

Imaginary Melees and Imagined Masculinities: Memory, Violence, and Masculinity of the *Ilias Latina* in the Medieval Schoolroom

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*The son of Atreus departed for war since he was hardy
While Aegisthus entered the bedrooms at home
One who lies on soft feathers, having suffered no hardships in them,
Is not able to endure calamity as a warrior is accustomed to do.
Because of rains and winds his dropping cheek changes color;
And his tender skin burns easily in the sun.
His shoulder, used to softness, does not bear a shield well,
Nor does his perfumed hand hold a sword firmly.
—Alan de Lille (*Liber Parabolarum*)¹*

You are nine years old and have just settled down at your desk in school. You remove your textbooks and notebooks from your backpack and align them in a neat row along with your pens, pencils, and highlighters. After your peers calm down from the morning's excitement, the teacher calls on your classmate to pick up the reading from where the class has left off. A small, soprano voice reads aloud,

. . . his body pierced by a swift spear,
falls prone from horseback. That one's head,
thrown by a sword far from his neck, rolls on the ground;
this one lies dead, his brains poured out upon his arms.²

To a modern reader, this prose may appear exceptionally violent for children. It was, however,

¹ I am ever grateful to Marjorie Curry Woods for her patience and wisdom in discussing the direction of this paper, as well as her willingness to let me use her manuscript facsimiles. Thanks to Stephen, for being a kind and supportive sounding board, and thanks to John for being willing to read my drafts.

² *Ilias Latina*, l. 478-481. George Kennedy, *The Latin Iliad: Introduction, Text, Translation, and Notes* (Fort Collins, Colo., 1998; slightly revised, 2007), 57. For all English translations of the *Ilias Latina* in this paper, I will be using Kennedy's edition.

not unusual for the medieval schoolchild—or schoolboy—to engage with such intensely vivid texts.³ The teaching of the *Ilias Latina* in the classroom was carried out with several goals in mind. With its form and meter, the *Ilias Latina* provided boys with the means to learn and emulate classical epic construction, especially with its mixed militaristic and literary language, which provided students with a specific set of vocabulary.⁴ Keeping in mind the all-male environment of the classroom, reading aloud about the combat between men acted as an imaginary masculinizing force for the boys, most of whom would probably never engage in real combat. Their communal exposure to the violence in the *Ilias Latina* allowed them to develop a sense of camaraderie, not unlike that lived out by the heroes in the texts they read.⁵ Together, the vocabulary of war and violence, and the homosociality of the classroom garnered a unique masculine identity within the confines of the classroom.

Life Mixed with Blood

The violent deaths of soldiers depicted in the *Ilias Latina* may have helped to establish certain models of masculine identity for schoolboys. Paired with an extensive physical vocabu-

³ I say "schoolboy" because it was, generally, boys who attended grammar school. According to Nicholas Orme, "Most pupils at this level were probably boys . . ." Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Schools: From Roman Britain to Renaissance England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 16; see also Nicholas Orme, *Education and Society in Medieval and Renaissance England* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1989). For more on medieval women's education, see David N. Bell, *What Nuns Read* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1995).

⁴ Kennedy, *Latin Illiad*, 12. Kennedy notes that this emphasis on military language relates to the poet we now know as Baebius Italicus's future successful military career. It must be noted here that the primary goal of the medieval grammar schoolroom was to learn Latin, thus the *Ilias Latina* was an effective way to engage schoolboys in second language acquisition.

⁵ In discussing this project with my colleagues, it was suggested that the representation of modern-day superheroes, such as Superman or Batman, instills similar ideas of masculinity in children as the Greek and Trojan heroes might have done in the Middle Ages.

lary employed throughout the poem, the aftermaths of battle present the reader with overwhelming descriptions of the wounded soldiers. These Greek and Trojan men are sometimes presented as more feminine, or passive, than those who have successfully felled them. Several verses of the *Ilias Latina*, when taken out of the text and examined on their own, may provide insight into how medieval schoolboys might have formulated certain masculine identities based on these physical representations of the heroes, their melees, and their subsequent deaths in the poem. The first excerpt describes a skirmish between Ajax, Simoesius, Antiphus and Leucus:

and he (Ajax) transfixes his (Simoeisius's) chest with a hardened spear.

He vomits out his life, purple from the blood mixed in,⁶

and his face grows stiff in death. Then Antiphus,

striving with all his body, whirls a spear at Aeacides⁷

with great force; the spear missed one enemy

and fell upon another, piercing Leucus' groin.

