgamation of ideas and realities.

6.iv. The *Passio Adalberti*.

Bruno's *Passio Sancti Adalberti Martiris Christi* was a one a number of works venerating Saint Adalbert of Prague which appeared shortly after his death on 23rd April 997. Adalbert's cult acquired widespread fame remarkably quickly, not least due to the

¹⁹⁴ *Passio Adalberti Longior*, 10.

¹⁹⁵ *Passio Adalberti Longior*, 10.

¹⁹⁶ *Passio Adalberti Longior*, 10.

enthusiastic support of Otto III, Sylvester II and Bolesław Chrobry, who had ransomed Adalbert's body from his Prussian killers.¹⁹⁷ The earliest account of Adalbert's life, now known as the *Vita Prior*, was produced in 999, probably by John Canaparius at the monastery of Saints Alessio and Boniface in Rome. It is now lost. Canaparius' text was rapidly re-written and disseminated, and Bruno had access to the 'B', or 'Second Aventine/Roman' version of the work when writing his own *Passio Adalberti*.¹⁹⁸ The recent attempts by Johannes Fried and Jürgen Hoffman to reproduce Canaparius' original text are deeply flawed, ignoring Jadwiga Karwasińska's comprehensive survey of the manuscript tradition as well as many of the manuscripts themselves. Karwasińska's edition is to be preferred.¹⁹⁹

Bruno produced two versions of his *Passio Adalberti*. He is believed to have composed the first version – the *Longior* – while in Rome in 1004, producing a shorter, revised version of this – the *Brevior* – while in Poland in 1008.²⁰⁰ These dates are plausible, but must be treated as provisional. Our sources simply do not allow us a clear picture of Bruno's actions during this period, and none of his works can be situated with any certainty. Both versions survive in manuscripts from the twelfth century.²⁰¹ The differences between the two versions of the *Passio* are generally very minor, and mostly concern issues of word order and grammar. Bruno appears to have been aiming to both condense and clarify his account in the *Brevior*, although these aims did not always complement one another. Bruno retained the same chapter structure in both versions, although he did remove or rewrite a small number of chapters in the later version. References to the *Passio Adalberti* will indicate the *Longior* version, although the *Brevior* can be assumed to mirror this closely, unless otherwise stated.

¹⁹⁷ *Passio Adalberti*, 34; *Vita Quinque*, 2; Cristian-Nicolae Gaşpar, 'Preface to the *Life of the Adalbert*', in *Saints of the Christianization Age of Central Europe (Tenth-Eleventh Centuries) Vitae sanctorum aetatis conversionis Europae Centralis (Saec. X-XI)*, ed. Gábor Klaniczay (Budapest: CEU, 2012), pp. 79-94 (pp. 79-83); Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 211-212, 215-21; Nora Berend and others, pp. 364-368; Alexis P. Vlasto, pp. 103-105.

¹⁹⁸ Cristian-Nicolae Gaşpar, 'Preface', pp. 79-94 (esp. pp.8 5-85); *S. Adalberti Pragensis episcopi et martyris vita altera*, ed. by Jadwiga Karwasińska, MPH s.n 4/2 (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawn. Naukowe, 1969), pp. xxxii-xxxvi; Jadwiga Karwasińska, *Święty Wojciech: wybór pism*, ed. by Teresa Dunin-Wąsowicz (Warsaw: TNW, 1996); Marie Bláhová, 'The Function of the Saints in Early Bohemian Historical Writing', in *The Making of Christian Myths in the Periphery of Latin Christendom (c. 1000-1300)*, ed. by Lars Boje Mortensen (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2006), pp. 83-120; Lisa Wolverton, *Hastening Toward Prague: Power and Society in the Medieval Czech Lands* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), pp. 147-85.

¹⁹⁹ John Canaparius, *Passio Sancti Adalberti Martiris Christi*, ed. by Jadwiga Karwasińska, MPH n.s. 4.1. (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawn Naukowe, 1962); Johannes Fried, 'Gnesen – Aachen – Rom. Otto III', esp. pp. 245-54; Jürgen Hoffmann, *Vita Adalberti: früheste Textüberlieferungen der Lebensgeschichte Adalberts von Prag* (Essen: Klartext, 2005); Gerard Labuda, 'W sprawie autorstwa i miejsca napisania "Żywotu pierwszego" Świętego Wojciecha', *Studia Źródłoznawcze*, 42 (2004), 115-130; Cristian-Nicolae Gaşpar, 'Preface' pp. 88-90.

²⁰⁰ Jadwiga Karwasińska, *Vita Altera*, pp. xxxii-xxxvi; Cristian-Nicolae Gaşpar, 'Preface' pp. 88-90.

²⁰¹ Jadwiga Karwasińska, *Vita Altera*, pp. xxxii-xxxvi.

Bruno's *Passio Adalberti* largely echoes Canaparius' account of Adalbert's life. Bruno describes Adalbert's noble origins in Bohemia, his education, and his election as bishop of Prague.²⁰² Much of the remaining work is dedicated to justifying Adalbert's repeated attempts to abandon his episcopal duties to become a monk in the monastery of Saints Alessio and Boniface in Rome.²⁰³ Like Canaparius, Bruno justified this in terms of the Bohemians' untameable barbarity, while hinting at the aristocratic rivalries which made Adalbert's position in Prague increasingly untenable.²⁰⁴ Bruno describes Adalbert's joy when he was definitively rejected by the Bohemians, which freed him to pursue missionary work amongst the Prussians.²⁰⁵ But Adalbert's mission was short-lived, and he was martyred shortly after arriving in Prussia.²⁰⁶ Bruno's account of this mission is remarkable for its sensitivity to the psychological realities of mission, but it cannot be assumed to be accurate. Bruno appears to have actively omitted some of the details included in earlier versions of the *Passio*, and this entire tradition is brought into question by the fragments of an alternative tradition associated with Adalbert's brother, Gaudentius-Radim.²⁰⁷

6.iv.a. Overview.

Bruno's *Passio Adalberti* has far more to say about vilified and excluded peoples than either his *Vita Quinque* or his letter to Henry. Bruno's *Vita Quinque* has relatively little to say about groups outside Christendom, partly because the brothers were martyred before the mission began, but also because the *Vita Quinque* is primarily a contemplative and confessional work. While Bruno's *Epistola ad Heinricum* is more directly concerned with mission to the pagan, it is also much shorter. It is the *Passio Adalberti* which provides the greatest amount of material through which we can develop an understanding of the key categories of otherness in Bruno's thought. Bruno actively considers the defining characteristics of the Prussians and Bohemians, and his attitudes towards marginalised

²⁰² *Passio Adalberti*, 1, 3-5, 8.

²⁰³ *Passio Adalberti*, 9, 11, 15, 17. On this monastery, see Bernard F. Hamilton, 'The Monastery of S. Alessio and the Religious and Intellectual Renaissance of tenth-century Rome', *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, 2 (1965), 265-310.

²⁰⁴ *Passio Adalberti*, 11, 15-17, 23. cf. *Vita Prior*, 12, 13, 18-20. On the rivalry between the Slavniks and Přemyslids, see: *Passio Adalberti*, 21-23; Petr Charvát, *The Emergence of the Bohemian State* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 177-184; Alexis P. Vlasto, pp. 101-106; Lisa Wolverton, *Hastening Toward Prague: Power and Society in the Medieval Czech Lands* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), pp. 191, 304.

²⁰⁵ *Passio Adalberti*, 23.

²⁰⁶ *Passio Adalberti*, 26-33; *Vita Prior*, 30.

²⁰⁷ Ian Wood, 'The Pagans and the Other', pp. 15, 16; Miłosz Sosnowski: *Anonimowa Passio s. Adalberti martiris*, pp. 5-74.

groups such as women and slaves are drawn into these descriptions. Accordingly, much of the remainder of this chapter will be concerned with his depiction of these groups.

However, the most inextricably alienated category in the *Passio Adalberti* was the world and worldly things, which included Bruno himself. Bruno had many different Christian identities which had, at most, a family resemblance to one another. The most prominent of these in the *Passio Adalberti* is what has been described here as Bruno's 'world-rejecting Christian identity'. This can be usefully approached as a distinct mode of thought in which Bruno adopted an eschatological view of the world, dividing the universe into the celestial and the diabolical. Within this model, the earth and everything in it appeared at best ephemeral, temporary and inadequate, and at worst, damned. The world is thus the most prominent and intractable other in the text, shaping and overshadowing Bruno's presentation of other marginalised groups.

6.iv.b. Bruno's world-rejecting Christian identity.

6.iv.b.i. Bruno's position within his eschatological worldview.

The world-rejecting Christian identity which we find in the *Passio Adalberti* was oriented around a tension between heaven and earth, the mundane and the celestial. An earth filled with sin, suffering and uncertainty is contrasted with a heaven in which these things were wholly absent. Bruno contrasts the bitterness of earthly life with the sweetness of heaven; the wounds and suffering of earth with heaven's healing; the sin of carnal pleasure with celestial joy; the distraction of juvenile jokes and mockery with the sport and laughter of God.²⁰⁸ He reviles earthly things; 'us', 'we', 'man', 'the external', 'the flesh', 'our times', 'our wretched age', 'the slippery age', 'our unhappy times', 'human uncertainties', 'human nature', 'the boundless errors of our times', 'the squalor of our misery' are matters for condemnation in the *Passio Adalberti*.²⁰⁹ He praises and aspires to heavenly things; 'the internal', 'the spiritual', the 'sweet and incomparable good' of heaven.²¹⁰ Above all, when writing in this mode, Bruno's ideal is the desire of God; nothing else mattered. If we must select one theme as preeminent in such a complex and multifaceted work, it is this world-rejecting Christian identity. No other theme or identity matches it in volume or intensity,

²⁰⁸ *Passio Adalberti*, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 33.

²⁰⁹ *Passio Adalberti*, 10, 11, 13, 16, 17, 19, 21, 32, 33.

²¹⁰ *Passio Adalberti*, 11, 32, 33.

and the ubiquity of such language in the early Middle Ages should not lead us to overlook its central position in Bruno's thought.

Underlying Bruno's preoccupation with this world-rejecting Christian identity is a familiar theme; Bruno's fixation on death and martyrdom. Describing Adalbert's death in Prussia allowed Bruno to contemplate holy martyrdom. Bruno similarly established John and Benedict as models of sanctity and, in doing so, allowed himself the opportunity to reflect on the nature of martyrdom.²¹¹ But Bruno had known John and Benedict intimately, and he himself played an important role in the events he described in the *Vita Quinque*. Hence when he tried to relate himself to his subject-matter in the *Vita Quinque*, he was at least as likely to see their sufferings in terms of his own failings, as he was to identify himself with the brothers as martyrs. But Adalbert was a more distant figure, and consequently there was far less preventing Bruno from projecting his own thoughts and character onto his representation of Adalbert. The result is a curious situation where those who were closest to Bruno are idealised, while his hero is humanised through his flaws and suffering. In part this reflects Bruno's divergent aims and audiences – Adalbert's cult was well established, whereas the brothers' was not – but I would argue that, at least in part, this discrepancy was a result of Bruno's greater freedom to identify himself with the character of Adalbert. 'Displaced autobiography' was easier when the subject was more distant.²¹² Through Adalbert, Bruno was able to think through the nature of sanctity, and this leads him to the subject of martyrdom.

In the *Vita Prior*, Adalbert's martyrdom complements his sanctity, but is not fundamental to it; Adalbert is a saint who is martyred.²¹³ Bruno comes very close to inverting this order of things in his *Passio Adalberti*. He emphasises Adalbert's God-given virtues, but also his failures.²¹⁴ Even after Adalbert becomes a bishop and overcomes the sins of a wayward youth, Bruno continues to remind his audience of Adalbert's past failures.²¹⁵ Upon encountering a childhood friend, Adalbert confesses his great shame at his past behaviour; 'it destroys my soul with this deep and bitter wound.'²¹⁶ Prior to describing Adalbert's impending martyrdom Bruno introduces an anecdote recounting Adalbert's terror at the sound of a large wave, using this as an opportunity to emphasise Adalbert's

²¹¹ *Vita Quinque*, 13, 32.

²¹² Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 215-220, 236, 239, 264-265; Ian N. Wood, 'Shoes and a fish dinner', pp. 249-254.

²¹³ *Vita Prior*, 29, 30.

²¹⁴ *Passio Adalberti*, 1, 3, 6, 11, 17.

²¹⁵ *Passio Adalberti*, 11, 17.

²¹⁶ *Passio Adalberti*, 17.

dependence on God; ‘Lord, my virtue, knowing my weakness I know you to be my virtue.’²¹⁷ Bruno’s description of Adalbert’s martyrdom follows this theme, focusing far more on Adalbert’s fears and absolute dependence on God, than Adalbert’s physical death.²¹⁸ The killers – and even the moment of death itself – are almost incidental to the spiritual fact of Adalbert’s martyrdom; the issue is Adalbert’s relationship to his God, and Bruno’s. More than anything, Bruno’s Adalbert is martyr to be admired and imitated.

Bruno’s account of Adalbert’s actual death is relatively short.²¹⁹ But the space he dedicates to anticipating and analysing the psychological and spiritual realities of martyrdom is extensive, occupying a significant proportion of the *Passio Adalberti*.²²⁰ These passages should not be overlooked. Diverse factors contributed to Bruno’s preoccupation with martyrdom, but here I would merely like to isolate one aspect of this obsession as a tool for understanding the dynamics of Bruno’s peculiar brand of world-rejecting Christianity; this is Bruno’s understanding of martyrdom as a secure means of salvation.

While reflecting on Adalbert’s martyrdom Bruno describes such a death as ‘a safe thing and a unique glory, a “rare bird of the lands.”’²²¹ Adalbert’s place in heaven was assured by his martyrdom:

Satan certainly does not rush to accuse martyrs... because they have imitated the shadow of the Saviour... thus although the martyrs are guilty of sin, through God by the outpouring of blood they are made altogether free from sin.²²²

He ‘embraced dear death’ and entered ‘the happy life, wondering at the laughter of God and the delights of heaven’s singing.’²²³ Adalbert was secure in heaven, a ‘purple noble’ with ‘much influence at the cohort of the King’, and accordingly Bruno appeals to him to intercede on behalf of himself and the other ‘captives’ and ‘exiles from glory’, who remained in ‘the miserable lands.’²²⁴ The gulf separating heaven and earth is central to Bruno’s conception of Adalbert’s martyrdom. On earth Adalbert was imbued with virtue; yet fearful,

²¹⁷ *Passio Adalberti*, 28.

²¹⁸ *Passio Adalberti*, 22, 24, 26-27, 29-34.

²¹⁹ *Passio Adalberti*, 32, 33.

²²⁰ *Passio Adalberti*, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26-27, 29-34.

²²¹ *Passio Adalberti*, 31, quoting Juvenal, vi. 165 ‘*rara avis in terris nigroque simillima cygno*’. cf. Darius Baronas, ‘St Bruno of Querfurt’, pp. 43, 44.

²²² *Passio Adalberti*, 31.

²²³ *Passio Adalberti*, 33.

²²⁴ *Passio Adalberti*, 11, 32.

flawed, and distressed by his sins.²²⁵ In heaven he is secure.²²⁶ Through martyrdom his salvation was assured; ‘now what great dignity, what great security of joy!’²²⁷

Bruno’s thoughts on martyrdom – and indeed, on spirituality, morality and much else besides – are bound up with a profound and unresolvable uncertainty about who would be saved. Bruno’s writings and what little we know of his life as an ascetic, missionary and martyr, all point towards an overriding concern for salvation. But the only sure route to salvation consistently identified as such in Bruno’s works is martyrdom; everything else is uncertain. Bruno promotes some ways of life as more conducive to salvation than others; hence his tripartite scheme of monk, hermit, and martyr. He even frames these occupations in terms of conversion and salvation.²²⁸ But such confidence is not sustained, and there are no safe places to rival martyrdom in Bruno’s works.²²⁹

Bruno discusses morality and spirituality in terms of a choice between the celestial and the mundane. For instance, when describing Adalbert’s transformation upon being appointed as bishop of Prague, he wrote:

Oh how much was he changed, who a little before had chased eagerly after the sea of pretty temporal things, who wandered amongst the terrestrial with his whole mind... returning to himself, he recognized that God made man, he changed his love, he corrected his feet, sighing and desiring only heavenly things...The priest searched the world and its pomp with his whole mind, the bishop sought to flee it with his whole mind.²³⁰

These ideals are echoed throughout the *Passio Adalberti*. For instance, when he described Adalbert preaching at Otto III’s court, Bruno wrote:

He admonished the nobles standing around... to fix their hearts not even a little on the base and the worldly, or, cast out from the kingdom of God, for the sake of a little joy they would go into eternal torment.²³¹

²²⁵ *Passio Adalberti*, 1, 3, 6, 7, 11, 13-14, 17, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 29.

²²⁶ *Passio Adalberti*, 31-34.

²²⁷ *Passio Adalberti Longior*, 31.

²²⁸ See above, p. 144.

²²⁹ *Passio Adalberti*, 7, 10, 12.

²³⁰ *Passio Adalberti*, 11 cf. 7, 19.

²³¹ *Passio Adalberti*, 20.

Such fire and brimstone does not appear to have been unusual in medieval pulpits, but passages elsewhere in the *Passio Adalberti* suggest that Bruno considered this language to be more than mere rhetoric for reinforcing certain standards of behaviour; for some of those in Bruno's works who are nominally Christian are also explicitly damned.²³² Bruno writes that when Adalbert's predecessor, Thietmar of Prague, was dying:

He testified in a desperate voice, that he had been carelessly carried to the Tartarean underworld by black unclean spirits... The great dread of this vision possessed him [Adalbert], and directed him to the first safety.²³³

Bruno also casts doubt on Otto II's salvation.²³⁴ Although he notes Otto II's innate virtue, he emphasises the disasters caused by his sins, particularly his refusal to restore the bishopric of Merseburg.²³⁵ These tragedies, together with an admonitory vision of Saint Lawrence, patron saint of Merseburg, ought to have prompted Otto II to repent, but they failed to do so.²³⁶ Bruno comments that, 'he did not correct the crime; whether the love of men persuaded him, or the wrath of God ordered him thus.'²³⁷ The biblical overtones of a wrathful God hardening the heart of a condemned king do little to reassure the reader about the state of Otto II's soul.²³⁸ Unrepentant, Otto II then dies; 'the honour of the king helps not, he is made a victim of death, dust returns to dust'.²³⁹ Bruno does concede the possibility of salvation – Otto II was a Christian king, after all – writing:

But the surviving wife endeavoured to correct the sin which he had disregarded while living... she sent legates, alms and the prayers of many, through which she might appeal to the propitious Redeemer, so that He might free the sinner king from the flames.²⁴⁰

²³² Thomas L. Amos, 'Preaching and the Sermon in the Carolingian World', in *De Ore Domini: Preacher and Word in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Thomas Leslie Amos, Eugene Green and Beverly Mayne Kienzle (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1989), pp. 41-60; Emmet McLaughlin, 'The Word Eclipsed? Preaching in the Early Middle Ages', *Traditio*, 46 (1991), 77-122; Richard E. Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', *Speculum*, 28 (1953), 705-740 (pp. 714-720).

²³³ *Passio Adalberti*, 7.

²³⁴ *Passio Adalberti*, 10, 12.

²³⁵ *Passio Adalberti*, 10, 12.

²³⁶ *Passio Adalberti*, 12.

²³⁷ *Passio Adalberti*, 12.

²³⁸ cf. Exodus 4.21, 7.3-14, 8.15-32, 14.8; Deuteronomy 2.30; Isaiah 6.10; Jeremiah 16.12; 18.12; Daniel 5.20; Matthew 13.15; Acts 28.27; Romans 2.5; Revelation 16.9, 16.11.