The unlucky man fell, laid low by the heavy wound

⁶ Marco Scaffai notes that this verse is taken directly from Virgil's *Aeneid*, Marco Scaffai, *Ilias Latina: Introduzione, Edizione Critica, Traduzione Italiana e Commento* (Bologna: Pàtron, 1997), 279. In Stanley Lombardo's translation of the *Aeneid*, this occurs 9.414-17, "Rhoetus belched forth / His purpled life, bringing up wine / Mixed with blood as Euryalus pressed on, Seething in the dark," Stanley Lombardo, trans. *Aeneid*, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2005), 227.

⁷ Kennedy notes that Aeacides is Ajax in this line, though usually this name refers to Achilles. Kennedy, *Latin Iliad*, 54.

and, dying, bit the green grass with his teeth.⁸

(l. 364-71, Kennedy 25)

Instantly apparent in this excerpt is the corporeality of the battle sequence. With words such as chest (*pectora*), vomits (*vomit*), blood (*sanguine*), body (*corpore*), and, of course, groin (*inguina*), the poet ensures that his verses gesture toward the violent descriptions of battles in Virgil's *Aeneid*. From the start of this passage, the reader is engaging with male physicality, beginning with Ajax's sword impaling Simoeisus, and eventually experiencing Leucus' literal un-manning as the spear severs his genitals. The victors of this skirmish assert their male dominance

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Et praedurato transfixit pectora ^{illius} telo / {ferro} ^{vel telo} .
Purpuream vomit ⁂ ille animam cum sanguine mixtam
ora rigat ⁂ moriens. Tum magnis ^{existens} Antiphus hastam
viribus adversum conatus corpore ^{suo} toto
torque in Aeaciden; telumque ⁂ erravit ab hoste ^{id est aiace}
inque ^{alterum} hostem cecidit, ⁂ transfixit et inguina Leucon. ^{scilicet}
Concidit ⁂ infelix prostratus vulnere forti
et carpit virides moribundus dentibus herbas.

I have included the superscripted glosses as I have transcribed them from MS X, Bodleian Library, Auct. F. 2. 14 (2657) in order to shed light on potential, various interpretations of the *Ilias Latina* in the medieval classroom. The curly brackets indicate a word as it is written in MS X (as well as MS O); Kennedy has used the term "telo" instead of "ferro," which is clearly a result of differences in manuscripts. In these interlinear glosses, there is a mark that looks like a "7," but does not have congruencies in the other MSS I have examined, and these marks are indicated by "⁂" in my rendering. The ⁂ is used in conjunction with other punctuation marks, which leads me to think that they may indicate a long pause or breath mark, which is particularly fascinating when thinking how the *Ilias Latina* would have been read aloud or performed in the classroom. I am still working to determine what exactly these glosses mean.

by penetrating their enemies, with Leucus suffering the greatest emasculation. Both Ajax and Antiphus find themselves in the more dominant, masculine roles, whereas Simoeuisus and Leucus are emasculated in their passivity. To further emphasize the assumed femininity of the dead, Leucus is described as *prostratus*, which, while it means "laid low," can also mean "debased." A debased Leucus indicates that through physical emasculation, he has lost his status as a man and, consequently, has died. Moreover, the Latin ablative of "heavy wound" (*vulnere forti*) can be understood as euphemistic of the female sexual organ. Leucus is laid low and shamed by means of his "heavy wound," or his metaphoric vagina.

As the epigraph for this paper suggests, the warrior develops a different masculine persona than he who "lies on soft feathers." Herein lies the paradox of identity that the medieval schoolboy might have faced: reading about heroes in combat in the *Ilias Latina* emphasizes a particular male pathos with which the pupils would identify, but also supplies the boys with an imaginary model of masculinity since most grammar schoolboys did not continue onto knight-hood.⁹ What the *Ilias Latina* allows, however, is access to the hegemonic form of masculinity: "Because military prowess was gendered as an attribute of secular, masculine, elite identity, inability or inexperience in the military sphere was a sign of subordination, and associated explicit-

⁹ I am not positing that there is one concept of masculinity in the Middle Ages. Inherent to my argument is the very plural nature of masculinity. Schoolboys are able to access a specific type of masculine behavior because of their single-sex environment and because their texts provide an imaginary space where they can experience combat and violence. For more on the three types of medieval masculinity, see Ruth Mazo Karras, *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003). For more on the development of masculinity, see *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler (New York: Garland, 1997); Shulamith Shahar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1990); *Violence in Medieval Courtly Literature*, ed. Albrecht Classen (New York: Routledge, 2004).