²³⁹ *Passio Adalberti*, 12.

²⁴⁰ *Passio Adalberti*, 12.

Otto II is left in limbo. Bruno is explicit about Otto II's failings but, having raised the issue of his possible damnation, he leaves his account of the proposed remedy unresolved. Bruno tells us that Theophanu sent Adalbert to Jerusalem to offer prayers and gifts for the dead emperor's soul, but Adalbert abandoned his quest in Italy, preferring to seek a spiritual 'life of Jerusalem' instead.²⁴¹ This is the last we hear of Otto II.

Bruno's criticism of Otto II fits into a wider pattern in the *Passio Adalberti*, in which only the dead are unequivocally saved. This uncertainty concerning salvation on earth even permeates Bruno's description of Adalbert. Bruno knows that Adalbert will be martyred and therefore saved, and describes Adalbert himself as being reassured by visions of his impending martyrdom, but it is only after his death that Adalbert's sanctity becomes a sure thing. Adalbert was striving after heaven, but not yet there, and his time on earth is framed in terms of striving, suffering and sorrow.²⁴²

When thinking within this world-rejecting Christian identity Bruno juxtaposes heaven and earth, placing them in opposition to one another. He rejects the world – 'the squalor of our misery', 'the boundless error of our times' – for the kingdom of God; all with one eye on 'the eternal fire of those who will be cast out.'²⁴³ Bruno appeals to Adalbert to 'look back at the miserable lands from heaven with a kind spirit.'²⁴⁴ And he describes Adalbert's abandonment of the world as comprehensive, 'whatever human emptiness embraces and loves all the way unto death, he disdains with his entire mind.'²⁴⁵ Bruno was not merely criticising some aspects of earthly life; his condemnation of the world is absolute. Within this mode, heaven is not simply preferable to earth, but its alternative and antagonist; Bruno was thinking in terms of an urgent either-or decision between the two. Earth is no middle ground in an as yet unresolved conflict between heaven and hell, but placed but more straightforwardly in direct opposition to heaven.

To understand Bruno's stance in these moments we must recognise the temporal aspect of this strand of thought. Bruno was thinking eschatologically; he was looking beyond the intermingling of the two cities, co-mingled on earth, towards their resolution. He is able to place heaven and earth in opposition to one another because he is thinking in terms of a time when earth would no longer occupy a midway position between heaven and hell. By adopting this perspective he is able to eliminate all ambiguity from earthly life,

²⁴¹ *Passio Adalberti*, 12, 13.

²⁴² *Passio Adalberti*, 3, 5, 6, 7, 11, 13, 14, 17, 20, 23, 26, 28.

²⁴³ *Passio Adalberti*, 17, 20, 21, 32, 33.

²⁴⁴ *Passio Adalberti Longior*, 32.

²⁴⁵ *Passio Adalberti*, 11.

applying an either-or choice to the ambiguities and complexities to which he is so sensitive elsewhere in his writings. Thinking in terms of the end times – both the end of time and the end of his own life – it is only the heavenly which appears secure; everything else falls short.

We can see this eschatologically-minded dichotomy of heaven and earth underlying large sections of Bruno's discussions of morality, spirituality and martyrdom, and it is useful to frame this influence in terms of identity. While such an analysis cannot claim to be comprehensive, it does serve to underline Bruno's own position within this world-rejecting scheme. For by rejecting everything which lay outside of heaven as sinful and insecure, he places himself on the outside looking in. His epistemology is centred on the eternal, but he remains in the temporal. Within this world-rejecting identity it is Bruno himself who is the outsider. Thus he contrasts Adalbert's security in heaven with his own position on earth:

This is the common evil of all, and this is my misery especially ... we ought to think wholly on the spiritual, but we think almost only of worldly things.²⁴⁶

Bruno positions himself as other, and nowhere else in Bruno's thought or writings is the comparison with modern discourses of otherness and identity as relevant as it is here. Bruno's internalisation of his own otherness echoes the acceptance of discourses of race, gender and class by those same groups who are alienated by them. The intractability of these discourses and concomitant emotional trauma has been the subject of much modern scholarship on otherness, and both aspects are prominent in the *Passio Adalberti*.²⁴⁷

Bruno's identification of himself as other overshadows his desire for martyrdom with a sense of uncertainty. Bruno does not doubt that martyrdom is a secure means of escaping ailing earth for the security of heaven. Nor does he doubt God's faithfulness in upholding the place of the martyr.²⁴⁸ Indeed, some of the more joyful and optimistic moments in Bruno's writings appear when he reaffirms God's faithfulness to those who trust in Him:

What is the All-powerful unable to do when He will?... He wills no man to perish, rather He suffers none of his own to die! Pure goodness, clean eternity, sole truth,

²⁴⁶ *Passio Adalberti*, 32.

²⁴⁷ The literature is immense. For a range of views, see: Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. by Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004); John McLeod, pp. 17-33; Simone de Beauvoir, pp. 282-284, 726-729; Marcella Latrofa and others, '“United We Stand, Divided We Fall”! The Protective Function of Self-Stereotyping for Stigmatised Members' Psychological Well-Being', *Applied Psychology: an International Review*, 58 (2009), 84-104.

²⁴⁸ *Passio Adalberti*, 29, 31-34.

sole sweetness, absolute beauty, hidden salvation and blessed present, beautiful love and dear eternity and dear mercy, God.²⁴⁹

Yet such triumphant confidence is not the norm in the *Passio Adalberti*. Bruno's confidence in the divine is absolute, but he is unable to trust the earthly and, as a bridge between the two, martyrdom touched on both.

Bruno desired escape from the uncertainties of earth, but as he himself was on earth he was unable to trust his capacity to secure such an escape.²⁵⁰ He even treats his own desire for martyrdom with suspicion.²⁵¹ Although he hints at the possibility that martyrdom might be earned, he is unable to sustain this thought against his conviction that martyrdom was a gift from God.²⁵² Bruno was far more consistent in imagining martyrdom as something which occurred despite human weakness, rather than something which could be earned or chosen. This could be an encouraging sentiment. Bruno could, and seemingly did, reassure himself that martyrdom was open to him despite his own fears and weaknesses.²⁵³ But this emphasis on the divine, this total dependence on God's will, left Bruno powerless to secure or even evaluate his own salvation. Bruno did not know whether he was saved and, by accepting the fundamental antagonism between heaven and earth, he forfeited the possibility of being able to find out for as long as he lived. He saw himself as alienated and this created both an insistent desire to end this alienation, and an insurmountable barrier to doing so.

6.iv.b.ii. The position of earthly institutions within Bruno's eschatological worldview.

Within this world-rejecting Christian identity there is little scope for earthly institutions. Even the Church appears relatively insignificant within this eschatological framework. Bruno was judging the temporal in terms of the eternal, thinking of a time when the Church would be wholly absorbed into the City of God. Such an emphasis on the end times was not unusual, particularly in missionary thought.²⁵⁴ Anticipating the end times was fundamental to Christian theology and exegetical practice, as well as being a standard

²⁴⁹ *Passio Adalberti*, 11 cf. 12.

²⁵⁰ *Passio Adalberti*, 11, 31-33.

²⁵¹ *Vita Quinque*, 2.

²⁵² *Passio Adalberti*, 31.

²⁵³ *Passio Adalberti*, 22, 24, 26, 28-33 (esp. 30).

²⁵⁴ Cf. Ian N. Wood, 'The Ends of the Earth', James Palmer, *The Vita Anskariǫ*, pp. 244-255, 255-256.

part of moralising rhetoric and sermons.²⁵⁵ Yet it is worth underlining the implications of Bruno's emphasis on this world-rejecting Christianity; for it is such emphases which make Bruno's thought distinctive. Pursuing the logic of an eschatological view of heaven and earth Bruno undermines all human effort in the pursuit of salvation. Salvation is God's gift to give; it could be desired but not actively taken.²⁵⁶ Bruno does not reject the Church and its institutions, yet when he was thinking in this mode – which is the dominant stance in the *Passio Adalberti* – the earthly manifestations of the Church becomes almost invisible. He establishes certain ways of life – such as monasticism and eremiticism – as particularly admirable, and he emphasises the spiritual rewards which accompanied white and purple martyrdom, and the conversion of pagan peoples.²⁵⁷ But the salvific role of the visible Church in the *Passio Adalberti* appears almost negligible. Bruno would perhaps never have denied the validity or necessity of the Church, yet he embraced a mode of thought which, with its individualism and eschatological focus, implicitly undermined its relevance.

Earthly rank appears even more ephemeral when Bruno was engaging in this world-rejecting mode of thought.²⁵⁸ Bruno was not consistently hostile to secular status throughout his writings. For instance, Adalbert's noble ancestry was presented positively.²⁵⁹ But he frequently disparages earthly status and secular rank when thinking in this mode.²⁶⁰ Bruno's most damning condemnation of Otto II juxtaposes his concern with earthly wars and status with trust in God:

O man, consider now the man alone. What would your virtue be, if you turn away from God? What benefit the love of war?... Just as it is written: there is neither counsel nor reckoning against the Lord... All of your strength and all of your plans have been hurled against the Lord and He himself will nurture you; trust in the Lord and He himself will provide... Look! While he sins, he will be scourged and not improve; he dies in the middle of life, full of enemies. He lies now obscure, oh and if only not rejected! Alumnus of beautiful virtue.²⁶¹

²⁵⁵ For instance, James Palmer, *The Apocalypse; The Apocalyptic Year 1000: Religious Expectation and Social Change, 950-1050*, ed. by Richard Landes, Andrew Gow and David C. Van Meter (Oxford: OUP, 2003).

²⁵⁶ *Passio Adalberti* 11, 31-33.

²⁵⁷ *Passio Adalberti*, 7, 11, 13-14, 17-19, 22, 24, 26, 29, 31-33.

²⁵⁸ *Passio Adalberti*, 13, 14, 17, 20.

²⁵⁹ *Passio Adalberti*, 1. Albeit with characteristic ambivalence. Thus when describing Adalbert's father he wrote, 'Although he might be lord of the land, he was nonetheless an average man.'

²⁶⁰ *Passio Adalberti*, 13, 14, 17, 20.

²⁶¹ *Passio Adalberti*, 12.

The juxtaposition is not simply one of good and bad concerns, but of ways of thinking. Worldly knowledge is juxtaposed with God's knowledge and found wanting. God's way is not merely superior, but operates on a level inaccessible to man. This sense of divine knowledge beyond human understanding can be seen throughout the *Passio Adalberti*: Heaven is explicitly described as a place of understanding – 'who is ignorant, where all is known?' – and when Bruno was unable to verify a vision concerning Adalbert, he nonetheless accepts its conclusions on faith.²⁶² Heaven is beyond human understanding:

Blessed man who would possess the glory of paradise! ... that you might understand what is commonly said: 'the eye has not seen, and the ear has not heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for those who love him.'²⁶³

This supra-rational aspect of Bruno's thought also played an important role in Bruno's *Vita Quinque*. But whereas *Vita Quinque* prioritises a mystic acceptance of the incomprehensibility of God, the *Passio Adalberti* is more oriented around a system of knowledge based on an awareness of such supra-rational truths.²⁶⁴ The *Vita Quinque* is more instructional and devotional, more concerned with the process of the eremitical life. But the *Passio Adalberti* is more detached from earthly institutions – even those as removed and contemplative as the hermitage – and more preoccupied with Bruno's thoughts on his own death and salvation. But the foundations of Bruno's own system of knowledge left him unable to resolve his own position with any certainty; certainty belonged in heaven, but he was on earth. There was nothing which Bruno could do to escape his own alienation, yet there was nothing which he desired more. More than anything the *Passio Adalberti* is an account of Bruno trying, and failing, to negotiate the emotional trauma of his own otherness.

Worldly knowledge.

Bruno's world-rejecting Christian identity is the dominant strand in the *Passio Adalberti*; both in terms of the amount of attention it receives and its position relative to

²⁶² *Passio Adalberti*, 27, 31, 32; *Passio Adalberti Longior*, 33.

²⁶³ *Passio Adalberti*, 32.

²⁶⁴ *Vita Quinque*, 32.

other identities. Yet there are many different ideas about identity and otherness in Bruno's work. Just as with Adam's *Gesta* and Bruno's other writings, a wide range of complex and often contradictory ideas are at work in the *Passio Adalberti*. The final sections of this chapter are devoted to Bruno's depiction of the Bohemians and the Prussians. Bruno imagined both of these groups in ways which bypassed or undermined key aspects of his world-rejecting Christian identity. Nonetheless, this aspect of Bruno's identity was not easily abandoned, and it often shaped and overshadowed his understanding of these groups.

6.iv.c. The Bohemians.

6.iv.c.i. Overview.

It is essential to Bruno's narrative that the Bohemians appear sufficiently villainous and irredeemable to justify Adalbert's repeated attempt to abandon them. Try as he might to undermine Gregory V and others who forced Adalbert to return to his diocese from his intermittent exiles, Bruno was unable to ignore Adalbert's embarrassing failure as a bishop. Hence, like the author of the *Vita Prior*, Bruno dedicated a significant amount of time to developing an image of the Bohemians as un-Christian barbarians who were incapable of being helped by Adalbert, and who ultimately rejected his pious attempts to reform them.²⁶⁵

Two main strands can be identified in Bruno's attempts to denigrate the Bohemians. The first is familiar; Bruno places the Bohemians on the wrong side established boundaries, and associates them with groups who were recognizably other. The second strand of his criticism is, while not unique to Bruno, bound up with his characteristic preoccupation with personal salvation. He intensifies his criticisms by framing the Bohemians as a group in the language of individual morality, to the point where their salvation is left in doubt. The result of Bruno's combined efforts is to make the Bohemians appear as barbarous, recalcitrant Christians at best and irredeemable apostates at worst.

6.iv.c.ii. Opening qualifications.

Before considering Bruno's denigration of the Bohemians in detail, it is useful to set out a few opening qualifications. Firstly, Bruno's use of terminology is extremely vague. It is convenient, and not wholly anachronistic, to collect Bruno's descriptions of Adalbert's

²⁶⁵ cf. *Passio Adalberti*, 11, 15-16, 21, 23; *Vita Prior*, 12-13, 18-20.

flock under the heading of 'Bohemians'. Bruno does occasionally write about 'Bohemia', 'the Bohemian land' and, just once, 'the Bohemians'.²⁶⁶ But his terminology tends to be much vaguer. He regularly describes the Bohemians as 'the people' (both *gens* and *populus*), but more often he simply describes them as 'they' or 'them', often not allowing the Bohemians a separate noun when they act as the subject.²⁶⁷

Thus although this section is concerned with Bruno's depiction of the Bohemians, it must be emphasised that the subject-matter itself is not clearly defined in the *Passio Adalberti*, nor, in all likelihood, in Bruno's own mind. It is not even clear which categories of thought Bruno associated with the Bohemians. A sense of place appears prominent, both the wider area – the land or province of the Bohemians – and Prague itself, together with its Church and relics.²⁶⁸ Certainly we must be cautious about prioritising an ethnic or national reading of the term, and give at least as much attention to its possible geographic, ecclesiastical, political, cultural, gender, moral, linguistic and literary associations. Based on the context, what Bruno appears to have in mind most of the time when he discusses the Bohemians is Adalbert's uncooperative flock.²⁶⁹ More than anything, they are the people whose actions illustrate Adalbert's piety and justify his departure.

This leads on to a second key qualification. The Bohemians as they are presented in the *Passio Adalberti* are embedded in Bruno's aims which are, in turn, embedded in Bruno's personal concerns. Within the *Passio's* narrative the Bohemians needed to be alienated to justify Adalbert's persistent efforts to abandon his episcopal duties for a life of quiet contemplation. Accordingly, Bruno echoed Canaparius' treatment of them.²⁷⁰ But Adalbert's life was also a matter of great personal interest and consequence for Bruno, and this personal element probably provided much of the motivation for Bruno's inclusion of a similarly negative account of the Bohemians in the *Vita Quinque*, where Bruno writes:

In that city [Prague] lies the king of that land, the martyr Wenceslas, who now proclaims his sanctity with a great mercy of miracles and who preferred the things of heaven to the troublesome affairs of this world... Also in that city there used to be a bishop, pious Adalbert, a precious being whose like we are not granted to find these days, but whom the citizens forced to flee with their sacrilegious customs...

²⁶⁶ *Passio Adalberti*, 1, 7, 21.

²⁶⁷ *Passio Adalberti*, 1, 7, 11, 15-16, 21, 23.

²⁶⁸ *Passio Adalberti*, 1, 7, 15; *Vita Quinque*, 11.

²⁶⁹ *Passio Adalberti*, 11, 15-16, 23.

²⁷⁰ cf. *Passio Adalberti*, 11, 15-16, 21, 23; *Vita Prior*, 12-13, 18-20.

compelling him to take the monastic habit in golden Rome... he was compelled to return against his will, to serve as a shepherd, but the promised correction of morals did not take place and he was forced to make a good escape for the second time, until the third time, vexed by their evil deeds, he heard them shout openly, and to his greater joy: 'We do not want you for our bishop.'

... Adalbert was not saddened by whatever had befallen him. As he was pouring Christ into the ears of the pagans, that angelic man... that good bishop and even better monk, that precious Adalbert, was murdered with seven wounds in desirable martyrdom... Following his blissful triumph, those who had not heeded the bishop's words... lacerated each other's limbs with their own right hands and slew each other; and from the hour in which they decapitated his innocent brothers, they neither could nor did halt the sword raging against their own entrails. Too late they repented at last... those bad Christians unwittingly administered a good service to the holy man, since they gave their shepherd the permission to go to the pagans and there, as he was bringing them eternal life in his preaching, he received in return temporal death from them... Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.²⁷¹

Bruno's comments here serve as a useful summary of his presentation of Adalbert and the Bohemians in the *Passio Adalberti*. Wenceslas is more conspicuous in the *Vita Quinque* and, significantly, Bruno gives no indication in the *Passio Adalberti* that the Bohemians repented of their treatment of Adalbert.²⁷² But otherwise Bruno's treatment of the Bohemians in the two works is more or less interchangeable. This passage is by no means ephemeral to Bruno's concerns in the *Vita Quinque*; Wenceslas and Adalbert prefigure the deaths of the brothers and provide a model of martyrdom for the brothers and, of course, for Bruno himself. Yet other models might have been found.²⁷³ Similarities in aim, style and genre must be acknowledged when accounting for the uniformity of Bruno's depictions of Bohemians, yet much of the consistency in Bruno's choice and handling of his subject-matter must surely be traced to Bruno himself. These were issues which Bruno had chosen to write about, within works which were deeply personal and reflective. These were also events which had inspired him to embrace the ascetic life. The narrative of the

²⁷¹ *Vita Quinque*, 11, pp. 248-251.

²⁷² *Passio Adalberti*, 21, 23.

²⁷³ cf. *Passio Adalberti*, 19.

Bohemians as Adalbert's intractable antagonists appears to be one that Bruno himself had internalised.

The majority of references to the Bohemians in the *Passio Adalberti* are subsumed into this Adalbert-centred narrative. Yet a third qualification is required, for Bruno was not wholly consistent, and glimpses of alternative ideas about the Bohemians can be seen. Bruno's denigration of the Bohemians was an important component in his cultivation and legitimisation of Bruno's sanctity, but at times he draws on other ideas about the Bohemians, especially those which could support this picture of sanctity in different ways. Crucially, Bruno does not disguise the fact that Adalbert himself was a Bohemian:

He was born into the purple, the flower of Bohemian land, the greatest son of distinguished parents, a golden fruit issued from a most distinguished branch... The father was good but the mother better, best was he who was born from them.²⁷⁴

These familial links are emphasised throughout the work.²⁷⁵ According to Bruno, it was Adalbert's parents who dedicated him to the Church; his mother raised him in virtue, and his father thrashed him when he attempted to abandon his schooling.²⁷⁶ When describing Adalbert's humility during his time in the monastery of Saints Alessio and Boniface, Bruno praises him for his willingness to abandon earthly distinctions 'surrendering his rank to healthy counsels', yet Adalbert's rank and nobility are presented favourably elsewhere in the *Passio Adalberti*.²⁷⁷ Thus when Bruno describes Adalbert's election as bishop of Prague he writes concerning 'the duke of the land and the greater people':

Yet finally the whole gang supported him, they filled the air with their clamour: that there could be none better... to be their bishop than their native Adalbert, on whose nobility, wealth, divine knowledge and pleasing manners they could all agree.²⁷⁸

Bruno's description of Adalbert's election raises numerous points pertinent to his representation of the Bohemians. The importance of familial and aristocratic connections is

²⁷⁴ *Passio Adalberti*, 1.

²⁷⁵ *Passio Adalberti*, 1-5, 8, 14, 21-23.

²⁷⁶ *Passio Adalberti*, 1-5.

²⁷⁷ *Passio Adalberti*, 1, 8, 13, 14.

²⁷⁸ *Passio Adalberti*, 8.

evident; Bruno is elected by the 'greater people', not least because of his own nobility. Indeed, it has been suggested that Adalbert's appointment represented a compromise of sorts between the dominant Slavník and Přemyslid families, although the details of any such deal are obscure.²⁷⁹ This passage may also hint at the aristocratic and political elements of Bohemian identity; a sense of unity and belonging is bound up with the political cooperation of the 'greater people'. This would fit with the tendency for ethnic labels to be used as umbrella terms for political and aristocratic groupings and interactions, but given the vagueness of Bruno's language, the comparison should not be pushed too far.

Adalbert's relationship with the assembled Bohemians is notably different to that cultivated by Bruno elsewhere in the *Passio Adalberti*. The nobles unanimously elect Adalbert as their bishop because of his virtues and nobility. Such unanimity may reflect a real concern for consensus, which was a common theme in such situations, and a genuine sense of *Wirgefühhl* may be suggested by his reference to 'native' Adalbert.²⁸⁰ However, within the *Passio Adalberti* this episode primarily acts to underline Adalbert's eminent suitability for the role of bishop. The Bohemians act as witnesses to Adalbert's piety and, consequently, Bruno does nothing to undermine their credibility at this point. The Bohemians appear here as an inversion of their later selves who would explicitly reject Adalbert, and it is curious to speculate about the extent to which Bruno had these later events in mind when writing this passage.²⁸¹ Was he, for instance, attempting to absolve Adalbert of any responsibility for the appointment which he came to loathe? Were the Bohemians being set up for their subsequent fall from grace? The subtleties of this episode's position within Bruno's wider narrative are unclear, but the key issue here is that Bruno was able to present the Bohemians in manner which is at odds with their subsequent vilification.²⁸²

Bruno's awareness of Adalbert's Bohemian background continues to influence his presentation of the Bohemians even after he begins his campaign to discredit them in chapter eleven.²⁸³ He dwells on the violent destruction of the Slavník family at the hands of the rival Přemyslids, presenting Adalbert's slain brothers as 'holy men' and near-martyrs,

²⁷⁹ Alexis P. Vlasto, pp. 100-104; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 208.

²⁸⁰ cf. Alexis P. Vlasto, pp. 100-104; David Kalhous, pp. 92, 104-129, 141; Gerd Althoff, 'Colloquium familiare – Colloquium secretum – Colloquium publicum. Beratungen im politischen Leben des früheren Mittelalters', *FMAS*, 24 (2010), 145-167.

²⁸¹ *Passio Adalberti*, 8, 23.

²⁸² *Passio Adalberti*, 8, 23.

²⁸³ *Passio Adalberti*, 11.

and their killer, Bolesław of Bohemia, as a ‘second Judas’.²⁸⁴ Bruno describes the sudden attack on the Slavník town of Libice-nad-Cidlinou, underlining the horror of the slaughter and the subsequent suffering, destruction and exile.²⁸⁵ Bruno’s description of the betrayal and murder of Adalbert’s brothers leads to a brief excursus on the miserable state of fallen mankind directed, in part, at Bolesław of Bohemia. But the Bohemians as a people are not exempt from this condemnation. Bruno describes the Bohemians refusing to accept Adalbert back as their bishop, saying that:

We do not want you, nor is there a place amongst your people for you, who are able to avenge your brothers’ deaths.²⁸⁶

This rejection episode is framed in terms of the people, the *populus*. Bruno conflates the Bohemians and their ruling dynasty; something which was not unusual or misleading in early medieval terms. Yet even while doing so, he hints at complexities underlying this purported unity; a rival dynasty, an annexed city, and a civil war.²⁸⁷

The Alienation of the Bohemians through established others.

6.iv.c.iii. Alienating the Bohemians.

‘Can it be that the Catholic is not better than the pagan?’²⁸⁸

Bearing these qualifications in mind, Bruno’s attempts to alienate the Bohemians will now be discussed in detail. There are two main strands to Bruno’s efforts, although these are intermingled in the *Passio Adalberti* and, seemingly, in Bruno’s own mind. The first is familiar from other medieval works, including those of Adam of Bremen and Rimbart. Bruno places the Bohemians on the wrong side of established boundaries, and associates them with groups who were recognizably other. He condemns the Bohemians for violating the boundaries of the sanctuary, the Sabbath, clerical celibacy, marriage, and the feast days, and draws on the sense of otherness surrounding women, Jews, slaves and pagans to

²⁸⁴ *Passio Adalberti*, 21.

²⁸⁵ *Passio Adalberti*, 21; Petr Charvát, pp. 179-181; Alexis P. Vlasto, pp. 101-106.

²⁸⁶ *Passio Adalberti*, 23.

²⁸⁷ *Passio Adalberti*, 21.

²⁸⁸ *Passio Adalberti*, 21.

alienate them further. Most of Bruno's attack on the Bohemians takes this form. Yet there is another aspect to Bruno's attack, which frames the Bohemians' failures in the language of individual morality and personal salvation. This element plays a similar role in Bruno's narrative, but its implications are distinct, and will therefore be treated separately.

Bruno's condemnation of the Bohemians was dependent on the strong sense of familiarity surrounding the boundaries and categories which he exploited. The sanctity of the altar, the otherness of women, the opposition of pagans; these things were established and known, they didn't need to be justified. Nor did they need to be explained or qualified; and neither Bruno nor Adam made any significant attempt to do so. This implicit transparency is derived less from the conceptual clarity of these ideas – which is often wholly absent – than from the confidence with which they were expressed and, presumably, received. The boundaries between masculine and feminine, sacred and profane, Christian and pagan were institutionalised; difficult, if not impossible, to undermine.

Bruno's use of these categories to present the Bohemians as other begs the question of whether the Bohemians were already thought about in such a way. Was Bruno merely restating what his audience already knew? The inconsistencies in Bruno's account and his decision to buttress his vilification of the Bohemians with references to a myriad of similarly alienated groups does nothing to undermine this possibility; both trends were associated with institutionalised others such as Jews, heretics and lepers. Inconsistencies are easily overlooked, and there is tendency for disparate hostile groups to be intuitively linked.²⁸⁹

Representations of the Bohemians elsewhere, such as in the works of Thietmar of Merseburg, Widukind of Corvey, and the legends of Saint Wenceslas, do not suggest that Bruno's hostility formed part of a wider, institutionalised othering of the Bohemians.²⁹⁰ They might be criticised as enemies or recalcitrant Christians, but they were not a byword for exclusion or otherness. The Bohemians' relationship with their neighbours was close, changeable, and relatively equal; none of which was conducive to establishing the kind of entrenched antagonism associated with paganism or heresy. The closest we come to such alienation is the vilification of the Bohemians, and especially the ruling Přemyslids, for the murder of Wenceslas (d. 935). The Wenceslas legend was well known, and could be used to attack the Bohemians for their fratricidal ruling dynasty and their recent paganism.

²⁸⁹ Robert I. Moore, pp. 32, 62-65, 89-90.

²⁹⁰ cf. Thietmar, i. 4, 10, ii. 31-32, iii. 7, 18, iv. 5, 11, 28, v. 11, 23, 29, 31, vi. 11, 14, 50, 56, 58, 71, 99, vii. 8, 10, 59; Widukind of Corvey, i. 35-36; *Legenda Christiani; Diffundente Sole; Fuit in Provincia Boemorum; Crescente Fide*; Gumpold, *Passio Venceslai*; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 194-201; Nora Berend and others, pp. 11-20; Sverre Bagge, p. 134.

Gumpold of Mantua did just this in his *Passio Wenceslai*, almost certainly as part of Otto II's attempts to undermine the Přemyslids.²⁹¹ Bruno exploits this existing strand of hostility in the *Passio Adalberti*, criticising the Bohemians' Christianity and alluding to Wenceslas' martyrdom while describing the murder of Adalbert's brothers.²⁹² However, such an approach existed within a wider struggle over Wenceslas' memory, in which the Bohemians and their rulers also had a voice. Framed differently, Wenceslas's legacy could support the Bohemian's unity and Christianity, and the legitimacy of their ruling family.²⁹³ There was no universal antipathy towards the Bohemians, akin to the engrained otherness of women, pagans or the profane; hence Bruno's need to reinforce his criticisms of the Bohemians by appealing to such unambiguously negative groups and classifications.

6.iv.c.iv. The Bohemians in the eleventh chapter of the *Passio Adalberti*: Jews and slaves.

The majority of the lengthy eleventh chapter is taken up with Bruno's reflections on the dramatic changes to Adalbert's character after he had been elected as bishop:

Returning to himself, he recognized that God made man, he changed his love, corrected his feet and, sighing, desired only heavenly things.²⁹⁴

This context is important, and will be discussed shortly. Having illustrated Adalbert's virtues at length, Bruno introduces his first sustained criticism of the Bohemians at the end of the chapter. He writes:

However, the stiff-necked people, having been made servants of desire, unlawfully mixed with their relations and took many wives. They sold Christian slaves to the perfidious Jews; they observed the feast days with confused religion. Idling with pleasure, truly they do not care for the days of fasting at all! The clerics themselves lead their wives publicly ... they hate the objecting bishop with odious hate ... They

²⁹¹ Gumpold, *Passio Wenceslai*, pp. 37, 39, 47, 53-57, 61; Gábor Klaniczay, pp. 62, 101-109; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 195-199; David Kalhous, pp. 252-253.

²⁹² *Passio Adalberti*, 20-22; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 195.

²⁹³ Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 194-201; Lisa Wolverton, pp. 150-160; Marina Miladinov, 'Preface to the Passion of Saint Wenceslas', in *Saints of the Christianization Age of Central Europe (Tenth-Eleventh Centuries) Vitae sanctorum aetatis conversionis Europae Centralis (Saec. X-XI)*, ed. Gábor Klaniczay (Budapest: CEU, 2012), pp. 19-26.

²⁹⁴ *Passio Adalberti*, 11.

stirred up the magnates of the land against him. The labour was great, opposition was growing, and when it was not possible to correct the emerging evil, when fishing seized nothing, the saintly bishop considered the inevitable surrender of his rank.²⁹⁵

Bruno vilifies the Bohemians by describing them violating religious and sexual boundaries. There are strong echoes of Adam of Bremen's attacks on the Saxons in his appeal to such fundamental categories, and in neither case were these criticisms wholly groundless.²⁹⁶ Variations in religious practice, clerical marriage and consanguineous marriage (to uncanonical degrees) were all common problems facing the reform-minded clergyman, and would remain so for centuries. The longevity of such controversies reflects the fluctuations and plurality of reforming rhetoric and ideals, but it also hints at the disparities between canonical ideals and everyday beliefs and practices.²⁹⁷ These variations were complex, and cannot be easily summarised in terms of regional divisions, or the divide between clergy and laity. Both Bruno and Adam provide glimpses of such diversity, and the different ways it could be represented.²⁹⁸ However, during his critique of the Bohemians Bruno presents these boundaries as definitive, arranging the bishop and his flock into a dichotomy of correct and incorrect behaviour.

He supports this polarisation by claiming that the Bohemians sold Christian slaves to the 'perfidious Jews'.²⁹⁹ Bruno glosses over ambiguous realities underlying this statement, directing his readers instead towards the moralised conclusions he draws from it. Prague was an important centre for the early medieval slave trade, possibly forming a key part of a network supplying north European slaves to Spain. Other sources support the presence of a Jewish community in Prague at this time with some involvement in this trade.³⁰⁰ But the intent of the statement is moral, not factual, and Bruno could reasonably

²⁹⁵ *Passio Adalberti*, 11.

²⁹⁶ See p. 108.

²⁹⁷ Kathleen G. Cushing, *Reform and the Papacy*, pp. 111-159; Megan McLaughlin, 'Sex, Gender, and Episcopal Authority', pp. 221-231; Maureen C. Miller; Julia Barrow, 'The Ideas and Application of Reform', in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. iii, 600-1100, ed. by Julia M.H. Smith and Thomas Noble (Cambridge: CUP, 2008), pp. 345-362; Giles Constable, 'Renewal and Reform in Religious Life: Concepts and Realities', in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. by Robert Louis Benson, Giles Constable and Carol Dana Lanham (Oxford: OUP, 1982), pp. 37-67.

²⁹⁸ *Passio Adalberti*, 11, 15-16; *Vita Quinque*, 4, 11; Adam, 2. xiii (40), 2. xliii (41), 2. schol 53 (54), 2. lxxxii (77), 3. xxx (29), 3. lvi (55).

²⁹⁹ *Passio Adalberti*, 11.

³⁰⁰ Petr Charvat, pp. 154-158, 166, 182, 193-194; Martin Ježek, 'A Mass for the Slaves: from Early Medieval Prague', in *Frühgeschichtliche Zentralorte in Mitteleuropa*, ed. by Jirí Macháček and Šimon Ungerman (Bonn: Rudolf Habelt, 2011), pp. 623-642; Marek Jankowiak, 'Dirhams for slaves. Investigating the Slavic slave trade in the tenth century', 2012,

have expected his audience to pick up on the negative connotations of the term 'Jew', even without prefacing it with a pointed 'perfidious'. In literary, and especially theological, works the Jews were often depicted negatively. This antipathy appears to have been echoed by some degree of popular hostility which could, at times, turn into active persecution. During the decade in which Bruno was writing, the West saw a number of acts of persecution including forcible conversions, expulsions, and murders.³⁰¹ In 1012 Henry II would expel the Jews from Mainz.³⁰² But such acts of hostility were not the norm in this period, and it is only after the Rhineland massacres in 1096 that we see the development of a widespread and sustained anti-Semitism.³⁰³

Similarly, the position of slavery in this period is not as straightforward as Bruno's statement might suggest, especially to a modern reader. While slavery did not retain the defining role it had held in the Roman world and often appears indistinguishable from serfdom, it fulfilled important economic, cultural and political functions in early medieval Europe. The nature of the evidence and the institution itself makes it difficult to estimate the extent of slavery, but perhaps 10-12% of the population of early medieval Europe might usefully be defined as slaves. Furthermore, slavery was one of the most important mercantile activities, possibly the most important, in the period. Slavery had important political consequences, both as a key source of income, and as a status against which elites – particularly masculine elites – could define themselves.³⁰⁴

The position of slaves was not enviable, but the ubiquity of slavery and the integration of the Church into early medieval society meant that slavery was largely normalised. The Church itself was a major slave owner, and such prominent figures as Augustine and Alcuin were able to find theological justifications for the existing order of

https://www.academia.edu/1764468/Dirhams_for_slaves_investigating_the_Slavic_slave_trade_in_the_tenth_century [accessed 24th August 2014], pp. 6, 7.

³⁰¹ Leonard B. Glick, *Abraham's Heirs: Jews and Christians in Medieval Europe* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1999), pp. 41- 90 (esp. 58-76); David Malkiel, 'Jewish-Christian relations in Europe, 840-1096', *Journal of Medieval History*, 29 (2003), 55-83; David Malkiel, 'Jews and Apostates in Medieval Europe — Boundaries Real and Imagined', *Past and Present*, 194 (2007), 3-34; Léon Poliakov, *The History of Anti-Semitism, Volume 1. From the Time of Christ to the Court Jews*, trans. by Richard Howard (University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 2003), pp.17-72 (esp.29-37); Robert Chazan, *Medieval Stereotypes and Modern Antisemitism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 1-19.

³⁰² *Annales Quedlinburgenses*, an. 1012.

³⁰³ Robert Chazan, '1007-1012: Initial Crisis for Northern European Jewry', *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, 38/39 (1970 - 1971), 101-117; Robert I. Moore, pp. 28, 38, 79-82, 111-115, 139-143, 177-180; David Malkiel, 'Jewish-Christian relations.'

³⁰⁴ Julia M. H. Smith, pp. 153-160; David Wyatt, *Slaves and Warriors in Early Medieval Britain and Ireland, 800-1200* (Leiden: Brill, 2009); Michael McCormick, 'New Light on the 'Dark Ages': How the Slave Trade Fuelled the Carolingian Economy', *Past & Present*, 17 (2002), 41-53; Paul H. Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), pp. 59-86.

things.³⁰⁵ Perhaps more significant is the lack of surprise expressed by the vast majority of authors who mentioned slaves; slaves formed part of the mental backdrop to life, in the same way as many assumptions about gender, disability, age and class.

Yet there were ambiguities in the early medieval understanding of slavery. This stemmed in part from a theology which could both support and undermine the status quo. Like physical illness, authors could approach slavery as inevitable, even just, or as an abnormality which required healing. The same authors who treated slavery as ubiquitous could also use the liberation of slaves as a useful trope for illustrating an individual's piety, or a metaphor for salvation more generally.³⁰⁶ Some authors did express concerns about the institution of slavery itself, but in general any doubts about the legitimacy of slavery were focused on the more specific issue of the sale of Christian slaves to non-Christians.³⁰⁷

Such objections were oriented around a fear of proselytization; the boundary between Christian and non-Christian overshadowed that between slave and free. Gregory the Great and others expressed justifiable concerns that Christian slaves sold to Jews might be tempted to apostatize.³⁰⁸ A number of Church councils prohibited the sale of Christians to Jews, or the ownership of slaves by Jews altogether, on these grounds.³⁰⁹ The morality of slavery was questioned, but chiefly insofar as it appeared to threaten the Christian order. Intriguingly, there appears to have been a parallel debate occurring within the Jewish community, questioning the morality of trading in 'places in which markets are established for the sake of idolatry'.³¹⁰ One such place would have been the slave market at Prague, which helped support the monastery of Břevnov, founded by Adalbert.³¹¹

Bruno's claim that the Bohemians sold Christian slaves to the Jews is based on the realities of tenth-century Prague. But his appeal is based on a very narrow reading of these realities. Given the wider context and Bruno's decision to label the Jews as 'perfidious' in a passage where such elaboration is used extremely sparingly, it seems that Bruno was primarily appealing to a religious divide; any sense that slavery might be unsavoury was merely supplementary. Whether Bruno envisaged his appeal primarily in terms of canonical

³⁰⁵ Paul H. Freedman, pp. 59-86; James Muldoon, 'Spiritual Freedom—Physical Slavery: The Medieval Church and Slavery,' *Ave Maria Law Review*, 3 (2005), 69-93.

³⁰⁶ John Kitchen, ' "Raised from the Dung": Hagiography, Liberation, and the Social Subversiveness of Early Medieval Christianity', in *Rhetoric and Reality in Early Christianities*, ed. by Willi Braun (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005), pp. 121-160.