ly with those who did not belong to the dominant masculine group."¹⁰ Thus, this is perhaps why Leucus' physical emasculation and debasement could have been regarded as the most pathetic. Additionally, schoolboys would have experienced simultaneously two variations of masculinity: a dominant masculinity through the representation of Ajax and Antiphus, and subordinate masculinity through Simoeisus and Leucus.¹¹

What helps the successful descriptions of violence, and subsequent imagined masculinities in the *Ilias Latina*, is the poem's narrative time: the battle sequences appear to be sequential as opposed to simultaneous. That is, in the excerpt above, each action in the scene only occurs after a character has already died or is almost killed: Ajax kills Simeoisius; Antiphus throws a spear, but misses; Leucus is killed. Not described above is Agamemnon, who seeks revenge for Leucus' death by killing Democoon. This narrative trait is what lends to the *Ilias Latina* a sense of interminable fighting; each death, each action elicits another. The reader is able to focus individual attention on each death before moving on to the next. Consequently, epics such as the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* also function within this sequential narrative form, but it is perhaps the *Ilias Latina's* brevity that highlights the poem's violence.

Certain authorial and contextual clues about the poem may help bolster the relationship between the *Ilias Latina* and the possible masculinities it exemplifies. The *Ilias Latina*, or the "Latin Iliad" as it is also called, is a work authored by many men. More precisely, it is a text that has been attributed to several different authors throughout the course of its study: Homer, Pin-

¹⁰ Dawn M. Hadley, ed. *Masculinity in Medieval Europe* (London: Longman, 1999), 11.

¹¹ It is unclear as to whether or not the boys would have necessarily identified with one of the masculinities of the other. Rather, what I am suggesting is that the act of reading and interpreting these violent deaths may have provided the schoolboys with more than one masculine identity.

darus Thebanus, Silius Italicus, and finally Baebius Italicus.¹² The text comprises 1,070 lines in dactylic hexameter and was likely composed around 65 C.E..¹³ Some scholars prefer to suggest that the poem's author remains unknown, Baebius Italicus is widely accepted as being the amateur poet of the *Ilias Latina*.¹⁴

The poem was taught in medieval schools as part of the grammar school curriculum in a loosely-organized group of works known as the *Liber Catonianus*. The *Liber Catonianus* originated in the ninth century and was used in the classroom through the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.¹⁵ Along with the *Ilias Latina*, schoolboys would have read such works as the *Distichs of Cato*, the *Fables* of Avianus, the *Eclogue of Theodulus*, the *Elegies* of Maximianus, Statius'

¹² Scaffai, *Ilias Latina*, 11. In the introduction of his translation of the *Ilias Latina*, George Kennedy notes that the author of the poem was "probably" Italicus. Kennedy, *Latin Iliad*, 9. Many manuscripts note that Pindarus was a translator of the poem. Marco Scaffai, "Tradizione monscritta dell'*Ilias Latina*," *In verbis verum amare; miscellanea dell'Instituto di filologia latina e medioevale*, (1980), 246.

¹³ Scaffai, *Ilias Latina*, 18.

¹⁴ In his translation and commentary on the *Ilias Latina*, Gérard Fry argues for an anonymous author rather than accepting Baebius Italiucs as the poet; he cites stylistic and formal differences as the basis of this claim. Gérard Fry, *Récits Inédits sur la Guerre de Troie* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1998), 16. In opposition to Fry, Scaffai writes that while concrete evidence is scarce, the author's self-attribution is indicated by the poem's beginning and terminating acrostics (ITALIC*S SCRIPSIT), Scaffai, *Ilias Latina*, 11-12, which is a conclusion shared by Kennedy. For the remainder of this paper, I will refer to Baebius Italicus as the author of the *Ilias Latina*.

¹⁵ Paul M. Clogan, "Literary Criticism in the *Liber Catonianus*" (Binghamton: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1986), 571. Tony Hunt presents a rather negative perspective on the *Liber Catonianus*: "a number of authors of far less literary merit were rapidly assimilated in the Middle Ages to a more or less coherent corpus of texts which became a school manual which survives in a considerable number of copies," Tony Hunt, *Teaching and Learning Latin in 13th-Century England*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1991), 66. I had hoped that Hunt's volumes would provide useful information and glosses from the *Ilias Latina* in the *Liber Catonianus*, but he did not examine any manuscripts that contained the *Ilias Latina*. The manuscripts I will discuss below are from eleventh-century England.