³⁰⁷ Paul H. Freedman, pp. 59-86; James Muldoon, pp. 69-93; Julia M. H. Smith, pp. 159-160.

³⁰⁸ Adam Serfass, 'Slavery and Pope Gregory the Great', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 14 (2006), 77-103; Robert A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and His World* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), p. 78; *Vita Prior*, 12.

³⁰⁹ Leonard B. Glick, pp. 30-35, 45-54.

³¹⁰ Petr Charvat, pp. 193-194.

³¹¹ Petr Charvat, pp. 193-194.

prohibitions on such a trade, the more elaborate arguments underlying these, or a more straightforward juxtaposition of Christian and Jewish, is unclear. But to some extent this question is of secondary importance; the detail is less significant than a sense of difference, and of a boundary violated.

Like Rimbert's complaints about the Nordalbingian's enslavement of Christians who had escaped from the Northmen, Bruno's critique of the Bohemians presents a polarised view of the world. Fragments of ideas founded in everyday life and thought are organised and rearranged, setting Adalbert and his flock in binary opposition to one another. The structure of the thought is more important than its purported content. The sense of antagonism between Christian and Jew, canonical and uncanonical, slave and free, is transferred to the relationship between the Bohemians and their bishop. Bruno evokes a sense of many different boundaries being broken, but is uncharacteristically reluctant to illustrate these. Instead, he describes the Bohemians through a quick succession of violated boundaries. This reticence rests on, cultivates, and creates the apparent self-evidence of these boundaries. But it also suggests that the substance of Bruno's description of the Bohemians lies in the polarising structure of the description, not in its details.

6.iv.c.v. The sixteenth chapter of the *Passio Adalberti*: barbarism and the holy of holies.

Whereas Bruno's criticism of the Bohemians in the eleventh chapter is oriented around a terse list of violated boundaries, the sixteenth approaches the subject in a rather different manner. Bruno's aims in both of these chapters appear similar. Both culminate with Adalbert leaving his flock, and the preceding attacks on the Bohemians act to polarise the bishop and his flock as means of justifying this.³¹² But Bruno is far more verbose in the sixteenth chapter, illustrating his hostility narratively. The underlying conceptual structure also varies at times. Bruno writes:

It happened, as is the custom with human uncertainties, that a certain woman, forgetful of her inborn nobility, made herself a prostitute. With the sin having been made public, the husband sought the life of his wife. However, she fled quickly to the bishop ... who hid her ... behind the altar... Behold! Unexpectedly the gang is near, and they threaten both the bishop and the woman with the sword if the woman is

³¹² *Passio Adalberti*, 16, 11.

not returned. The cheerful bishop heard the noise of arms and the imprudent threats of words. He chewed over in silent thought; he exults with uncertain joy, thinking that the ever-desired martyrdom might, by chance, now come. Ah, evil mind and wicked voice! The informer came and betrayed the secret, where she was lying hidden... What benefit refuge near the holy of holies? Who cares for divine Christian law amongst the ruling barbarism? They shatter the temple... they lead out the trembling woman; they cut off her head. The offenses grow, the old crimes do not cease, new grow daily. Whatever good they promised, well, lies are in the voice of works, they say. Thus the bishop thought that his fruitless labour had been useful neither to them nor to himself, that truly his station harmed his soul.³¹³

The anecdote is taken from the *Vita Prior* but, like most such borrowings, it has been comprehensively reworked.³¹⁴ The overall sense of the episode is maintained, but Bruno reduces it to less than half of its original length, and smooths out many of the ambiguities and intricacies in Canaparius' account. He omits Canaparius' description of the 'rabid Slav barking' at Adalbert, the anonymous bystander who betrays the woman's whereabouts for gold, and her custodian who, fearing for their life, handed her 'into the hands of her bloodthirsty enemies.'³¹⁵ He also removes Canaparius' suggestion that Adalbert planned to claim responsibility for the adultery, but was dissuaded from doing so by Vělich, provost of Prague Cathedral.³¹⁶ The result is a simpler, more polarised account, which reserves all humanity for Adalbert himself.

Bruno also simplifies the position of the unnamed woman. In Canaparius' account she is merely rumoured to have committed adultery, and her husband, 'a righteous man', refused to execute her himself, so she was instead killed 'by the sword of a worthless slave.'³¹⁷ Canaparius is by no means sympathetic, concluding that 'she paid with her head for the wicked use she made of her body.'³¹⁸ Bruno is even less ambivalent about the woman's guilt. Although he introduces a slight element of doubt by framing her action in the subjunctive, he precedes this with a comment on the uncertainties of earthly life, and follows it by describing what happened once the sin became publicly known.³¹⁹ Moreover, he

³¹³ *Passio Adalberti*, 16.

³¹⁴ cf. *Passio Adalberti*, 16; *Vita Prior*, 19.

³¹⁵ *Vita Prior*, 19, pp. 148-151.

³¹⁶ *Vita Prior*, 19, pp. 148-149, p. 126 fn. 3.

³¹⁷ *Vita Prior*, 19, pp. 146-151.

³¹⁸ *Vita Prior*, 19, pp. 150-151.

³¹⁹ *Passio Adalberti*, 16.

includes the husband amongst the crowd seeking her death, further reducing the ambiguity of Canaparius' account.

Bruno simplifies the position of the anonymous woman, defining her solely in terms of a single, unelaborated action and her relation to Adalbert. Yet she is not neatly incorporated into the dichotomy of Adalbert and his flock. The unnamed woman is neither on Bruno's side, nor the Bohemians. She is only loosely associated with both. She stands apart, stigmatised, supporting both the critique of the Bohemians and Adalbert's piety. It is important to recognise that Bruno does little to elicit a sense of injustice at the woman's treatment *per se*. He evokes a sense of outrage at the violation of the temple, the altar and Christian law, but he does not appear to have been formulating a scene in which the barbarous Bohemians are juxtaposed with their victim. He notes that the woman was trembling as she was led to her death, but otherwise Bruno does nothing to encourage his audience to empathise with her. Perhaps such empathy was felt to be self-evident, but Canaparius' condemnatory remarks should make us cautious about assuming this. Bruno and Canaparius would both have known that the killing of an adulteress could, in principal, be justified, even if such a punishment was unusual in practice.³²⁰ Thus, 'if a man commits adultery with another man's wife – with the wife of his neighbour – both the adulterer and the adulteress are to be put to death.'³²¹

But it is a different biblical model which had the greatest influence on this passage. Bruno presents Adalbert as Christ-like in his willingness to face martyrdom and defend an adulteress, or prostitute, to use Bruno's term. John's account of Jesus' encounter with a woman accused of adultery ends with judgement being suspended; no one is willing to accuse her, so Jesus dismisses the woman, saying 'neither do I condemn you.'³²² But the dynamics in Bruno's imitation are different. To effectively mirror Christ's behaviour Bruno must accentuate, not complicate, the woman's guilt. It must be clear that Adalbert was defending an adulteress, not an innocent woman. To demonstrate mercy, the woman must be guilty. Hence Bruno has an interest excising any ambiguity surrounding the woman's position; her guilt accentuates Adalbert's piety. Affirming the woman's status as an adulteress was integral to his account; eliciting sympathy for her murder was not.

The anonymous woman in the sixteenth chapter serves a number of purposes. She provides an opportunity for Adalbert to display his willingness to accept martyrdom, and

³²⁰ Charles J. Reid, *Power Over the Body, Equality in the Family: Rights and Domestic Relations* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004), pp. 119-140; Vern L. Bullough, 'Medieval Concepts of Adultery', *Arthuriana*, 7, 4 (1997), 5-15.

³²¹ Leviticus 20.10 (NIV). cf. Deuteronomy 22.22.

³²² John 8.3-11.

for Bruno to condemn the Bohemians for violating established boundaries. She also allows Bruno to present Adalbert as a Christ-like figure, defending an adulteress from her accusers. In these roles she reinforces the binary opposition of Adalbert and his flock, but she is not integrated into this dichotomy.

6.iv.c.vi. The fifteenth chapter of the *Passio Adalberti*: accusations of paganism.

‘Lies are in the voice of works, they say.’³²³

Bruno’s criticism of the Bohemians is bound up with accusations and insinuations of paganism. In the fifteenth chapter Bruno describes Adalbert’s despair at discovering the Bohemians holding a market on the Sabbath, which concludes:

At first they respected the newly arrived pastor, as if, living faithfully, they desired Mother Church. And, with evil habits repressed (too) little, they ‘honoured Christ’ with ‘Christian’ acts. Truly the new religion soon fell down, the old custom possessed the greater part. With God scorned... pleasure was the law for them.³²⁴

His final remarks on the Bohemians in the twenty-third chapter echo this sentiment:

They who previously turned in flight from pagan works, behold they openly say the words, ‘we do not want you’.³²⁵

Bruno’s suggestion that the Bohemians were relapsing into paganism raises a number of issues, not least the sincerity, plausibility and intent of such a claim.

It is extremely difficult to assess the nature and extent of the Christianisation of any region during this period. The Christianisation of Bohemia appears to have been on-going for at least two centuries by the time Bruno was writing, and Bohemian contacts with Christianity were far older. This process becomes clearly visible in both literary and archaeological sources during the ninth century. The first churches and Christian grave goods belong to this period, together with first references to a specifically Bohemian

³²³ *Passio Adalberti*, 16.

³²⁴ *Passio Adalberti*, 15.

³²⁵ *Passio Adalberti*, 23.

Christianity.³²⁶ The *Annals of Fulda* refer to fourteen Bohemian leaders being baptised in Regensburg in 845, and within a century Prague had acquired its own internationally renowned martyr-king, Wenceslas.³²⁷ Wenceslas' brother, successor and murderer, Bolesław I, continued Wenceslas's Christianising policies, which included the introduction of Sunday markets to encourage attendance at the churches built within nearby strongholds.³²⁸ Christianity was not new to Bohemia when Bruno was writing his *Passio Adalberti*.

Yet assessing the nature and degree of Christianisation in Bohemia at Bruno's time remains problematic, for a variety of reasons. Particularly relevant is the temptation to extrapolate wholesale conversion from limited evidence, or to see Christianisation as a cumulative, linear development. Bruno himself was guilty of both of these things, presenting the perceived failures of the Bohemians of Adalbert's time as a general return to an older pagan condition. The events of the present are located, spiritually, in the past, and the actions of a few are taken to represent an entire population. Yet the process of Christianisation was a series of changes, setbacks and compromises, and we know this, at least in part, because authors such as Bruno were able to acknowledge much of this complexity. For instance, Bruno describes the Hungarians' Christianity as being 'intermingled with polluted pagan religion... faint barbarism and tepid Christianity.'³²⁹ John Canaparius introduces the Bohemians in a similar way, writing:

The greatest part of this land, held fast in pagan error, worships the creature instead of the creator... moreover, many among them, Christians in name only, live according to the rites of the pagans... nevertheless, a few among this nation both believe and do good deeds in the hope of the reward to come.³³⁰

Bruno's description of the Bohemians as 'bad Christians' in the *Vita Quinque* appear to echo these sentiments.³³¹ Such an awareness of religious variety within a population can also be

³²⁶ Petr Sommer and others, 'Bohemia and Moravia', in *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy: Scandinavia, Central Europe and Rus' c. 900-1200*, ed. by Nora Berend (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), pp. 214-262; Nora Berend and others, pp. 110-166; Zdenek R. Dittrich, *Christianity in Great Moravia* (Groningen: J.B. Wolters, 1962); Alexis P. Vlasto, pp. 86-113, Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 187-201; Richard A. Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, pp. 332-367.

³²⁷ *Annales Fuldenses*, an. 845, 890, 895, 897, 900; Dušan Třeštík, 'The Baptism of the Czech Princes in 845 and the Christianization of the Slavs' *Historica*, 2 (1997), 7-59; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 187-201.

³²⁸ Peter Sommer and others, p. 230.

³²⁹ *Passio Adalberti Brevior*, 23.

³³⁰ *Vita Prior*, 1, pp. 96, 97.

³³¹ *Vita Quinque*, 11, pp. 250-251.

seen within the works of Rimbart and Adam of Bremen, although Bruno and Canaparius were unusually forthright about acknowledging it.

Canaparius' description acts as a useful summary of the state of Christianity amongst the Bohemians at the end of the tenth century, but it only takes us so far. The issue lies not so much in the religiosity of the Bohemians, but in the ambiguities and divisions within Christianity itself. The boundaries of Christianity were usually presented confidently, but underlying this confidence was a great deal of fluidity, variety, and ambiguity. Something of Bruno's response to the inherent uncertainties of Christianity can be seen in his retreat from earthly knowledge, and elevation of mysticism. But Bruno also responded by rhetorically insisting on the boundaries of Christianity. Like many other medieval authors, he exploited the disparity between the sense that the division between Christian and pagan was absolutely fundamental, and the lack of any definitive means of defining this division. Thus Bruno could condemn the Bohemians' Sunday markets, even though they had been instituted for the sake of Christianity.

It is important to recognise that in a period when definitions of Christianity often reflected notions of political or ecclesiastical authority, claiming that a group who self-identified as Christian was no such thing could be quite sincere. The implications of the schism between Adalbert and his flock, as described by Bruno, were severe.³³² We must therefore treat Bruno's suggestion that the Bohemians were backsliding into paganism seriously. We must also place it within the context of his other accusations against them. When Bruno wrote of the Bohemians defying their bishop and violating the boundaries of the Sabbath, marriage, clerical celibacy, the feast days and the altar, to a great extent he was appealing to the very things which constituted Christianity for Bruno and his audience. Bruno's allusions to Bohemian paganism were as much as a summary of his earlier criticisms as an extension of them.

Nonetheless, it is probably going too far to suggest that Bruno thought of the Bohemians as wholly pagan. He holds back from explicitly labelling them as such, and he hints at his awareness of the more complex religious realities in Bohemia. Furthermore, Bruno's reference to the Bohemians as 'a stiff necked people' draws on a prophetic tradition

³³² Adam, 2. xiii (40), 2. xliii (41), 3. xx (19), 3. xxi (20) 3. l (49), 3. li(50), 4. xxvi (26)- 4. xxviii (28); Bruno, *Epistola*, p. 100; *Vita Quinque*, 2, 9, 10, 12, 13; Timothy Reuter, 'A Europe of Bishops', in *Patterns of Episcopal Power / Strukturen bischöflicher Herrschaftsgewalt im westlichen Europa des 10. und 11. Jahrhunderts*, ed. by Ludger Körntgen and Dominik Waßenhoven (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), pp. 17-38; Greta Austin, 'Bishops and Religious Law, 900-1050', in *The Bishop Reformed Studies of Episcopal Power and Culture in the Central Middle Ages*, ed. by John S. Ott and Anna Trumbore Jones (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 40-57; Anna Trumbore Jones, *Noble Lord, Good Shepherd: Episcopal Power and Piety in Aquitaine, 877-1050* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 1-26; Julia M. H. Smith, pp. 231-239.

in which the people of Israel are condemned for erring, but remain chosen nonetheless.³³³ Given Bruno's aims in denigrating the Bohemians and his description of the Bohemians as 'bad Christians' in the *Vita Quinque*, his insinuations of paganism appear comparable to Adam of Bremen's criticism of the Saxons or Rimbert's condemnation of the Nordablingsians.³³⁴ In each of these situations a sense of the fundamental division between Christian and pagan is appealed to as a rhetorical tool for chastising a Christian people, and as a means of negotiating the authority, legitimacy, and failings of the bishop.

Bruno's suggestion that the Bohemians might be pagan is polemical, yet such an accusation had real power. In part, this power was derived from the strength of feeling and institutionalised certainty surrounding the division between Christian and pagan. But it also rested on the plausibility and possible success of such an accusation. Groups like the Bohemians could be rejected as apostates, not least as Bruno and his contemporaries tended to think about Christianity as encompassing precisely those issues of ecclesiastical authority and orthopraxis which Bruno invoked in his criticisms of the Bohemians. Bruno's remark that 'lies are in the voice of works, they say', was deeply damning.³³⁵

6.iv.c.vii. The fifteenth chapter of the *Passio Adalberti*: the condemnation of the Bohemians in the language of individual spirituality.

Bruno's criticism of the Bohemians' way of life is encapsulated in his dark hints that they were abandoning Christianity for paganism. Such accusations were powerful yet polemical, and Bruno does not appear to have thought of the Bohemians as irredeemably pagan. Yet there is another strand to Bruno's criticism of the Bohemians which is rather more damning. Influenced by his own spiritual concerns, Bruno drew upon the language and concepts of individual salvation to describe the Bohemian's failings and to justify Adalbert's departures. Such moments are intermingled with Bruno's other criticisms of the Bohemians, and may have largely overlapped in his own mind. Yet the underlying concepts and consequences of this mode of thought are distinct, and must therefore be distinguished.

Having complained about the Bohemians violating the Sabbath and reverting to the 'old custom' in chapter fifteen, Bruno adopts slightly different tone. He writes:

³³³ cf. Exodus 32.9, 33.3,5, 34.9; Deuteronomy 9.6,13, 31.27; II Chronicles 30.8; Nehemiah 9.16; Psalm 75.5, 78.8; Isaiah 48.4; Jeremiah 17.23; Zechariah 7.11,12.

³³⁴ Rimbert, 37, 38; Adam, 3. lvi (55).

³³⁵ *Passio Adalberti*, 16.

He [Adalbert] said ‘Behold your good promise! Your repenting! Not resting from work even on this holy day.’ Yet he remained in his diocese, feeding his meagre flock with divine fodder and, if they are willing, drinking from the saving cup... They acted as slaves for many lords; the ropes of sin bind them, which are able to drag them into eternal separation... Because they are unwilling to see where wisdom is, where life is, the light of the eyes and peace.³³⁶

Bruno’s subject and aims remain the same. He vindicates Adalbert by vilifying the Bohemians, treating the group as absolutely uniform so as to remove any ambiguity which might distract from this dichotomy. He continues to draw on biblical models, incorporating Baruch’s warnings to Israel, just as he had earlier referenced the recurrent *topos* of Israel as a stiff-necked people.³³⁷ Yet, like these prophets, Bruno’s perspective varied, and he moves from an earthly perspective, in which he criticises the pagan behaviour of a group of Christians, to an eschatological point of view where such group identifiers as ‘Christian’ and ‘pagan’ lose much of their relevance. He looks to the future, where the distinction between Christian and pagan is subsumed into matters of salvation. The debates are intertwined, but the conceptual underpinnings and consequences are distinct.

Bruno’s condemnation of the Bohemians became rather more damning when he was thinking and writing in this mode. Bruno frames his criticisms in the language of internal morality and personal salvation. This has the effect of undermining the significance of the Bohemians’ corporate claim to Christianity. The political, ecclesiastical, and cultural elements which constituted Christianity on a group level meant far less within the framework of personal salvation. As we have seen, Bruno freely disregarded nominal Christianity when thinking in eschatological and salvific terms. He was looking to a time when the two cities were no longer intertwined and entangled, when salvation was no longer a matter of anticipatory labels and actions, but of a permanent status and location.³³⁸

Bruno does allow some ambiguity into his condemnation of the Bohemians; Adalbert offers them the ‘saving cup’, and the chains of sin are merely ‘able’ to condemn them to hell, they have not done so yet. But this ambiguity is overshadowed by his uncompromising assertion that Bohemians were acting sinfully, were bound by the chains of sin and were unwilling to accept to God and Wisdom, in Baruch’s terms.³³⁹ This condemnation is

³³⁶ *Passio Adalberti*, 15.

³³⁷ *Passio Adalberti*, 11. Baruch 4.19.

³³⁸ Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, i. 35.

³³⁹ Baruch 3.14.

buttressed by an allusion to the Sarabaites condemned by the *Benedictine Rule*, and an explicit reference to the eternal consequences of the Bohemians' actions.³⁴⁰ Whereas elsewhere Bruno used the image of the slave polemically, to stigmatise the Bohemians for their insufficiently Christian behaviour, here the image is used more forcibly to condemn the Bohemians in eternal, salvific terms. By thinking in terms of eternity and salvation Bruno obviates any comfort taken from the earthly aspects the Bohemians' Christianity, circumnavigating any objections his audience may have to his attempts to undermine it. The political, cultural, and ecclesiastical aspects of Christianity on earth were all discernible and verifiable; salvation was not. The Bohemians may not have been pagan, but they could be damned nonetheless.

Bruno's descriptions of the Bohemians are framed by extensive reflections on Adalbert's spiritual life. Before launching his first attack on the Bohemians in chapter eleven, Bruno dwells on Adalbert's spiritual transformation after being appointed as bishop. 'His sole thought, his sole study was to desire nothing, to strive for nothing, except Christ.'³⁴¹ Having listed the Bohemian's failings, he describes Adalbert's flight to Italy and his entry into the monastery of Saints Alessio and Boniface in Rome. He then returns to the subject of Adalbert's spiritual development, writing how Adalbert 'forgets himself the bishop.'³⁴² Adalbert is ordered to return to Prague, but upon discovering that the Bohemians were unwilling to live up to their promises of reform he once again flees to the spiritual comfort of the monastery. Bruno then reflects on the 'sacred delights' of the monastery; Bruno's arrival was like a ship finding a safe harbour, like Jacob finally receiving Rachel.³⁴³

Bruno's descriptions of the Bohemians occur within the wider context of his account of Adalbert's spiritual development, to which he dedicates significantly more attention. This context is important for understanding Bruno's train of thought in these passages. Hence when concluding his first attack on the Bohemians in chapter eleven he writes that:

When it was not possible to correct the emerging evil, when fishing seized nothing, the saintly bishop considered the inevitable surrender of his position.³⁴⁴

³⁴⁰ Benedict, 1.

³⁴¹ *Passio Adalberti*, 11.

³⁴² *Passio Adalberti*, 14.

³⁴³ *Passio Adalberti*, 17; Genesis 29. Rachel commonly represented the contemplative life. See, Gregory the Great, *Moralia*, 6. xxxvii.31

³⁴⁴ *Passio Adalberti*, 11

Bruno criticises the intransigence and antagonism of the Bohemians, but also their spiritual state. This concern for spirituality is reinforced by Bruno's concluding remarks to his second attack on the Bohemians, in the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters:

The bishop (was) thinking that his fruitless labour had been useful neither to them nor to himself, that truly this station was harmful to his soul.³⁴⁵

Having completed the most sustained attack on the Bohemians in the *Passio Adalberti*, it is significant that Bruno then turned his attention to the spiritual consequences for Adalbert and his flock. Such a conclusion was not inevitable. Bruno's criticisms were sufficient to stigmatise the Bohemians and thereby justify Adalbert's departure, and his final remarks represent an extension and redirection of these thoughts. The justification shifts from being centred on a schism between the bishop and his flock, to being oriented around the spirituality of both. Similarly, when Bruno describes Adalbert's final rejection by the Bohemians, he returns to the issue of Adalbert's spirituality. He describes Adalbert accepting his dismissal joyfully, declaring, 'God, you severed my chains! ... My chains are broken!'³⁴⁶ Adalbert's joy is prompted by the unexpected opportunity to seek martyrdom, the ultimate spiritual achievement in Bruno's thought.

A significant part, perhaps the greater part, of Bruno's defence of Adalbert's departure was oriented around Adalbert's own spiritual needs. This theme is evident in the eighteenth chapter where Bruno describes Adalbert being ordered to return for the final time:

After the synod had finished... the archbishop of Mainz, zealous for the law, sings the old refrain and prepared to drag the holy bishop away from the calm of the monastery, back to the abandoned flock..... But he, secretly entreating the pope, said, 'the enemy envies my quiet, and incites you with his goad, so that I will be compelled to return where I will not bring forth the fruit of the Spirit. However, I will accept these monstrosities.'³⁴⁷

Bruno presents Adalbert as the victim; his forced return would be damaging to his spiritual development and is inspired by 'the enemy', a term he uses elsewhere to refer explicitly to

³⁴⁵ *Passio Adalberti*, 16

³⁴⁶ *Passio Adalberti*, 23

³⁴⁷ *Passio Adalberti*, 18.

the devil.³⁴⁸ Bruno also uses the mildly derogatory '*antiquam cantilenam cantat*' to describe Archbishop Willigis of Mainz's demand, and it may be no coincidence that he describes Willigis as 'zealous for the law' shortly before describing Adalbert's desire for the fruits of the Spirit. As a biblically-minded audience would surely have realised, Paul completed his description of the fruits of the Spirit by stating that 'there is no law against such things'.³⁴⁹ The Archbishop of Mainz's legalism is thus juxtaposed with Adalbert's spirituality.

This prioritisation of the personal and the spiritual over the law, even in opposition to the law, is a theme to which Bruno returned regularly, and which had many biblical echoes.³⁵⁰ As Adalbert ostensibly responded when criticised by the Archbishop of Ravenna for not wearing his episcopal attire,

'It is easy', he said, 'to carry a staff, difficult to render a reckoning when you come before the judge of the living and the dead, destined either for life or for the eternal fire of those who will be cast out.'³⁵¹

Bruno presents the spiritual and personal as higher than canon law, episcopal norms and responsibilities, and even the pope. Although Adalbert obeys the pope's command Bruno does not suggest that the judgement was just, instead using the episode to illustrate Adalbert's humility and obedience.

This emphasis on the spiritual and personal forms the wider context to Bruno's criticism of the Bohemians. It provides a distinct justification for Adalbert's attempts to leave Prague and, given Bruno's preoccupation with the spiritual, may have been the primary justification for this in Bruno's own mind. Certainly this would help account for Bruno's curtailing of Canaparius' rather more extensive attacks on the Bohemians.³⁵² It also influenced how Bruno conceived of the Bohemians, and much the same can be said of Prussians.

³⁴⁸ *Passio Adalberti*, 11.

³⁴⁹ Galatians 5.22-23.

³⁵⁰ Jeremiah 31.31; John 6.63; Luke 22.20; Romans 2.29, 3.27, 7.6; Hebrews 8.8, 8.13; I Corinthians 3.5, 11.25; II Corinthians 3.3, 3.6, 3.14, 11.23; I Peter 4.18; I Timothy 1.9.

³⁵¹ *Passio Adalberti*, 17.

³⁵² cf. *Vita Prior*, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20; *Passio Adalberti*, 11, 15, 16.

6.iv.d. The Prussians: The psychology of mission.

6.iv.d.i. Overview.

The Prussians are the most prominent pagan group in Bruno's *Passio Adalberti*. Paganism formed an important part of the backdrop to Bruno's thought and the Liutizi and the Saracens, whom Bruno classed as pagans, were integral to Bruno's critique of Otto II.³⁵³ But the Prussians play a critical role in the *Passio Adalberti* by providing the opportunity for Adalbert's martyrdom and, consequently, they receive the most extensive treatment of any pagan group. The general outline of Bruno's narrative echoes Canaparius' account, but Bruno alters and expands this freely, so that dynamics of his own text are quite different. Many factors shaped Bruno's account of the Prussians, including literary style, hagiographic convention and ethnographic hearsay, but the most influential factors were Bruno's interest in the realities of mission and the intensely reflective nature of his work. Above all, Bruno's description of Adalbert's mission to the Prussians is a reflection on martyrdom.

Bruno's account of Adalbert's mission to the Prussians and his martyrdom is spread over the final ten chapters of the work, and anticipated throughout. The account begins in the twenty-fourth chapter where Bruno describes Adalbert entering the 'Land of the Prussians' with the help of Bolesław Chrobry, and the rumour of his arrival spreading to the pagans.³⁵⁴ The twenty-fifth chapter provides us with the longest description of the Prussians. Adalbert and his two companions are met by a small group of Prussians, who lead them to the nearby marketplace after beating Adalbert with an oar. At the market Adalbert attempts to persuade the pagan crowd to convert to Christianity, but they remain hostile and state that they have no desire to abandon their current way of life.³⁵⁵ Discouraged, Bruno and his companions retreat, and consider how they might convert the Liutizi instead.³⁵⁶ But their preparations are in vain, as shortly afterwards a small group of barbarians captures them and Adalbert is martyred.³⁵⁷ The work ends with Bolesław Chrobry ransoming Adalbert's body, and a few miraculous signs which illustrate and affirm Adalbert's status as a martyr and intercessor.

³⁵³ *Passio Adalberti*, 10.

³⁵⁴ *Passio Adalberti*, 24.

³⁵⁵ *Passio Adalberti*, 25.

³⁵⁶ *Passio Adalberti*, 26.

³⁵⁷ *Passio Adalberti*, 26 and 26-33.

The space which Bruno dedicates to Adalbert's martyrdom – around a third of the *Passio Adalberti* – reflects the centrality of martyrdom in Bruno's version of the work. It is important to note that the narrative description of Adalbert's mission and physical martyrdom represent only a small proportion – approximately a quarter – of these ten chapters.³⁵⁸ The majority of this final section of the *Passio Adalberti* is occupied by Bruno's reflections on Adalbert's martyrdom, in the form of visions anticipating and affirming his martyrdom, and meditations on the psychological and spiritual process of martyrdom and its outcome. As with the Bohemians, Bruno's prioritisation of the personal and spiritual overshadows his description of the Prussians, both as the thought-world within which these descriptions are situated, and as an active influence on the descriptions themselves.

6.iv.d.ii. Anticipating mission.

Bruno anticipates Adalbert's mission and martyrdom throughout the *Passio Adalberti*, sometimes separately but often in tandem, for the two were closely linked in his mind.³⁵⁹ As in the *Vita Quinque*, Bruno presents missionary work as a good and desirable thing which is nonetheless overshadowed by the hope of something better, martyrdom.³⁶⁰ This prioritisation is reflected in Bruno's emphasis on martyrdom in the passages which anticipate Adalbert's missionary work and martyrdom, both in terms of the relative amount of time Bruno expends on each, and his descriptions of them. Thus Bruno wrote:

If he would catch no fish, at least he would drink the offered cup of the Son of God. The lofty hope burns in him of dying for Christ ³⁶¹

And:

The athlete of Christ, not seeing any crop of souls and carrying the hope of the desired death...said, 'the chance for the evangelized may certainly arrive; thus either we might gain a great treasure of found souls or, pouring out sweet life for sweetest Christ, we

³⁵⁸ *Passio Adalberti*, 24-34. The mission is described in 24-26, while Adalbert's physical death is mentioned briefly in 30, 32-33.

³⁵⁹ *Passio Adalberti*, 2, 4, 16, 18-20, 22, 25-34.

³⁶⁰ *Passio Adalberti*, 22, 24, 26 *Vita Quinque*, 2, 9, 10, 11, 32; Bruno, *Epistola*, pp. 97-98, 100.

³⁶¹ *Passio Adalberti*, 24.

might die with desired death... that Christ might gain a new people, or he might put an end to old desires.’³⁶²

Bruno’s anticipatory remarks on Adalbert’s mission and martyrdom act as a useful guide to the account itself. Bruno focuses more on martyrdom than mission, and both are viewed in terms of the spiritual condition of the missionary. The Prussians, meanwhile, merely facilitate these aims.

6.iv.d.iii. Adalbert’s journey.

Bruno begins his account of Adalbert’s mission by creating a sense of distance between the Land of the Prussians and Adalbert’s own world. Bruno had already nurtured the sense that mission was a step into the unknown, writing:

With your license I [Adalbert] would advance to the strange and famous peoples, to preach to those who do not know the name of the Lord.³⁶³

Adalbert was journeying into the exotic and peripheral, ‘to rend with the plough of God the uncultivated peoples.’³⁶⁴

Bruno helps to create this sense of distance by obscuring the location of the Prussians, while simultaneously maintaining the myth that Adalbert and his companions appeared to be coming from an unknown land, a refrain he returns to throughout the account.³⁶⁵ Bruno describes Adalbert receiving Bolesław Chrobry’s aid and advice in Gniezno, before travelling to the Land of the Prussians by sea.³⁶⁶ This section of Bruno’s account is uncharacteristically vague, and slightly misleading. The majority of Adalbert’s journey from Gniezno would not have been by sea. The most probable route for Adalbert’s journey to Prussia was to sail down the Vistula to Gdansk, and from there to Prussia. This is the route suggested by Canaparius, who notes that Adalbert stopped at Gdansk, after deliberating whether to preach to the Liutizi or the Prussians. Canaparius claims that Adalbert opted to go to the Prussians ‘since this land was closer and better known to the

³⁶² *Passio Adalberti*, 26.

³⁶³ *Passio Adalberti*, 18.

³⁶⁴ *Passio Adalberti*, 24.

³⁶⁵ *Passio Adalberti*, 24–26.

³⁶⁶ *Passio Adalberti*, 24–25.

said duke.³⁶⁷ Tellingly, Bruno omits these remarks, acknowledging only that Bolesław Chrobry advised Adalbert on his journey.³⁶⁸ The closest Bruno comes to recognising the geographical proximity of the Prussians is when he notes that Adalbert's journey only took a few days.³⁶⁹ Otherwise, he limits the geographical sense of the Land of the Prussians to a distant place across the sea.

Bruno's tendency to obscure and reduce the geographical clarity of the Land of the Prussians is intriguing, especially in the context of his interest in the realities of missionary work.³⁷⁰ It was not a matter of sources; the *Vita Prior* together with Bruno's own knowledge of northern geography, and the information which was presumably available to him through his Polish contacts, would have enabled him to provide a more accurate representation of the Prussians' location if he desired. It should be emphasised that the Prussians were not as distant as Bruno implies. They bordered the Poles and had many contacts with them, the most evident being war and trade.³⁷¹ We might also note Bolesław Chrobry's ability to ransom Adalbert's body, and Bruno's reference to a Prussian whose brother had been killed by the Poles, as evidence of the contacts between the Prussians and Poles.³⁷² Bruno presents the Prussians as geographically vague and distant, but not because he needed to.

Various factors may have contributed to this geographical imprecision. Bruno was writing hagiography, so topographical accuracy was not a requirement. Such vagueness might even enhance the timelessness of the narrative, tying Adalbert into a tradition of other missionary-martyrs who braved unknown lands. Certainly the established themes of the encounter between the missionary and his pagan audience can be seen at work in Bruno's narrative, and the anonymity of the pagan audience was an established part of this tradition. Bruno's narrative is centred on Adalbert's status as a missionary-martyr and the Prussians were supplementary to this. It was easier to fit Adalbert into the universalism of this image if the peculiarities of the Prussians were smoothed out, so that they appeared more pagan and less Prussian.

³⁶⁷ *Vita Prior*, 27, pp. 168, 169.

³⁶⁸ cf. *Passio Adalberti*, 24, 25; *Vita Prior*, 27, 28.

³⁶⁹ *Passio Adalberti*, 24.

³⁷⁰ Bruno, *Epistola*, pp. 98-100; *Vita Quinque*, 2, 9, 10, 11, 13; *Passio Adalberti*, 24-26, 29.

³⁷¹ Marek Franciszek Jagodziński and Maria Kasprzycka, 'The Early Medieval Craft and Commercial Centre at Janów Pomorski near Elbląg on the south Baltic coast', *Antiquity* 65 (1991), 696-715; Mateusz Bogucki 'Coin finds in the viking Age emporium at Janów Pomorski (Truso) and the 'Prussian phenomenon' ', in *Money Circulation in Antiquity, the Middle ages and Modern Times*, ed. by Sławomir Suchodolski and Mateusz Andrzej Bogucki (Warsaw-Cracow, Avalon, 2007), pp. 79-108; Andrzej Buko, ' "Tribal" Societies and the Rising of Early Medieval Trade: Archaeological Evidence from Polish Lands (eights- tenth centuries)', in *Post Roman Towns, Trade and Settlements in Europe and Byzantium*, ed. by Joachim Henning (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), pp. 431-450; Anton Englert and Athena Trakadas.

³⁷² *Passio Adalberti*, 30, 34

Bruno's simplification of Adalbert's journey reduces it to a single element, the sea. In terms of transport, economics, communication and political power, the sea was more of a conduit than a barrier; seasons, tides and weather permitting, at least. Highlands, dense woodland, or marshes were often greater impediments to travel, and at times the literature reflects these realities.³⁷³ However, within the literary framework of the *Passio Adalberti*, the sea acts as a boundary separating the pagan Prussians from the Christian world. The sea provides a physical barrier, creating the kind of unambiguous separation which was absent on land, where Christian and pagan populations were intermingled.³⁷⁴ Adalbert travels from Christian to pagan, with no troubling conceptual middle ground between the two.

Furthermore, in the Old Testament the sea often provides an image of spiritual chaos and earthly troubles.³⁷⁵ Classical authors similarly evoked the idea of an untameable and fearsome sea, epitomised in the surrounding Ocean.³⁷⁶ By Bruno's time, the image of the sea was an established part of the repertoire of theological and spiritual literature. Bruno himself used a ship coming into harbour as an image of escape from the world to the spiritual life.³⁷⁷ In his *Moralia in Job* Gregory the Great had described the pagan nations as a stormy sea that would be stilled by the Word of God.³⁷⁸ Bruno knew Gregory's works extremely well, citing him regularly, and he may have had this passage in mind when he described Adalbert sailing to meet the pagans.³⁷⁹

While Bruno's account is geographically unsatisfying, it is wholly appropriate when viewed within a theological or literary framework. The image of Adalbert crossing the sea to face the pagans evokes a sense of separation, and of the saint setting out into a turbulent and (spiritually) chaotic world. This is precisely the theme of the *Passio Adalberti* and, indeed, of Bruno's own career. Given Bruno's focus and the hagiographical context, it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that his account of Adalbert's journey to the Prussians is better understood in terms of Bruno's reflective and spiritual concerns, than his ethnographic or geographic knowledge. The wider effect of Bruno's obscuration of the Prussians' location is that it foregrounds the other aspects of his account. His silence on

³⁷³ Robert Bartlett, 'Heartland and Border: The Mental and Physical Geography of Medieval Europe', in *Power and Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Huw Pryce (Oxford: OUP, 2007), pp. 23-36.

³⁷⁴ Sławomir Wadył, 'Borders of early medieval Old Prussia in light of the written accounts and archaeological data', in *Swój i "obcy". Materiały z I Międzynarodowej Sesji Humanistycznej* (Warsaw: In tempore, 2009), pp. 47-60.

³⁷⁵ Job 7.12, 26.12-14, 28.12-14; Psalm 65.5-7, 66.5-7, 74.12-14, 89.8-10, 93.1-5; Isaiah 17.12, 23.11, 26.21-27.1, 57.20.

³⁷⁶ Pliny, ii. 160-170; Macrobius, ii. 5; Orosius, i. 2.

³⁷⁷ *Passio Adalberti*, 17. cf. 10.

³⁷⁸ Gregory the Great, *Moralia*, 27. xxi.

³⁷⁹ *Passio Adalberti*, 11, 15, 17, 19, 24, 25, 31, 32, 34.

geographic matters allows the sense of cultural, linguistic, and spiritual distance cultivated by Bruno to dominate the reader's understanding of the Prussians.

6.iv.d.iv. Adalbert's arrival.