Achilleid, and Claudian's *De Raptu Proserpinae*.¹⁶ Paul Clogan notes that the eventual addition of the *Achilleid* and *De Raptu Proserpinae* resulted in the omission of the *Ilias Latina* by the fourteenth century.¹⁷ Eventually, the *Liber Catonianus* was replaced in the late Middle Ages and the Early Modern period by another collection of texts known as the *Auctores Octo*. The *Auctores Octo*, in general, kept the *Distichs of Cato* and the *Eclogue of Theodulus* from the *Liber Catonianus*, although the content shifted from more classical and pseudo-classical works to more overtly Christian works.¹⁸ With regard to the holistic, pedagogical function of the *Liber Catonianus*, these texts were intended to influence the behavior and conduct of the schoolboys.¹⁹ Thus, it is likely that the *Ilias Latina* would have played an integral role in instructing the students in how to be warriors; it taught them how to act as men.

More pertinent to the larger corpus to which the *Ilias Latina* belonged is the clear influence of both Homer and Virgil. The most obvious source, albeit perhaps indirect, according to George Kennedy, for Italicus' poem is Homer's *Iliad*.²⁰ Kennedy notes that the "differences between the *Iliad* in Greek and the *Ilias Latina* suggest that Italicus did not work directly from the Greek text. He may have consulted the text occasionally but often seems to rely on memory, and sometimes rearranges the order of the narrative within a book."²¹ This notion is particularly striking when considering Kennedy's suggestion that the poem may have been written as a type of

¹⁶ Clogan, *Liber Catonianus*, 571.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Clogan, *Liber Catonianus*, 571. See also: Hunt, *Teaching and Learning Latin*, 59-79.

¹⁹ Marjorie Curry Woods and Rita Copeland, "Classroom and Confession," in the *Cambridge History of English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 382.

²⁰ Kennedy, *Latin Iliad*, 11.

²¹ *Ibid.*

school composition exercise.²² Gérard Fry believes that Baebius Italicus composed the poem between the ages of fifteen and twenty-three, which would have placed him at a suitable age to have written the type of "Neronian propaganda" to which Fry believes the *Ilias Latina* belongs.²³ Both Fry and Kennedy's assertions support the suggestion that Baebius Italicus would have been old enough to have been familiar with the *Iliad*, yet young enough to possibly still have been in school to compose such an exercise.²⁴ Since one of the capstone works of the grammar school would have been Virgil's *Aeneid*, usually studied at or after the age of twelve, Baebius Italicus' memory recall of the epic genre at this age is to be expected.²⁵

The texts of the *Liber Catonianus* and *Auctores Octo* mentioned above were far from the only texts read in the medieval classroom.²⁶ Always being aware that the grammar school's goal

²² Ibid., 10. The length of the *Ilias Latina*, being merely one one-twenty-fourth the length of the *Illiad*, is a perfect example of abbreviation medieval students would have completed, along with countless other rhetorical and compositional techniques in the classroom. See also, Marjorie Curry Woods, "Experiencing the Classics in Medieval Education," Forthcoming in *The Oxford History of the Classical Tradition in England*, ed. Rita Copeland, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 40, cited with express permission of the author.

²³ Fry, *Récits*, 16. Kennedy also characterizes the *Ilias Latina* as Neronian propaganda, citing the ecphrastic description of Achilles' shield as similar passages in Seneca's *De Clementia* and *Apocolocyntosis* and Calpurnius Siculus' eclogues, Kennedy, *Latin Iliad*, 10.

²⁴ For more on Roman education, see Stanley F. Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome: From the Elder Cato to the Younger Pliny* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977); see also W. Martin Bloomer, *The School of Rome: Latin Studies and the Origins of Liberal Education* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011);

²⁵ If Baebius Italicus had written the *Ilias Latina* at twenty-three, he would have been far too old to have written the poem in school. Instead, he would have been a soldier by the time he composed the work. In either scenario, Italicus was either anticipating a military career or in the middle of a successful career at the time he wrote the text.

²⁶ For an extensive enumeration of Latin school texts and their vernacular glosses, see Hunt, *Teaching and Learning Latin*, vols. 1-3.

of teaching Latin, however, it seems too obvious to state that these texts fulfilled that requirement par excellence. Learning Latin as a second language for these boys was not simply learning conjugations and declensions, and the classical texts facilitated Latin acquisition in conjunction with innumerable useful skills. Indeed, the classics' place in the curriculum served to provide students with "historical, mythological, and geographical data; rhetorical tropes and figures as well as example and allusions useful for amplification and clarification; strong emotions, which helped in the retention and memory of texts."²⁷ If these categories are nearly universally applicable to the utility of classical texts in the classroom, then it follows that the *Ilias Latina* would have shared many of these qualities.²⁸

Indeed, the most striking element of the *Ilias Latina* is its seemingly interminable battle sequences. Kathryn McKinley notes that Baebius Italicus presents the poem as though the "battle fray [were] the most significant action in the poem."²⁹ She views Italicus' abbreviation of the *Iliad* as an affront to Homer's epic: "Yet what Baebius chooses to omit for the sake of brevity is precisely what gives Homer's poem its lasting power and beauty."³⁰ Some scholars underestimate the longevity that the *Ilias Latina* knew, but it is the poem's brevity that secured its place in the

²⁷ Woods, "Experiencing the Classics," 35-6.

²⁸ Woods notes that the *Ilias Latina* would have cultivated the students' technical and rhetorical skills so that in order to help them advance to longer, more complicated texts such as the *Aeneid* and Lucan's *Belium civile*, Woods, "Experiencing the Classics," 44. It seems, however, that the *Ilias Latina* does not lend itself well to amplification and clarification, but rather to abbreviation

²⁹ McKinley, Kathryn, "The Medieval Homer: The *Ilias Latina*," *Allegorica*, vol. 19 (1998), 5. For McKinley, the *Ilias Latina* is always brought into dialogue with Homer and his *Iliad*. In order to fully understand what work the *Ilias Latina* did in the classroom, however, and since the the schoolboys would most likely never have read the *Iliad*, we must consider the poem on its own, in its unique, pedagogical context.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

medieval classroom. But how is one able to make sense of the battle scenes? McKinley is not wrong in identifying Baebius Italicus' proclivity for the combat. In fact, 742 out of the 1070 lines involve fighting.³¹ These battle sequences are perhaps justified when considering Baebius Italicus' possible military career, but the reason for their existence is not what is of interest here. Rather, it is crucial to investigate the poignancy of the basic, intended purpose of the *Ilias Latina* was in the classroom, and the incidental lessons that might have been taken from Baebius's violent prose.

Examining the medieval *accessus* for the *Ilias Latina* illuminates the poem's various characteristics and offers some clues to why the work was taught in the medieval schoolroom. An *accessus*, or introduction, offers background information on the author of the text, as well as other pertinent aspects of a work. The *Ilias Latina* is described in the *Accessus Homeri* (Accessus of Homer) and published by R.B.C. Huygens as a "story composed about the destruction of Troy, in which Virgil portrays it again, the war of Turnus and Aeneas."³² Besides creating genealogical connections with Virgil's *Aeneid*, since the schoolboys would have read Virgil's work later in

³¹ McKinley delineates the poem as follows: "ll. 1-8, proem; 9-80, the cause for Achilles' wrath and Agamemnon's taking of Briseis; 80-110, Achilles' prayer to Thetis and Thetis' petition to Jupiter; 110-60, Jupiter's message to Agamemnon to wage war on Troy and Nestor's counsel; 161-66, the poet's invocation to the Muse; 167-221, the catalogue of ships; **222-563, Greeks battle Trojans**; 564-75, Hector and Andromache; **575-688, battle resumes**; 688-95, the unsuccessful embassy to Achilles; **696-805, battle continues with Trojans taking the upper hand**; **805-61, Hector's slaying of Patroclus and Achilles' return to battle**; 862-91, the shield of Achilles; **892-1015, Achilles battles the Trojans and kills Hector**; 1015-62, Priam's petition for Hector's body and Hector's funeral; and 1063-70, epilogue." McKinley, "Medieval Homer," 4-5, emphasis my own.

³² "Ilias est fabula de destructione Troiae composita, in quo eum iterum Virgilius imitatur in Turni bello et Eneae," R.B.C. Huygens, *Accessus ad auctores, Bernard d'Utrecht, Conrad d'Hirsau* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1970), 25-6. Latin translation my own.

their education, the *accessus* emphasizes the crux of the *Ilias Latina* as a story about destruction: violence is a precondition here.