This sense of distance and antagonism underlies Bruno's description of Adalbert's initial encounter with the Prussians. Bruno describes Adalbert coming into the Land of the Prussians at an isolated place encircled by a river, like an island.³⁸⁰ There, 'the sailors hurried to drop off their holy cargo and, returning with nocturnal aid, they seized secure flight.'³⁸¹ The sailors' flight to safety and sense of isolation are both Bruno's additions, and act to accentuate a sense of the Land of the Prussians as a fearful place, separate from the world of Bruno and his audience. Bruno adds to this sense of distance and separation by explicitly framing the mission as a first encounter of sorts. Hence the Land of the Prussians is 'unknowing of God', Adalbert and his companions appear as 'strangers in unknown dress, from an unheard of land', and the Prussians 'gnash in an unknown barbarism'.³⁸² Both implicitly and explicitly, Adalbert was entering a world which was entirely strange and unknown. In terms of the wider contacts between the Prussians and the outside world, this is nonsensical. Yet in terms of the psychology of mission and its theological and literary justifications, such a sense of separation was far more appropriate than the physical realities of an overlapping and interconnected world. For the individual missionary such a venture could indeed feel like entering a strange and hostile world, not least as the conceptual underpinnings of mission rested on the sense of a fundamental difference between Christian and pagan. Mission was intertwined with a sense of difference, and Bruno's account of Adalbert's arrival draws on this.

Bruno continues to develop this sense of distance in his account of Adalbert's first encounter with the Prussians. Mirroring Canaparius' account he describes a small group of Prussians arriving by boat, who warn Adalbert and his companions to leave.³⁸³ One of them, described as 'the worst of evils', beats Adalbert with an oar while he sits meditating on the Psalms.³⁸⁴ Both accounts juxtapose Adalbert's piety with the Prussians' violent barbarism. The assailants are anonymous, characterised by their hostility, and their role is to silhouette

³⁸⁰ *Passio Adalberti*, 24.

³⁸¹ *Passio Adalberti*, 24.

³⁸² *Passio Adalberti*, 25.

³⁸³ cf. *Passio Adalberti*, 25; *Vita Prior*, 28.

³⁸⁴ *Passio Adalberti*, 25.

Adalbert's virtue. Hence when he is struck, Adalbert thanks God for the opportunity to suffer in His name.³⁸⁵

Bruno underlined the disparity between Adalbert and his attackers by adding several lines on Adalbert's joy at being permitted to suffer for Christ.³⁸⁶ He also expanded Canaparius' description of Adalbert quietly reading with a statement on the authoritative and salvific nature of the Psalms.³⁸⁷ Both of these changes act as useful reminders that Bruno was writing as an ascetic, most likely as part of his devotions in his cell. His description of the Bohemians owes at least as much to this environment as it does to the realities of Adalbert's mission.

Bruno's choice of language reflects the spiritual and literary concerns of this environment. He writes:

They gnash in an unknown barbarism... They smoke with great anger and interrogate the strangers.³⁸⁸

Jadwiga Karwasińska connected the phrase '*Barbarum nescio quid fremunt*' with Jerome's description of Paul of Thebes' encounter with a centaur in the desert.³⁸⁹ Such an allusion, associating the Prussians with a monster whose mutterings Paul was unable to decipher, would not be out of place in Bruno's negative portrayal of the Prussians, which includes suggestions of monstrosity. Yet there are limitations to this interpretation, assuming that Bruno intended such an allusion to be recognized, rather than act as a convenient stylistic model. Crucially, the monsters which Paul meets are deeply ambiguous; Jerome claimed that he did not know whether the centaur was good or bad, and in the following chapter he inverts the normal order of things by contrasting the God-fearing satyrs with the monster-worshipping Alexandrians.³⁹⁰ A better point of reference might be Gregory the Great's remarks on the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons in his *Moralia in Job*. Describing the conversion of the ends of the earth, Gregory wrote that the Britons, who previously knew only how to gnash barbarisms, now sing allelujahs.³⁹¹ Adam of Bremen would draw on this verse when describing the conversion of the North, and Bruno himself drew on the works of

³⁸⁵ *Passio Adalberti*, 25; *Vita Prior*, 28; Acts 5.1.

³⁸⁶ cf. *Passio Adalberti*, 25; *Vita Prior*, 28.

³⁸⁷ cf. *Passio Adalberti*, 25; *Vita Prior*, 28.

³⁸⁸ *Passio Adalberti*, 25.

³⁸⁹ *Passio Adalberti*, 25 cf. Jerome, *Vita S. Pauli Primi Eremitae*, PL 23, cols. 13-61, 7.

³⁹⁰ Jerome, *Vita S. Pauli*, 7, 8.

³⁹¹ Gregory the Great, *Moralia*, xxvii. 11.

Gregory intensively, especially in the *Passio Adalberti*.³⁹² An allusion to this section of the *Moralia*, with its focus on mission and salvation, would fit more closely with Bruno's concerns. It would also link into a spiritual interpretation of Adalbert's voyage to Prussia, for in the same chapter Gregory compares the conversion of the pagan nations to a stormy sea which would be stilled by the Word of God.³⁹³

6.iv.d.v. The description of the Prussians in the *Passio Adalberti*.

6.iv.d.vi. Translation and initial qualifications.

Having described Adalbert's violent reception in Prussia, Bruno goes on to imagine his confrontation with a crowd of Prussians at the nearby marketplace.³⁹⁴ This section of the *Passio Adalberti*, which continues to echo Canaparius' account, is our primary evidence for Bruno's attitude towards the Prussians. Indeed, the various versions of the *Passio Adalberti* provide our principal narrative accounts of the Prussians in this period. Given the importance of this passage, and the absence of an English translation, a large part of the passage is translated here. Bruno writes:

(Chapter twenty-five)

They come into the market, where a wave of people flowed around them. The heads of dogs suddenly surround the heavenly man in a great crowd. They spread out bloody jaws; they ask, 'where is he from? What would he seek? Why has he come who no one called?' The wolves thirst for blood; they threaten death to him who would carry life to them... They shrink back and they deride, for they do not know better. They command him to speak and stir their heads. The man girds his loins, he opens his mouth and, because many are unable to hear, he addresses them briefly.

'From the land of the Poles where your neighbour Bolesław rules in the Christian dominion, I come to you for your salvation; the servant of Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and all living things. I come to lift you out from the hand of the

³⁹² Adam of Bremen 4. xlv (42); *Passio Adalberti*, 11, 15, 17, 19, 24, 25, 31, 32, 34.

³⁹³ Gregory the Great, *Moralia*, xxvii. 11. cf. *Vita Prior*, 28.

³⁹⁴ cf. *Passio Adalberti*, 25; *Vita Prior*, 28.

devil³⁹⁵ and from the jaws of hell's demon, so that you might know your creator and put aside sacrilegious rites... and cleansed in the bath of salvation you might be made Christians in Christ, having in Him the forgiveness of sins and the kingdom of the eternal heavens.'... they mocked the heavenly words. They beat the earth with sticks; they fill the air with bellowing. Yet their hands do not strike, however they... say, 'Because of such men our land will not give fruit, trees do not produce, new animals are not being born, and the old die. Leave our borders quickly, if you do not... you will die an evil death...' ³⁹⁶

(Chapter twenty-six)

The athlete of Christ, not seeing any crop of souls and carrying the hope of the desired death, poured out his spirit and, affected with great sadness, he turned over the various passions of anxieties in his pure chest. He turned to his brothers and said, 'having been oppressed by such great obstacles, what counsel are we taking? Whither we should turn I do not know! ... I see that a dread of our clothing injures the pagan souls not a little. If it would appease them, we might change our clothes... allow our hair to grow ... resembling them we might live alongside them, speak and live with them... a chance for the evangelized may certainly arrive; thus either we might gain a great treasure of found souls or, pouring out sweet life for sweetest Christ, we might die with desired death... that Christ might gain a new people, or he might put an end to old desires.' ³⁹⁷

The term 'Prussians' is used here for convenience; without coining a new term, none of the alternatives appear preferable. The term is not wholly anachronistic, but it is useful to consider its place in Bruno's thought; its relative importance and constituent elements. Bruno's account of Adalbert's confrontation with the crowd in the marketplace is imbued with a sense of a distinct land and place, with its own people and customs.³⁹⁸ However, Bruno uses the term 'Prussian' only three times in his work. He uses it twice in the twenty-fourth chapter when describing Adalbert's intention to travel to the Land (or Lands) of the Prussians. He also mentions Adalbert of Magdeburg's appointment as *episcopus Pruzis*

³⁹⁵ Or 'from the devil's gang'. Bruno often uses '*manu*' for 'gang' or 'group'.

³⁹⁶ *Passio Adalberti*, 25.

³⁹⁷ *Passio Adalberti*, 25, 26.

³⁹⁸ *Passio Adalberti*, 25.

gentium. However, Adalbert was sent to the Rus, not the Prussians, so this appears to be either an extremely loose understanding of the Prussians which encompassed the Rus, or a simple error.³⁹⁹ That a later scribe corrected the phrase to ‘*episcopus Ruzis*’ may suggest the latter. Otherwise, Bruno did not explicitly frame his account in terms of the Prussians. Indeed, beyond his description of Adalbert’s marketplace confrontation, there is little sense of the Prussians as a people. Adalbert’s killers, for instance, are not directly connected with the Prussians in Bruno’s *Passio Adalberti*, unlike in Canaparius’ version.⁴⁰⁰ We can see the significance of the Prussians as antagonists for Bruno’s hero, as a *gens* with its own place in salvation history, and as an opportunity to reflect on missionary strategy or locate Adalbert within a universal encounter between Christianity and paganism. Yet Bruno’s interest in the Prussians as an ethnic, political or cultural group should not be overstated. The term is useful, but we should not be misled by a misplaced sense of familiarity; modern intuitions about the nature of ethnic or political groups are clumsy tools for analysing medieval texts.

6.iv.d.vii. Bruno’s missionary concerns: The twenty-sixth chapter of the *Passio Adalberti*.

It is helpful to begin an analysis of Bruno’s account of Adalbert’s encounter with the Prussian crowd by examining his account of Adalbert’s response to this encounter in chapter twenty-six. Bruno’s preoccupation with the spiritual, psychological, and practical realities of mission is clearly visible. Bruno describes Adalbert’s decision to set out for the Liutizi, in the hope that ‘Christ might gain a new people, or he might find an end to old desires.’⁴⁰¹ Bruno reflects on Adalbert’s despair at being rejected by the Prussians and his decision to change his appearance so that he might approach the Liutizi more easily. No such passage exists in Canaparius’ account. In an earlier section, omitted by Bruno, Canaparius had claimed that Adalbert considered travelling to the Liutizi when he was in Gdansk.⁴⁰² Other than this detail, Bruno’s account is entirely his own creation.

The key issue is not whether the account is fictitious or not – the nature of the relevant sources does not allow a meaningful judgement on this matter – but that in terms of the overall narrative of the *Passio Adalberti*, the episode is a non-event. As Bruno noted at

³⁹⁹ *Passio Adalberti*, 4. cf. Regino of Prüm, *Chronicon*, an. 961. Alternatively, Bruno may have been attempting to associate Adalbert of Prague with his namesake.

⁴⁰⁰ cf. *Passio Adalberti*, 30, 32-33; *Vita Prior*, 30.

⁴⁰¹ *Passio Adalberti*, 26.

⁴⁰² *Vita Prior*, 27; *Passio Adalberti*, 24.

the end of the chapter, Adalbert's plans swiftly came to nothing because he was captured and martyred soon after. More than anything the passage appears to reflect Bruno's missionary concerns; both his past experiences and his anticipation of future missions. Similar passages can be found in the *Vita Quinque*, where Bruno sets aside his narrative concerns to explore his personal interest in mission.⁴⁰³

Bruno uses the twenty-sixth chapter to provide a nuanced imagining of a missionary confronted with failure. He is sensitive to the conflicting emotions faced by the missionary; desire, sadness, passion, confusion, joy, and weariness. He also demonstrates a good sense of the practicalities of mission. The tactics which he proposes are conspicuously modest and based around empathy for the missionary's audience. They are strikingly different to the more dramatic confrontations favoured by many hagiographers. Instead, the account is characterised by its practicality and psychological realism.⁴⁰⁴

It is important to recognise that this understanding did not exist outside of Bruno's spiritual concerns, but was embedded in them.⁴⁰⁵ We should be careful when trying to separate the more mundane aspects of Bruno's thought from the spiritual. Every aspect of his account is drenched in religious language. He presents Adalbert as an athlete of Christ, competing for a 'crop of souls' or 'the desired death'.⁴⁰⁶ The Liutizi who inhabit the 'hated land' worshipping 'dumb idols', are to be converted by 'the mercy of the Saviour' while the missionaries nurture the Psalms in their hearts.⁴⁰⁷ Bruno gives us little reason to distinguish such language from his more down-to-earth remarks on missionary tactics and psychology. Indeed, the extent to which Bruno's remarks are intermingled argues against making such a distinction; Christian ideals and rhetoric could be transformed into tools for thinking about the pagan world. Bruno provides us with a plausible representation of the mindset of an early medieval missionary, in which painstaking (and painful) realism was drenched with a sense of the spiritual.

6.iv.d.viii. Adalbert's appeal to the Prussians.

Bruno's excursus on missionary tactics and psychology in the twenty-sixth chapter acts as a useful point of reference for analysing his description of the Prussians in chapter twenty-five. Although it is tempting to focus on the ethnographical and hagiographical

⁴⁰³ *Vita Quinque*, 10, 13; Ian N. Wood, 'Shoes and a fish dinner', pp. 252-254.

⁴⁰⁴ Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 217-220; Ian N. Wood, 'Shoes and a fish dinner', p. 253.

⁴⁰⁵ cf. I Corinthians 9.20-23.

⁴⁰⁶ *Passio Adalberti*, 26. cf. I Corinthians 9.25, 27; II Timothy 2.5.

⁴⁰⁷ *Passio Adalberti*, 26.

aspects of Adalbert's dramatic encounter with the Prussians, Bruno's personal concern for the psychological, practical, and spiritual aspects of missionary work remains crucial, and the wider context of the chapter should alert us to this.

The outline of Adalbert's speech remains the same in both versions; Adalbert announces that he has come to persuade the Prussians to abandon their paganism and become Christians.⁴⁰⁸ But the details and tone of the accounts varies significantly. Describing Adalbert's speech, Canaparius writes:

I am a Slav by birth, Adalbert by name, a monk by profession, and once a bishop by rank, and now by function – your apostle. Your salvation is the purpose of our journey; that you abandon your deaf and dumb idols and recognize your Maker, who alone is God, and besides whom there is no other; and that you may come to life, believing in His name, and be found worthy to receive the reward of celestial joys in the imperishable dwellings.⁴⁰⁹

Canaparius uses his account of Adalbert's speech as an opportunity to reiterate Adalbert's credentials. His appeal to the Prussians is based on the promise of heaven, the exclusivity and power of the Christian God, and the ineffectiveness of the Prussians' idols. The Prussians probably did have idols of sorts – in the form of the enigmatic *babas* – but Canaparius' choice of phrase and his distance from events suggests that his description owed more to Old Testament *topoi* than any familiarity with Prussian religion.⁴¹⁰

Canaparius goes on to describe the Prussians' angry response to Adalbert's speech. 'Shouting blasphemous words', the crowd threatened Adalbert and his companions and rejected his appeal, saying:

This entire realm, to which we stand as gateway, and we ourselves obey one common law and have one single way of life! But you, who have a different law, unknown to us, will lose your heads tomorrow if you do not go away tonight!⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁸ cf. *Vita Prior*, 28 *Passio Adalberti*, 25.

⁴⁰⁹ *Vita Prior*, 28, pp. 172, 173.

⁴¹⁰ For instance, Deuteronomy 7.25; I Kings 12.30, 14.23; II Kings 16.4; Isaiah 2.20, 17.8, 30.22, 57.5; Jeremiah 13.27; Ezekiel 6.4, 18.6, 20.28, 36.25; Hosea 14.8. Sławomir Wadył and Paweł Szczepaniak, 'A Comparative Analysis of Early Medieval North-West Slavonic and West Baltic Sacred Landscapes: An Introduction to the Problems', *Networks and Neighbours*, 2, 1 (2014), 1-19; Sławomir Wadył, 'The sacred sphere of Prussian life in the early Middle Ages', in *Sacred space in the state of the Teutonic Order in Prussia* ed. by Wenta Jarosław (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2013), pp. 39-58.

⁴¹¹ *Vita Prior*, 29, pp. 172, 173.

In Canaparius' account the Prussian's rejection of Adalbert rests solely on a sense of difference; Adalbert is Christian, and they are not. Like the reference to Prussian idols, this is not implausible; a Prussian sense of *Wirgefüh* is conceivable, especially in a situation where an outsider approached them as a coherent group. Yet the explanation is a very limited one, and one which echoes the Christian/ pagan dichotomy underlying the whole episode. Like Bruno's description of the Bohemians, or Adam's reimaginings of dramatic missionary confrontations, the fundamental dynamic of the account is the polarisation of the missionary and his audience. This polarisation acts both to glorify the missionary, whose virtues are displayed by the confrontation, but also to embody and enact the fundamental antagonism between Christian and pagan. It appeals to the Christian/ pagan dichotomy legitimising and defining missionary work, evoking a boundary which echoes and buttresses a Christian sense of self. The Prussians' response does little more than reaffirm this boundary; the Prussians choose to remain different because they are different. The argument is limited and tautological, but in the context of Canaparius' overall narrative of Adalbert's sanctity, nothing more was required.

Bruno's account of Adalbert's speech is slightly longer, and shows greater sensitivity to the problems faced by a missionary addressing a pagan audience. Bruno prefaces Adalbert's speech with the comment:

They deride, for they do not know better... The man girds his loins, he opens his mouth and, because many are unable to hear, addresses them briefly.⁴¹²

Bruno's awareness of the physicality of the situation suggests a practicality and empathy lacking in Canaparius' account, and brings to mind Bruno's account of his own missionary work amongst the Petchenegs.⁴¹³ This awareness is expressed both in his recognition of the practicalities of addressing a large audience in a crowded place, and in the moment of mental and spiritual preparation suggested by the biblical 'girds his loins'.⁴¹⁴ While doing nothing to downplay the hostility of the crowd, Bruno qualifies their antagonism, saying 'for they do not know better.'⁴¹⁵ This phrase '*melius enim non sciunt*' echoes Luke's account of

⁴¹² *Passio Adalberti*, 26.

⁴¹³ Bruno, *Epistola*, pp. 98-100.

⁴¹⁴ Exodus 12.11; I Kings 20.32; II Kings 4.29, 9.1; Job 38.3, 40.7; Jeremiah 1.17; Ezekiel 44.18; Ephesians 6.14; I Peter 1.13.

⁴¹⁵ *Passio Adalberti*, 25.

Jesus' last words, '*Pater, dimitte illis: non enim sciunt quid faciunt.*'⁴¹⁶ Adalbert is thus linked to the ultimate model of martyrdom and virtue, and the dynamics of Calvary. Like Jesus, Adalbert faced unequivocal hostility, yet this hostility was framed by the possibility of future salvation. Bruno was in no way abandoning or rejecting Canaparius' polarising condemnation of the Prussians; this dichotomy was equally important to his narrative, and the conceptual underpinnings of mission. But this polarisation is overlaid with an awareness of the humanising and moderating attitudes necessary for successful missionary work. The Prussians were both pagans, and potential Christians. This paradoxical combination of a polarising rhetoric evoking a Christian/ pagan dichotomy, and more modest sense of the realities of missionary work, is characteristic of Bruno's account of Adalbert's mission to the Prussians.