The *accessus* then names the author of the *Ilias Latina* as "Homerus latinus," whose intention was to either imitate this Greek (Homer) or, again, to describe the Trojan war.³³ While Kathryn McKinley believes Baebius Italicus did not succeed in his imitation of Homer, or rather in the emulation of the *Iliad's* "lasting power and beauty,"³⁴ it would have been very clear to the medieval reader that *Ilias Latina* was an abbreviation of the *Iliad*. In addition to the author's intention, the usefulness (*utilitas*) of the text was to provide the students with a "knowledge of the Trojan War" (*cognitio troiani belli*), which further evinces the *Ilias Latina's* pedagogical characteristics and their connection to battles and ideal, wartime behavior.³⁵

Teaching Latin rhetoric and grammar, however, was the ultimate prescribed goal of the classroom, and the *accessus* for the *Ilias Latina* provides insight into how the text adds to this schoolroom requirement. Baebius Italicus "likewise divided the poem in three parts: proposition, invocation, and narration."³⁶ As Tony Davenport reminds us, a poet writing *historia* must adhere to a certain "literary formality and decorum," and thus must include these three elements.³⁷ Thus, while it follows traditional narrative form, and it is very likely that the school master would have

³³ "Homerus quidam latinus Homerum grecum in ea parte imitatur, et est eius intentio vel hunc Grecum imitari vel troianum bellum describere," Huygens, *Accessus ad auctores*, 26.

³⁴ McKinley, "Medieval Homer," 4. She notes, disparagingly, "When one compares Baebius' poem to the *Iliad*, the rationale for the less-than-positive assessments of many modern scholars becomes clearer."

³⁵ Huygens, *Accessus ad auctores*, 26.

³⁶ "Dividit quoque carmen in tria: propositionem, invocationem, narrationem," Huygens, *Accessus ad auctores*, 26.

³⁷ Tony Davenport, *Medieval Narrative: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 11.

taught this rhetorical concept and discussed it with his pupils, the scenes of gory violence are foregrounded in the schoolboys' minds, almost obscuring the prescribed purpose of the text.

Since the *Ilius Latina* traveled with other works in many different manuscripts, an examination of the two manuscripts discussed in this paper will help to contextualize further the poem. The manuscripts belong to what Marco Scaffai has categorized as “family OXd B,” which comprises one French and three English manuscripts from the eleventh through thirteenth centuries.³⁸ MS O, or Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawl, G. 57 (Addit. 14788), is an eleventh-century English manuscript, of which twenty-one folios belong to the *Ilius Latina*.³⁹ The *Ilius Latina* is paired with the *Distichs of Cato*, *Cato Novus* and *Fables* by Avianus and other fabulists.⁴⁰ The notes and glosses in MS O are in Latin in a couple different hands, but the manuscript also contains some Old English glosses.⁴¹ MS X, or Bodleian Library, Auct. F. 2. 14 (2657), is another eleventh-century English manuscript, of which the *Ilius Latina* makes up fourteen folios.⁴² In MS X, the *Ilius Latina* travels with Wulfstans' *Vita Sacnti Swithuni*, and “other recurring works of the *Liber Catonianus* such as the *Eclogue of Theodulus*, Avianus' *Fables*, Persius' *Satire*, Satitus' *Achilleid* and other different works.”⁴³ Like its sister, MS X contains lexical and syntactical glosses both in Latin and Old English.⁴⁴ While the provenance of MS O remains unknown, MS X comes from

³⁸ Scaffai, *Baebii Italica*, 37

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* Scaffai notes that the manuscript was originally one codex, but that the *Fables* by Avianus, as well as the works by other fabulists, technically comprise MS Rawl. G.111, Scaffai, *Tradizione*, 218-19.

⁴¹ Scaffai, *Ilius Latina*, 37.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 37-8

⁴⁴ Scaffai, *Tradizione*, 227.

the Benedictine abbey of Sherborne, in Dorset.⁴⁵ These two manuscripts are approximately the same age and from the same place, and yet have differences that shed light on how the *Ilias Latina* might have been taught and interpreted in the medieval English schoolroom, and how this could have affected the schoolboys' imagined masculine identities.⁴⁶

Rivers of Blood

The pathos elicited by the *Ilias Latina* is one of the most important resources for the schoolboys' imagined masculinities. The combination of pathos and violence "was typical of texts aimed at and/or chosen for male adolescents during the Middle Ages."⁴⁷ Of course, this pathos is further enhanced by the "simplified and limited" emotions displayed by the female personae in the poem.⁴⁸ This restricted role of women was common in medieval texts and often was "both gendered and institutionalized through the lack of introspection" by male authors.⁴⁹ Thus, medieval schoolboys were engaged in recursive hypermasculinity because they found themselves

⁴⁵ Scaffai, *Ilias Latina*, 38. Nicholas Ormes writes, "Most religious houses in England continued to be ministers during [the Norman Conquest], staffed by canons, priests, or clerks. The seventeen cathedrals of the period fell into this category, except the four which had been monasticised: Christ Church (Canterbury), Sherborne, Winchester, and Worcester," Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 37.

⁴⁶ Scaffai, *Tradizione*, 227. I have begun to look at some later French manuscripts in order to determine whether various glosses may enhance the text as a masculinizing force in the schoolroom.

⁴⁷ Woods, "Experiencing the Classics," 43. Woods also writes, "This emphasis on male pathos in the *Ilias Latina* is heightened by the severely curtailed influence of gods on the motivations and actions of the characters in this radically shortened version of the Homeric narrative," Woods, "Experiencing the Classics," 43.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Hadley, *Masculinity*, 9. One further way in which dominant masculine behavior was reinforced through the medium of text was through the absence of introspection in the writing of many medieval authors. In epic literature, the association between aristocratic and royal masculinity and violence is both gendered and institutionalized through the lack of introspection in those texts, and also, implicitly, through the sparse roles for women in the tales depicted.

in an all-male environment, reading texts dominated by pathetic male warriors.

Another excerpt from the *Ilias Latina* is an excellent example of the combination of pathos and violence, especially in its description of Piros, son of Imbrasus:

but while eager for booty, he prepared to strip the body,
from above there came a spear thrown by Thoas' hand
and passed straight through his [Piros's] shoulders and his lungs.⁵⁰

He falls upon his face and from his mouth

he vomits hot blood and quivers, stretched upon his weapons.

The Dardan plains were soaking everywhere with blood; (see l. 482)

the rivers flowed with blood as well. Everywhere the army

on each side fought, inflamed with intermingled arms,

and now the strength of Trojans, now that of Acheans grows,

⁵⁰ In MSS O and X, "pectora" is written as "tempora." Scaffai notes, "Per quanto riguarda la clausola *animosaque pectora transit*, il cfr. con Δ 528 (vd. *supra*) fa propendere, tra le due variant *pectora / tempora*, per la prime, e di conseguenza l'attributo non può che essere *animosa . . .*," Scaffai, *Ilias Latina*, 283-4.

and victory that delights is sought with differing success.⁵¹

(l. 380-9, Kennedy 26)

As is the case with the first excerpt, the second begins with a violent penetration, quickly followed by an equally violent and pathetic death. Piros, having just slain Diroes, prepares to search the latter's body for certain spoils of combat, but is interrupted by the spear that completely impales him. The death of Piros, a very minor character, is described in great, yet horrific, detail. After being run through with the spear, he falls to the ground, convulsing, and like Simoeisius, coughs up his lifeblood.⁵² Piros' pathetic death echoes Simoeisius' death, where he, too, coughs up his life, purpled with blood. As with Leucus, it seems as though, in death, Piros pro-

51

dumque avidus praedae iuvenem spoliare parabat,
desuper hasta venit dextra librata Thoantis
perque viri scapulas animosaque ^{per} pectora / {tempora} ^{es} transit.
In vultus ruit ⁂ ille suos calidumque cruorem
^{ex} ore vomit stratusque super sua palpitat arma.
Sanguine Dardanii manabant undique campi,
manabant amnes ^{sanguinis} passim. Pugnabant ubique
immixtis ardens amborum exercitus armis
et modo Troianis virtus, modo crescit Achivis
laetaque per varios petitur Victoria casus

As with the previous excerpt, I have added the glosses I found from MS X to Kennedy's transcription. An explanatory gloss in MS O clarifies about the stripping and search of enemy soliders that had been laid low: "Antiquo tempore militaribus non ascribebat persecari ; Alma victorie desprostrato tantum hoste. nisi eciam armis prostratum despoliaret et ea in evidens signum peracti triumphi secum (in?)ferret.

⁵² A manuscript from the fifteenth century, London, British Museum, Harley 2560, has an interlinear gloss here clarifies that *cruorem* is *sanginem*.

vides an example of the subordinate masculinity. But the narrative does not linger on the corpse of Piro, and the reader quickly learns that death and gore are omnipresent: *Sanguine Dardinii manabant campi / manabant amnes passim*. The gloss *sanguinis* in MS X above *amnes* clarifies that running streams of blood, and not water, are everywhere. The reader moves from the micro to the macro as the fighting intensifies: Troy is painted red with blood and victory is in the hearts of all.