In Bruno's account Adalbert says almost nothing about himself, and the credentials which he does emphasise are political. This is a markedly more practical approach to missionary rhetoric than that envisaged by Canaparius. Political sponsorship was invaluable to missionary work; both as a source of material support and protection, and as a significant factor in the conversion process. Conversion was often more political than personal, and the sponsorship of a mission by a neighbouring power could be an important factor determining the success or failure of a mission.⁴¹⁷ Indeed, Adalbert's decision to work amongst the Prussians rather than the Liutizi was almost certainly bound up with Bolesław Chrobry's own political ambitions. Canaparius explains the decision by claiming that 'this land was closer and better known to the said duke', but this is not entirely convincing, as the Poles neighboured both.⁴¹⁸ Bolesław's alliance against the Liutizi following the uprising of 983 may be more relevant, particularly as Otto III was campaigning against at least some of the Polabian Slavs in 997.⁴¹⁹ War was not conducive to mission, as Bruno complained in his letter to Henry.⁴²⁰ Mission to the Prussians probably appeared to be the safer and more promising option. The nuances of Bolesław's motivations are lost to us, but his self-identification as a Christian ruler must surely have been a factor.⁴²¹ Better documented missions also underline the potential for establishing and enhancing ecclesiastical and

⁴¹⁶ Luke 23.34; Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 218.

⁴¹⁷ For instance, Nicholas J. Higham, *The Convert Kings: Power and Religious Affiliation in Early Anglo-Saxon* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997); Dušan Třeštík, pp. 7-59; Anders Winroth, pp. 41-60, 138-144; Dag Strömbäck, pp. 90-108; Bruno, *Epistola*, pp. 99, 104.

⁴¹⁸ *Vita Prior*, 27, pp. 168, 169.

⁴¹⁹ Thietmar iv. 22, 28.

⁴²⁰ Bruno, *Epistola*, p. 105.

⁴²¹ Radosław Kotecki, 'The Idea of "defensio ecclesiae" and Its Resonances in Earlier Medieval Poland (X/XIth - XIIIth Century)', *Roczniki Historii Kościoła*, 4, 59 (2012), 51-84.

political authority through sponsored missions. Such contact could be mutually beneficial, facilitating diplomacy, a degree of protection from other Christian rulers, and delivering ‘the gift of Christianity’.⁴²²

The remainder of Bruno’s account of Adalbert’s speech to the Prussians similarly reflects his concern for the realities of missionary work. Like Canaparius, he describes Adalbert calling for the Prussians to convert to Christianity. But Bruno’s version of Adalbert’s speech is noticeably more explanatory. Adalbert sets out who the Christian God is through familiar points of reference (‘Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and all the living’), threatens his audience with supernatural retribution (a credible threat in most pre-modern societies), promises future rewards, and sets out his purpose clearly; he desires to make them Christian.⁴²³

Bruno’s approach is not untouched by literary concerns; he may have had Paul’s Unknown God in mind, and the language and structure of his appeal was far from original.⁴²⁴ Nor did it necessarily have any greater chance of success; this would very much depend on the intuitions of Adalbert’s audience, which are largely inaccessible to us. But Bruno’s decision to replace Canaparius’ account with what appears to be a clearer, more comprehensive and persuasive speech is indicative of Bruno’s desire to reflect on the practicalities of mission. Accordingly, it also provides an indication of the kind of arguments which Bruno felt might have been effective.

6.iv.d.ix. The Prussians’ response.

Bruno’s account of the Prussians’ response to Adalbert is similarly shaped around his interest in missionary work. Canaparius accounts for the Prussians’ rejection of Christianity in terms of difference; Adalbert is a Christian, they are pagan.⁴²⁵ Besides saying that the Lord hardened the Prussians’ hearts, this is perhaps the least uncomfortable rejection of Christianity which Canaparius might have formulated.⁴²⁶ It builds on and confirms the sense of antagonism between Christian and pagan which Canaparius was already developing in

⁴²² Anders Winroth, pp. 41-60, 138-144; Nicholas J. Higham, *The Convert Kings: Power and Religious Affiliation in Early Anglo-Saxon* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997); Dušan Třeštík, 7-59; Dag Strömbäck, pp. 71-72, 91-104; Bruno, *Epistola*, pp. 99, 104; Rimbart, 24, 26, 35, 36; Adam, 3. xviii (17).

⁴²³ *Passio Adalberti*, 25.

⁴²⁴ Acts 17.22-31.

⁴²⁵ *Vita Prior*, 28.

⁴²⁶ Exodus 7.13, 8.15, 8.32, 9.34 14.17; I Samuel 6.6; Psalm 95.8; Proverbs 28.14; Isaiah 63.17.

the passage. It does not require the audience to think anything new; it merely affirms that pagans are different.

Bruno's account is much less comfortable. He has the Prussians claim that the mere presence of the missionaries was a risk to the well-being of the land itself. Bruno is cursory, yet the argument he presents is both plausible and compelling. Christian missionaries appear to have emphasised the external, practical benefits of allegiance to the Christian God, and the inadequacies of His rivals.⁴²⁷ The rationale of the Prussians' argument was recognisable and reasonable by early medieval standards. Bruno imagines a situation in which Adalbert's failure is deeply discomfiting.

Such discomfiture, like Bruno's description of Adalbert's subsequent distress in chapter twenty-six, does little to support the narrative of Adalbert's sanctity. Indeed, the momentary humanisation of the Prussians undermines the polarisation of the missionary and his audience which acted to support this narrative. Again, the most likely explanation for Bruno's departure from Canaparius' model is Bruno's personal interest in the realities of mission. Such confrontations could be deeply uncomfortable for the missionary, as Bruno recognised in his *Epistola ad Heinricum*.⁴²⁸ And unlike Canaparius, Bruno had reasons to consider such discomfiture in his account of Adalbert's mission to the Prussians.

The barbarous crowd.

6.iv.d.x. The Prussians: Slavs and dogs' heads.

Both Bruno and Canaparius frame Adalbert's appeal and the Prussians' response within a description of Adalbert's audience. Both describe the crowd in negative terms, with Bruno drawing on Canaparius' work extensively.⁴²⁹ The remainder of this chapter is dedicated to picking apart the many and varied influences which shaped Bruno's account of the barbarous crowd; the monstrous, geographical, ethnic, political, cultural, linguistic, psychological, missionary, literary and religious ideas shaping Bruno's thought. It emphasises the variety, ambiguity and idiosyncrasy of Bruno's account, using Canaparius'

⁴²⁷ Rimbert, 19, 27, 30; Adam, 4. xxii (2); Lutz E. von Padberg., *Die Inszenierung religiöser Konfrontationen: Theorie und Praxis der Missionspredigt im frühen Mittelalter* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 2003); Richard E Sullivan, pp. 714-720.

⁴²⁸ Bruno, *Epistola*, pp. 98-100.

⁴²⁹ cf. *Passio Adalberti*, 25; *Vita Prior*, 28.

version of the *Passio* and Bruno's *Epistola ad Heinricum Regem* to illuminate Bruno's description of the Prussians.

Canaparius writes that in response to Adalbert's speech the Prussians:

Started hitting the ground with their sticks, giving his head a nudge or two with their cudgels, and for a long time gnashed their gruesome teeth at him.⁴³⁰

Like Bruno and Gregory the Great, Canaparius associated pagans with gnashing teeth, '*infrendunt dire dentibus in eum*'. The language echoes Psalm 34.16 – '*frenduerunt super me dentibus suis*' – and the sentiment of sinners gnashing their teeth, in this life and the next, appears in various forms throughout the Bible. Given Canaparius' choice of verb, *infrendere*, we might connect this statement with Gregory the Great's *Moralia*, a work he had referenced more explicitly only a few lines earlier.⁴³¹

Curiously, Bruno explicitly refuted the physical violence described by Canaparius, specifying that 'their hands do not strike.'⁴³² Yet he retained the sense of hostility which Canaparius associates with the Prussian crowd, amplifying it at times. Canaparius described the Prussians as a 'spineless crowd' who 'stood by watching with rabid snarls, like dogs,' echoing the words of Lucan and Juvenal.⁴³³ Bruno intensifies this sentiment, describing the crowd as 'wolves' and 'the heads of dogs', who 'spread out savage jaws.'⁴³⁴ To a modern audience the principal component of Bruno's description is its rhetorical effect. His description is polemical and derogatory, acting to reinforce the polarisation of Adalbert and his audience developed throughout the passage. Within the context of early medieval literature this rhetorical element is certainly significant, but issues of monstrosity, ethnicity and literature are also significant.

The image of dog was not unambiguously negative, as Miłosz Sosnowski largely recognised in his analysis of this passage.⁴³⁵ Within a biblical or exegetical context – *the* points of reference for early medieval literature – dogs could symbolise both positive and negative traits. They could signify sin or rejection, but they might also represent positive traits, such as fidelity. Thus medieval exegetes could interpret the commandment, 'do not

⁴³⁰ *Vita Prior*, 28.

⁴³¹ cf. Gregory the Great, *Moralia*, viii.52; *Vita Prior*, 28; Job 16.9; Psalm 35.16, 37.12, 112.10; Lamentations 2.16; Matthew 8.12, 25.30; Luke 13.28.

⁴³² *Passio Adalberti*, 25.

⁴³³ cf. *Vita Prior*, 28, pp. 170–171; Lucan, 5. 363–64; Juvenal, 10. 271–72.

⁴³⁴ *Passio Adalberti*, 25.

⁴³⁵ Miłosz Sosnowski ' "Prussians as Bees, Prussians as Dogs": Metaphors and the Depiction of Pagan Society in the Early Hagiography of St. Adalbert of Prague', *Reading Medieval Studies*, 39 (2013), 25–48 (pp. 29–34).

eat the meat of an animal torn by wild beasts; throw it to the dogs' as representing a reward for the dogs' silence during the exodus from Egypt.⁴³⁶ Nonetheless, the derogatory connotations of Bruno's reference to dogs and wolves must have been clear within such an antagonistic context, as such a usage was not unusual. Bruno himself drew on the negative connotations surrounding dogs in his works. He used dogs to signify his own sinfulness and, more pertinently, described both the killers of the five brothers and the Rimini mob which lynched the priest Rothulf as dogs.⁴³⁷

Ian Wood has connected Bruno's reference to 'heads of dogs' (*'capita canum'*) with the widespread expectation that *cynocephali* could be found in the North. Furthermore, he has suggested that this belief may have had some foundation in the realities of the North, citing the dog-like masks excavated at the trading centre of Haithabu / Hedeby.⁴³⁸

Miłosz Sosnowski has raised a number of objections to this argument, seeking to emphasise instead the moral and symbolic connotations of Bruno's description of the Prussians as dogs.⁴³⁹ There is much to be said for the literary approach adopted by Sosnowski, but his criticisms on this point are far from conclusive. Nor, it should be said, are they intended to be. Sosnowski emphasises the distance between Haithabu and Prussia, arguing that the Haithabu masks should not be treated as representative of Prussian culture.⁴⁴⁰ This is reasonable, for while the two were certainly interconnected – Wulfstan claimed that it took him seven days to travel between Haithabu and Truso – the archaeological evidence suggests that Prussia was in many ways distinct.⁴⁴¹ However, the key issue (and Wood's subject-matter) is not the reality of Prussian society, but accepted ideas about the North. The *cynocephali* were closely associated with the North and, crucially, very few authors displayed any scruples about treating the North as an essentially homogeneous region; the differences between Haithabu and Truso may not have presented a barrier to applying the stereotypes of one to the other.

⁴³⁶ Exodus 11.7; Deuteronomy 23.18; Judges 7.5; I Samuel 17.43, 24.14; II Samuel 3.8, 9.8, 16.9; I Kings 14.11, 16.4, 21.23-24, 22.38; II Kings 8.13, 9.10; Ecclesiastes 9.4; Psalm 22.16, 22.20, 68.23; Proverbs 26.11, 26.17; Job 18.11; Isaiah 56.11; Jeremiah 15.3; Matthew 7.6, 15.26; Luke 16.21; Philippians 3.2; 2 Peter 2.22; Revelation 22.15; Hraban Maur, *de Universo*, viii. 1; Isidore, *Etymologiae*, xii, 2, 25-26; Sophia Menache, 'Dogs: God's Worst Enemies?', *Society and Animals*, 5 (1997), 23-44.

⁴³⁷ *Vita Quinque*, preface, 10, 13.

⁴³⁸ Ian N. Wood, 'Categorising the cynocephali', pp. 130, 133, 134; Ian N Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 219.

⁴³⁹ Miłosz Sosnowski, pp. 29-34.

⁴⁴⁰ Miłosz Sosnowski, p. 32.

⁴⁴¹ 'Oththere and Wulfstan in the Old English Orosius', ed. by Janet Bately, in *Oththere's voyages: a late 9th-century account of voyages along the coasts of Norway and Denmark and its cultural context*, ed by. Anton Englert and Janet Bately, (Roskilde: Viking Ship Museum 2007), pp. 18-39. See p. 220 fn. 434.

Furthermore, although the literary context is indeed crucial, it is also deeply ambiguous; the *cynocephali* were both a literary trope *and* a matter of genuine concern for those seriously trying to understand the North. Given the ubiquity of the *cynocephali* in early medieval imaginings of the North, it would be surprising if Bruno and his audience did not connect the ‘heads of dogs’ with such rumours. However, given the brevity of Bruno’s reference, the extent of this association and its relation to the realities of the North remains unclear.

The comparison of the Prussians with dogs may also have had ethnic connotations, largely independent of any associations with monstrosity. An enduring slur against the Slavs was to describe them as dogs, a trope which has recently been explored in great detail by Geneviève Bührer-Thierry.⁴⁴² Like the rumours of northern *cynocephali*, this notion appears sufficiently widespread and established for us to expect that many medieval readers would have associated it with Adalbert’s confrontation with the Prussians, at least to some degree.

Sosnowski has questioned the applicability of this trope to the Prussians as the Prussians did not speak a Slavic language.⁴⁴³ This is reasonable, but it does rely on our authors consistently reasoning in similar terms. Language was, understandably, a concern for authors such as Bruno and Adam of Bremen who had an interest in mission, and was sometimes associated with identity.⁴⁴⁴ Yet it is important to remember that the Slavs were (and are) only loosely and unevenly defined. The accounts of Canaparius and Bruno both suggest a rather nebulous and contradictory attitude towards the Slavs.

To Canaparius, writing in Italy, the Slavs appeared as a vaguely defined group located somewhere beyond the Alps, possibly in *Germania*.⁴⁴⁵ Intriguingly, Canaparius began his account of Adalbert’s speech to the Prussian crowd with the phrase ‘I am a Slav.’⁴⁴⁶ Canaparius details Adalbert’s noble birth, but otherwise he gives no indication that this was a particularly significant aspect of Adalbert’s identity for him or his narrative.⁴⁴⁷ Canaparius’ reference to Adalbert’s Slavic origins thus appears to be prompted by his encounter with the Prussians, and his motivation was likelier a sense of mutual affiliation

⁴⁴² Geneviève Bührer-Thierry, ‘Des païens comme chiens dans le monde germanique et slave du haut Moyen Âge’, in *Impies et païens entre Antiquité et Moyen Âge*, ed. by Mary Lionel and Michel Sot (Paris: Picard 2002), pp. 175–187. cf. Florin Curta, ‘Slavs in Fredegar and Paul the Deacon: medieval gens or ‘scourge of God?’ *Early Medieval Europe*, 6, 2 (1997), 141–167 (pp. 154, 164).

⁴⁴³ Miłosz Sosnowski ‘Prussians as Bees’, p. 28.

⁴⁴⁴ *Passio Adalberti*, 5, 24–26; *Vita Quinque*, 2, 10, 13; Adam, 1. viii (8), 2. xxi (18), 3. lxxii, 4. xix (19), 4. schol. 150 (144), 4. schol. 151 (145), 4 xlii (42).

⁴⁴⁵ *Vita Prior*, 1.

⁴⁴⁶ *Vita Prior*, 28.

⁴⁴⁷ *Vita Prior*, 1, 8, 19, 28.

than opposition.⁴⁴⁸ The statement raises questions about the significance, or at least coherence, of any ethnic aspect to Canaparius' comparison of the Prussians with dogs. If Canaparius thought of the Prussians as Slavs then Adalbert's declaration that he himself was a Slav would mute, or at least complicate, any immediately negative connotations. If, on the other hand, Canaparius did not regard the Prussians as Slavs, then his comparison of the Prussians to dogs lost something of the power it received from drawing on an established discourse. Such an either-or approach would minimise the significance of any ethnic aspect of Canaparius' use of this canine slur.

However, given Canaparius' use of such established imagery in an account of the northern world, this conclusion is not entirely satisfying. Part of the issue is that such an approach attributes a level of conceptual clarity and consistency to Canaparius which his work does little to justify. He didn't need to be especially clear or consistent, and such stereotypes often are not. Accordingly, we should consider the possibility that Canaparius linked the Prussians with this ethnic slur despite the conflict this created with his description of Adalbert as a Slav, and perhaps also despite the linguistic boundary separating the Prussians and Slavs. Such an approach would allow us to take account of a major element in the representation of the Slavs throughout this period, while also hinting at some of the complexities and contradictions associated with it.

Bruno omits Canaparius' reiteration of Adalbert's status as a Slav, while strengthening his description of the Prussians as dogs.⁴⁴⁹ It may be that Bruno recognised the incongruity of appealing to this ethnic stereotype while reminding his audience of his hero's origins. Bruno's explicit remarks on the Slavs tended to be positive or neutral, but this is no barrier to such an interpretation.⁴⁵⁰ Such slurs suited Bruno's narrative aims in the passage, and consistency was not a key characteristic of Bruno's work, or his approach to identity more generally. But we should also note Bruno's specifically missionary concerns when re-writing Adalbert's speech. Bruno emphasises Adalbert's political affiliation, but is silent about his ethnicity. It may be that Bruno felt that such an ethnic identifier would be unhelpful or irrelevant in such an encounter.

⁴⁴⁸ A sense of opposition is possible, but is supported solely by the by antagonistic dynamic of account as a whole.

⁴⁴⁹ cf. *Passio Adalberti*, 25; *Vita Prior*, 28.

⁴⁵⁰ Esp. *Vita Quinque*, 13.

6.iv.d.xi. The Prussian crowd: Social class and the realities of mission.

Establishing who or what our authors had in mind when describing the Prussian crowd is extremely problematic; partly because their remarks are relatively cursory, but also because of the sheer variety of factors shaping them. One must also question the extent to which there was a single, coherent concept or intent underlying their descriptions, when closer inspection suggests a muddled amalgamation of loosely connected impressions and images.

Although Canaparius uses the Prussians' speech to present the crowd as conscious representatives of a realm with 'one common law and... one single way of life', he does not explicitly describe the crowd as Prussian, and indeed he only ever uses the term 'Prussia' once.⁴⁵¹ The crowd's unity may have as much to do with Canaparius' notions of paganism or hagiographic norms, as his understanding of the Prussians. Furthermore, the terminology Canaparius uses to describe the crowd – '*illi*', '*nobis*', '*sumus*' – is extremely vague. He also uses the phrase '*iners vulgus*' which, as Sosnowski has argued, may have been intended to reinforce Canaparius' description of the crowd as dog-like, for *vulgus* can be rendered as 'pack'.⁴⁵² Sosnowski interprets the phrase morally; the Prussians were dog-like for their paganism and '*iners*' – inert – because they were not practising Christianity.⁴⁵³ This is very credible, but the more immediate connotations of *vulgus* ought not to be overlooked. A sense of social class – of the 'common people', the 'crowd', or a 'mob' – is supported by the immediate context of the phrase, where the local lord – '*dominus villae*' – leads Adalbert to his estate or village.⁴⁵⁴ It is there that the '*vulgus*' gathered around. Canaparius' hints at social class are at least as evident as the ethnic or moral aspects of his account.