Murder, Memory, and Men

The third and final excerpt is perhaps the most numbing of the three sections. In this segment, there are multiple melee encounters, which create a sense of chaos:

With no less fury does Atreus' second son attack the Teucri,
while others follow and scatter death by sword.

Against him, led by adverse fate, unlucky Odius comes,
whom he laid low with a blow of his enormous lance
that cleft his shoulders with its mighty shaft.

Then Idomeneus seeks Phaestus the Maionian,
rushing from the other side, and exulting at his death
sends the son of Stophius as well down to the Stygian shades.

Meriones cuts Phereclum down with brandished spear
and Meges kills Pedaeus. Then, bristling with enormous arms,
Eurypylus lays Hypsenor low with sword as he advanced

and despoiled the youth both of his life and arms.⁵³

(l. 424-435, Kennedy 27).

In terms of content and characters of the *Ilias Latina*, this third section is further complicated by the rapid succession of one-on-one combat. Agamemnon kills Odius, Idomeneus slays Phaestus and Stophius, Meriones stikes Phereclum down, Meges destroys Pedaeus, and Eurypylus takes Hypensor's life. The narrative here continues the sequential combat as previously exemplified in the first excerpt, with one melee following another. But, what pedagogically speaking, is the effect of the seemingly never-ending sequence of deaths? It is likely that within the context of the school, these pathetic death scenes helped the boys to remember the text. If the students were affected by what they were reading, they would have been more likely to recall the narrative. As Mary Carruthers suggests, "This basic connection between the process of sensation

53

Nec minus in Teucros armis furit alter Atrides
insequiturque acies et gerro funera miscet.
Obvius huic fatis occurrit ductus iniquis
infelix Odius, quem vestae cuspidis ictu
sternit et igenti scapulas transverberat hasta.
Hinc petit Idomeneus adversa parte ruentem
Maeoniden Phaestum, cuius post funera laetus
et Stophio genitum Stygias demittit ad umbras.
Meriones Phereclum librata percutit hasta
Pedaeumque Meges. Tum vastis horridus armis
Eurypylus gladio venientem Hypsenora fundit
et partier vita iuvenem spoliavit et armis.

which ends in memory, and that of human emotional life is fundamental for understanding the crucial role memory was thought to have in the shaping of moral judgment and excellence of character."⁵⁴ This helps to draw the connection between the *Ilias Latina* and the other works in the *Liber Catonianus*: If the *Liber Catonianus* contributed to teaching schoolboys conduct and behavior, and the emotional, pathetic reactions to the *Ilias Latina* would have allowed schoolboys to clearly relate back the texts, then the *Ilias Latina* could have helped to shape the students' sense of "moral judgment and excellence of character." Furthermore, it is critical to remember that this text provided the schoolboys with access to the various ideals of masculinity, which would help to mold their conduct in theory if not in practice.

The *Ilias Latina* continued to be read through the High Middle Ages and well into the Early Modern period. It was, as Georgey Kennedy writes, "a poem of violence," but the representation of violence was not without its pedagogical utility.⁵⁵ Through the poem, schoolboys would have learned rhetorical form and narrative techniques, and new Latin vocabulary. The specific variations of masculinity encountered in the *Ilias Latina* would be reinforced later in the curriculum when the boys read Virgil's *Aeneid*.⁵⁶ While violence in the *Ilias Latina* is not unique, it is perhaps particularly significant because of its potential impact on the formation of schoolboys' identity and worldview. So much remains unknown about the way in which reading oc-

⁵⁴ Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 68.

⁵⁵ Kennedy, *Latin Iliad*, 12.

⁵⁶ Indeed, the heroic masculine archetype would show up again in different genres of literature. Matthew Bennett writes, "Latin chronicles in the form of narrative histories contain descriptions of military hero-figures, which help to illustrate what were considered important masculine characteristics," Mathew Bennett, "Military Masculinity in England and Northern France c.1050-c.1225," in *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, ed. Hadley, 72.

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curred in the medieval classroom, but it is clear enough that the *Ilias Latina* was read widely and for many years. While Marjorie Curry Woods argues that “boys will be women” in their emotional and pathetic interpretations,⁵⁷ boys will also be men, imagining themselves as warriors on the blood-soaked Ilion battlefields, fighting alongside gods and heroes alike.

⁵⁷ Marjorie Curry Woods, “Boys Will Be Women: Musings on Classroom Nostalgia and the Chaucerian Audience(s),” in *Speaking Images: Essays in Honor of V.A.Kolve*, ed. Robert F. Yeager and Charlotte C. Morse, (Asheville, NC: Pegasus Press, 2001).

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