It is similarly difficult to pinpoint how Bruno imagined the crowd which confronted Adalbert. Bruno is less explicit about the crowd's sense of belonging to a wider group, but this is still suggested by the crowd's references to their land and borders ('*terra*' and '*finibus*'), and Bruno's description of the crowd as placed at the entrance of the kingdom – '*ingressu regni positus*' – a notion borrowed from Canaparius.⁴⁵⁵ Yet the terms which Bruno uses to describe the crowd – '*unda populorum*', '*capita canum*', '*lupi*', '*illi*' – are ambiguous. As with Canaparius' descriptions, it is tempting to suggest that Bruno may have been touching

⁴⁵¹ *Vita Prior*, 28, pp. 172, 173.

⁴⁵² Miłosz Sosnowski 'Prussians as Bees', pp. 29, 43.

⁴⁵³ Miłosz Sosnowski 'Prussians as Bees', pp. 28-30.

⁴⁵⁴ *Vita Prior*, 28.

⁴⁵⁵ cf. *Passio Adalberti*, 25; *Vita Prior*, 28.

on ideas of social class in his account, alongside the aforementioned ethnic, moral, literary and monstrous connotations. Bruno's use of the phrase 'a wave of people' may suggest that he was thinking of Adalbert's audience more as a mob, than an ethnic group or people. This interpretation is reinforced by Bruno's account of the lynching of the monk Rothulf in the *Vita Quinque*, where he uses similar language to describe the mob's attack on Rothulf, comparing the people of Rimini to dogs.⁴⁵⁶

Distinguishing the lower classes from their rulers – usually unfavourably – was not uncommon in accounts of missionary work, including Bruno's own *Epistola ad Heinricum*.⁴⁵⁷ Bruno's description of his own mission to the Petchenegs in this letter provides a useful point of reference for analysing his account of Adalbert's mission to the Prussians. Bruno writes:

We travelled for two days without anyone doing us harm; on the third day... we were all led forth to our death with bowed necks on three occasions ... but on each occasion, we emerged unharmed from the enemies... On Sunday, we came to the greater population and were given a place to live until the entire people was gathered for a council by running messengers. Then... we were summoned to the council; we and our horses were whipped; innumerable commoners with blood-stained eyes fell upon us and raised a horrible clamour; with a thousand axes and a thousand swords unsheathed over our necks, they vainly threatened to cut us to pieces... We were vexed until nightfall, when the magnates of the land, who snatched us from their hands in a fight, recognized (being wise men) that we came into their land for the sake of something good... we travelled around three parts of their land, though we did not touch the fourth; from this region, however, messengers of the more noble people came to us.⁴⁵⁸

Bruno explicitly distinguishes between the majority of the people and their rulers, underlining this division by describing their differing reactions to the missionaries, and the violent conflict between the two. Bruno's explicit concern with social class in his *Epistola ad Heinricum* reinforces the suspicion that similar interests were at work in his description of Adalbert's mission to the Prussians. Yet unlike Adalbert's Prussian audience, a part of the

⁴⁵⁶ cf. *Passio Adalberti*, 25; *Vita Quinque*, 10.

⁴⁵⁷ Bruno, *Epistola*, p. 99; Bede, *Historia*, v. 10; Rimbert, 17, 26, 31; Adam, 2. xxvi (23), 2. xxxvi (34); Richard A. Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, pp. 133–142.

⁴⁵⁸ Bruno, *Epistola*, p. 99; William L. North, p. 3.

Petchenegs responded positively to Bruno's preaching, providing him with a greater incentive to focus on this distinction.

Crucially, we can see a variety of understandings of the Petchenegs at work in Bruno's account. Bruno approached the Petchenegs as a distinct group, but this unity encompassed ethnic, moral, religious and rhetorical concerns; they were the 'cruellest of all pagans' and an 'irrational nation.'⁴⁵⁹ Bruno was also able to distinguish groups within the Petchenegs, identifying regional and social divisions. Bruno's understanding of social groups was subject to conceptual blurring; the magnates are wise and the common people ferocious, while moral, political and social judgements are conflated in Bruno's description of the *meliores*.⁴⁶⁰ Bruno's *Epistola ad Heinricum* thus helps to illuminate the sheer variety of themes implicit in the *Passio Adalberti*.

Bruno's description of his encounter with the Petchenegs echoes the structure and tone of his account of Adalbert's confrontation with the Prussians. The Prussian crowd is aggressive and doglike in its ferocity, clamouring and threatening to kill Adalbert and his companions. The Petcheneg crowd also clamours and threatens violence, but Bruno expresses this in terms of their 'blood-stained eyes' and 'a thousand axes and a thousand swords unsheathed over our necks.'⁴⁶¹ The language is different but the effect is largely the same. Bruno uses such rhetorical embellishment for the sake of style and drama, legitimizing his work in the circles which shared the same literary assumptions. This rhetoric also served to express the moral, spiritual and social gulf between the missionary and his audience. Political and ethnic divisions are hinted at, and there may also be an echo of the mundane realities of events in both works, although this does not appear to be a major concern in either passage.

However, the wider context of Bruno's writings invites us to consider another factor in Bruno's accounts, that of the psychological realities of mission. Bruno's concern for psychological realism in his accounts of missionary encounters with pagan crowds is most visible in the *Epistola ad Heinricum*. Bruno was describing his own experiences, in a letter where he was explicitly concerned with his own thoughts and feelings. Thus he addressed Henry's concerns that he was suicidal, stating explicitly, 'I do not wish to die.'⁴⁶² Much of Bruno's description of the Petchenegs, such as his reference to 'a thousand axes and a

⁴⁵⁹ Bruno, *Epistola*, pp. 99-100; William L. North, pp. 2, 4.

⁴⁶⁰ Bruno, *Epistola*, p. 99.

⁴⁶¹ cf. Bruno, *Epistola*, p. 100; William L. North, p. 4; *Passio Adalberti*, 25.

⁴⁶² Bruno, *Epistola*, p. 100; William L. North, p. 4.

thousand swords', cannot have been intended literally.⁴⁶³ These might appear to be mere literary embellishments or *topoi*, if not for the fact that Bruno himself was there, and shows a sustained interest in the realities of mission. A literal description of the encounter may not have been the most intuitive, or even most accurate, way of describing what Bruno himself experienced. Bruno's style is often rhetorical, and the assortment of ideas which shaped his literary approach is unlikely to have been detached from how he experienced the world on a day-to-day basis. Shaped by his expectations of mission and the realities of the situation, Bruno expresses something of the emotional intensity of the encounter. It was an encounter he had anxiously anticipated – in part, through his previous writings – and which was laden with moral, spiritual, ethnic, political and social meanings. These shaped and combined with the psychological realities of the moment, and the dominant element appears, justifiably, to be fear. A more literal rendering of this encounter would take us further from, not closer to, the experience of the missionary.

Bruno was not personally involved in the events he describes in the *Passio Adalberti*, although they had had a great effect on him. Nonetheless, the passage and its immediate context, together with Bruno's sustained interest in mission across all of his writings, suggest that his description of Adalbert's encounter with the Prussians can be similarly understood in terms of the psychological experience of the missionary.⁴⁶⁴ When Bruno describes Adalbert surrounded by a ferocious and doglike crowd, we can see Bruno anticipating the psychological realities of mission. He dwells on the experience of the missionary facing a crowd who, by definition, he must treat as fundamentally antagonistic. It is a situation charged with diverse meanings, emotionally intense, and fearful. It was embedded in and expressed through other concerns; moral, spiritual, ethnic, monstrous, and literary. It is probably no coincidence that when Bruno encountered a similar situation in person, he recognised, experienced and understood it in much the same way.

6.v. Conclusion.

Like Adam's *Gesta*, Bruno's writings were characterised by conceptual variety. This should not surprise us. His works are subtle, ambitious and varied in their themes. They were also deeply personal, and many of their peculiarities must be traced back to Bruno's own thought and character. But the remarkable prominence of Bruno's personality should

⁴⁶³ Bruno, *Epistola*, p. 99; William L. North, p. 3.

⁴⁶⁴ *Passio Adalberti*, 26.

not lead us to expect consistency. Bruno's thought was varied and contradictory; he viewed the world as a devout mystic, a fearful sinner, a committed missionary, a would-be martyr, a guilt-ridden survivor, an eloquent warmonger, imperial critic, Saxon-Polish partisan, and a remarkably ambitious and subtle writer. As Bruno moved between these identities, his perspective shifted too.

However, Bruno's writings can be usefully considered in terms of the confidence and conviction which underpinned so many of these identities. His works were shaped around an absolute belief in his core ideals; the primacy of martyrdom, the otherness of pagans, the sanctity of the altar, the urgency of salvation. These ideals cannot be shaped into a coherent scheme of thought, although this has not discouraged many attempting to do so, including Bruno himself. Instead, we might begin to explore the shape of Bruno's thought; its emphases, blind-spots and great variety. In doing so we must recognise the pre-eminence of Bruno's Christian identities. These were no more coherent or consistent than any other aspect of his identity, but they dominated his understanding of the world and his place in it. Bruno describes Bohemians and Prussians, kings, dukes and conflicts, but all of these terrestrial concerns were overshadowed by the glory the saints, the terror of hell, an unresolvable longing for salvation, and the mystery of God.

7. Conclusion.

‘We have returned to it, not because of this argument or that argument, but because the theory, when it is adopted, works out everywhere; because the coat, when it is tried on, fits in every crease... the thing works out. We put on the theory like a magic hat and history becomes translucent like a house of glass.’¹

The answers which we find are embedded in the questions that we ask. This is unavoidable. Of the many and varied reasons for choosing and maintaining an approach one of the more appealing is its on-going utility; ‘the thing works out’. A good theory allows us to see things we would not otherwise have seen, and the very best allow us to see things we did not expect. The texts considered here have been approached with an expectation of variety, and each text has revealed a wealth of diversity, variation and contradictions.

This project was initially conceived of in terms of consistency. The aim was to find patterns and narratives, tools which could unlock the meaning of each of these works. This approach has not been wholly abandoned, nor could it have been. The *Vita Anskarii* in particular has been analysed in this manner. Rimbert’s depiction of otherness has been made explicable in terms of his varied aims and his negotiation of established hagiographical models and ideas about the North. Yet the aim of constructing a coherent, overarching narrative for any (or all) of these texts was swiftly abandoned.

I became increasingly wary of seeking a coherent, unified narrative – an ‘explanation’ for each text – when confronted with Adam’s *Gesta*. When considering the work as a whole, or individual themes within it, it soon became apparent that attempting to formulate neat, self-contained solutions would be deeply unsatisfying, and quite misleading. Perhaps more than most, Adam’s work is characterised by variety. Many examples have been given, and these are merely suggestive of the conceptual fragmentation in Adam’s work. Recognising this variety reinforced the need to understand what kind of text Adam was actually trying to write.

There were also methodological grounds for expecting variety. The works of Stephen Greenblatt and Edward Said have had a formative influence on this thesis, and the questions which I have asked largely reflect those posed in *Orientalism* and *Marvelous*

¹ Gilbert K. Chesterton, ‘The Return of Angels’, *The Daily News*, March 14, 1903.

Possessions; how did medieval authors think about difference, and what factors shaped what they were able to think? Yet I have never been wholly convinced by the grand narratives and totalising claims which Said and Greenblatt have produced. The world, I think, is more interesting than that, and we are not quite so clever. However, there remained a need to make connections, and many of the issues raised by these authors resonate with what we find in our medieval sources.

The other/Other dichotomy provided a useful tool for expressing these concerns. The world as known, labelled and defined is juxtaposed with its fundamental incomprehensibility and the insurmountable uniqueness of every moment. That existing discussions of otherness encompassed both issues of identity and epistemology reflected the blurring of these issues in my own mind. For questions of identity appear, to me, to be inseparable from questions of classification and thought. Scholarly discussions of otherness also provide yet another example of conceptual fragmentation, and our unlimited capacity for ignoring it. There is no theory of otherness. The 'other' has come to indicate a wide range of disparate and contradictory ideas, yet the term is commonly presented as representing a self-evident, or at least coherent, idea. Such fallacies are essential to human thought, and academia is not immune.

Many discussions of otherness are underpinned by a vague sense that the very act of classification wrongs the subject. Within this framework, the otherness of the Orient or the Feminine is really just a matter of degree, and the most that we can hope for is a morality that recognises the fundamental, yet inaccessible, Otherness of the people around us, and some kind of democratic balance of powers. Like Martin Buber, I am inclined to believe that classification is not inherently violent or immoral, and that life is not limited to the interactions of master and slave, colonised and coloniser. The discussions of Otherness presented here, and particularly the analysis of Bruno of Querfurt's mysticism, represent an attempt to broaden the forms of relation considered under the rubric of identity. Framed in terms of Adam's *Gesta*, sometimes difference had to be driven out, but sometimes it could be accepted, as different.

There is also a more fundamental question about why we expect to find consistency in our sources. This approach can be justified, in part, by the results. Although I have criticised aspects of existing scholarship, the current historiography on medieval attitudes towards the other is generally very convincing. Most of the criticisms presented here have focused on matters of detail, or on the unhelpful tendency to overstate the finality and comprehensiveness of one's conclusions. A resistance to final conclusions is nothing new. Indeed, variety is implicit in the way that history functions as a discipline; there is an

assumption that old models will be questioned, and new propositions scrutinised. Yet there remains a tension between this implicit acceptance of variety and the expectation that the ideal debate will conclude with 'an answer', often stated with great conviction.

Such a definitive conclusion does not neatly align with the approach taken in this thesis or, I would suggest, the nature and limitations of our evidence. Nonetheless, some themes might be highlighted.

The same methodological concerns which have underpinned an expectation of variety have also encouraged a broad understanding of what the study of identity entails. If any given identity is simply one classification amongst others, then we must justify the focus and limitations of our investigations. This is particularly important given that ideas about different groups are often interconnected. The aim here has been to echo the emphases in each text, while also taking into account the shape of existing scholarship. Thus Adam of Bremen's understanding of the barbarous North was discussed, but framed by an analysis of his ideas about literature, the conceptual fragmentation of his work, and his sustained attempts to alienate groups and individuals within the archdiocese itself. Similarly, a substantial amount of attention has been given to Bruno of Querfurt's Christian identities. These were fundamental to how Bruno made sense of the world, and overshadowed his descriptions of groups such as the Prussians, Bohemians and Liutizi. An analysis of Bruno's representation of these groups which failed to recognise the primacy of Bruno's Christian identities would, however accurate, severely misrepresent the nature of Bruno's thought. The details might belong to Bruno, but the structure and emphases of the thought would be our own.

The connection between identities and ideas has been approached with some caution. In essence, this is a study of ideas about identity which is somewhat sceptical about the coherence, persistence, and presence of definable ideas in the day-to-day functioning of identity. Rimbert's Danes and Swedes, Adam's witches, sorcerers, barbarians and concubines, and Bruno's pagans, Prussians and Bohemians are all better understood in terms of a sense of familiarity, and a certainty that some things can, and should, be distinguished. In the first instance identity is a stance, an attitude. From there it may develop into a relationship or interaction. It may even, retrospectively, become a scheme of thought. But it is not, in the first instance, an idea to be found, labelled and described. Approaching identity in this way can be hugely productive, but it can only take us so far. Thus much of this thesis has been concerned with intuitions, certainties and a sense of familiarity; the structure and framework of ideas; and how authors presented groups, rather than what they thought about them.

Particular attention has been paid to these authors' use of sources, and especially the Bible. Many of the literary allusions and citations discussed here have not previously been analysed, while others, such as Rimbert's use of Isaiah, had not yet been fully explored. Examining these authors' relationship with their sources aids our understanding of their works, but it also underlines just how alien the medieval thought-world could be. Modern intuitions about what it means to read or write a text are of very little use for understanding these authors' use of individual sources, or their attitude towards the written word more generally. Exegetical works such as Gregory the Great's *Moralia in Job* and Hraban Maur's *de Universo* have provided an instructive point of reference for thinking about these issues while writing this thesis. For Hraban Maur, diversity was expected. The earth itself could be many different things: it is centre of the sky, the ground on which we stand, the source of crops and earthquakes; it is dry, and opposed to water; it is the source of good works and the source of corruption; it symbolises the heavenly city, Christ's flesh, the virgin Mary, the Church, apostates, humanity, and the Jews.² Such variety provided Hraban Maur with an extraordinarily flexible mental toolkit. To negotiate such disparate meanings, Gregory the Great recommended that 'as the fitness of each passage requires, the line of interpretation is studiously varied accordingly.'³ This approach is openly flawed, self-referencing and inherently contradictory. Yet the study of history might be enriched by a greater tolerance of such diverse and contradictory meanings. The implicit norms of historical research remain weighted towards a search for definitive answers, and, while indispensable, this approach can only take us so far.

Scholars have a disconcerting tendency to end their works by restating, reformed, the premises with which they began. This thesis is no different. Recent discussions of otherness and identity have overstated our capacity to describe and understand medieval identities. Through a close reading of the works of Rimbert, Adam of Bremen and Bruno of Querfurt, this thesis has suggested a far more fragmented understanding of medieval representations of the other. What we have are the textual fragments of a series of moments which were, fundamentally, unique. Anything beyond this is a simplification, a withdrawal to a perspective which allows us to see a part of the whole at the expense of seeing all of it. Our best theories are helpful lies. Yet this is easily forgotten, because it needs to be forgotten for thought to continue. The insistence on the diverse and fragmentary nature of our sources and of our own understanding of them has been justified; 'the thing works out.'

² Hraban Maur, *De Universo*, xi. 1.

³ Gregory the Great, *Moralia*, ep. 4; John H. Parker, p. 9.

Variety was expected, and it was found. However, within the parameters in which they operate, the vast majority of existing studies of the medieval other also work out, often extremely well. Thus the conceptual variety and fragmentation in our sources is mirrored in modern scholarship. This must be recognised. We must resist the temptation to ignore, synthesise or dismiss such variety. Many things encourage us to have confidence in our view of the world, far less helps us to see it as it is. At best, we can view the world through a variety of fundamentally incompatible perspectives. The aim in this thesis has been to do nothing more than provide one such perspective.

8. Abbreviations.

AASS	<i>Acta Sanctorum quotquot toto orbe coluntur</i> , ed. J Bollandus and others, Antwerp and Brussels (1634-)
AASS OSB	<i>Acta Sanctorum, Ordinis Sancti Benedicti</i> , ed. J. Mabillon, 9 vols., Paris (1668-1701)
CCSL	<i>Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Medievalis</i> , Turnhout (1966-)
MGH:	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</i>
AA	<i>Auctores Antiquissimi</i> , 15 vols., Hanover (1877-1919)
Epp.	<i>Epistolae Merovinginci et Karolini Aevi</i> , Hanover (1892-1939)
Epist. Sel.	<i>Epistolae Selectae in Usus Scholarum</i> , 5 vols., Hanover (1887-91)
PLAC	<i>Poetae Latini Aevi Carolini</i> , Hanover (1881-)
SRG.	<i>Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in Usus Scholarum Separatim Editi</i> , 63 vols., Hanover (1871- 1987)
SRL	<i>Scriptores Rerum Langobaricarum et Italicarum sae VI-IX</i> , ed. Georg Waitz (1878)
SRM	<i>Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum</i> , ed. Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison, 7 vols., Hanover (1885-1920)
SS	<i>Scriptores in folio</i> , 30 vols., Hanover (1824-1924)
MPH s.n.	<i>Monumenta Poloniae Historica. Series nova.</i> (Krakow and Warsaw [alternately], 1952-)
NIV	<i>Holy Bible, New International Version</i> , Anglicised edition (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2004)
PL	<i>Patrologia Cursus Completus, Series Latina</i> , ed. Jacques Paul Migne, 221 vols., Paris (1841-64)
Vulgate	<i>Biblia Sacra Vulgata</i> , ed. Roger Gryson and others, 4 th ed. of the Stuttgart edition (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1990)

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