

Heroes and Saints

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Studies in Honour of Katalin Halácsy

Edited by
Zsuzsanna Simonkay
Andrea Nagy

mondAt

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Halden Katalin

*Hwæt! be halgum and be hæleðum þas boc
witena fela gewritene habbaþ,
leofo Kati, lof þin to ræranne –
freondscipes and lare mid lufe we þanciaþ.*

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Our warmest thanks go to Tamás Karáth, who made many useful comments and suggestions. Thanks are also due to Tibor Tarcsay and Zsuzsanna Péri-Nagy for their share of work in the early stages of preparing this book. We are also grateful to the contributors – a distinguished group of scholars from around the world – for providing us with such exciting papers and for the patience they showed during the editorial process.

Last, but not least, of course, we would like to thank Kati, without whom this volume would never have come into being.

Tabula Gratulatoria

Zsolt Almási	Judit Nagy
Katalin Balogné Bérces	Gale Owen-Crocker
János Barcsák	Júlia Paraizs
Zsolt Czigányik	Márta Pellérdi
András Cser	Ágnes Péter
Dóra Csikós	Éva Péteri
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Tamás Demény	Dóra Pődör
Tibor Fabiny	Andrea Reményi
Ákos Farkas	Gabriella Reuss
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Márta Hargitai	Ágnes Somló
Leena Kahlas-Tarkka	Erzsébet Stróbl
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Éva Kellermann	Krisztina Szalay
János Kenyeres	Sára Tóth
Anna Kőszeghy	Zsuzsa Tóth
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Tekla Mecsnóber	Judit Zerkowitz

Preface

The present volume was compiled and presented as a tribute to Katalin Halácsy on the occasion of her 65th birthday. The purpose of the contributors to this Festschrift is to express our appreciation for all that she has accomplished through her various endeavours in Medieval Studies and for her invaluable contribution to the study of medieval English literature in Hungary.

Katalin Halácsy received her MA degrees in English Philology and Polish Philology and obtained a PhD degree in American Literature. During her undergraduate studies she won a grant at the University of Warsaw and later she also won a postgraduate grant at the University of Minnesota. She started teaching at the Teacher Training College, Budapest in 1979, and during her career she was affiliated with five different universities in Hungary: Pázmány Péter Catholic University (Head of the English Institute; lecturer), Eötvös Loránd University (senior lecturer), Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary (guest lecturer on Medieval English literature), Central European University (guest supervisor for MA students on medieval English subjects), and József Attila University, Szeged (regular consultant of PhD and MA students on medieval English topics). Besides medieval English literature (which included courses such as Medieval English Literature Survey, Old English Poetry and Cultural History, Reading *Beowulf*, Reading Middle English, Heroic Epic and Romance, etc.), she also taught Theory and Practice of Oral Translation, English as a Second Language, Survey of the English Novel, and The History of English Music.

Kati was also a member of the Advisory Board of the International Society of Anglo-Saxonists (ISAS) between 1997 and 2001, and she organised and participated in a number of conferences both in Hungary and abroad. She was founder, co-ordinator and supervisor of the medieval section of the PhD Programme in English Literature, assisted in this work by her friend, the late Professor Kathleen Dubs. She raised a generation of Hungarian medievalists, in whom she instilled the importance of participating in scholarly dialogue, encouraging and helping her doctoral students to attend international conferences, and inviting to Hungary such noted scholars as Matti Kilpiö, Gale Owen-Crocker or Paul Szarmach, some of whom are also among the contributors to this volume.

Kati has always taken teaching seriously and is still doing so with exceptional enthusiasm. For this reason, we decided to pay tribute to her in the form of a Festschrift written by her colleagues and her former students who have benefited so much from her guidance. The contributions, a collection of studies covering a wide range of Kati's interest from Old English saints' lives and *Beowulf* to modern receptions and adaptations of medieval works and motifs, have been arranged in chronological order.

In the person of Kati we are greeting an outstanding scholar, a faithful friend, and a teacher/supervisor who has the perseverance of a medieval hero and the patience of a saint. We are grateful for the instruction she provided to us as students and for the attention she devoted to our undertakings in medieval English literature.

Now preye we to hem alle that rede his litel book, that if ther be any thing in it that liketh hem, that therof they thanken oure techer Kati. And if ther be any thing that displease hem, we preye hem also that they arrette it to the defaute of oure unkonnyng and nat to oure wyl.

In the name of the contributors to the volume and those included in the Tabula Gratulatoria, we wish you, Kati, a happy birthday!

Zsuzsanna Simonkay
Andrea Nagy

Károly Pintér

Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Piliscsaba

A Spring Break and the Next Twenty-Five Years

It is perhaps slightly unusual to begin a celebratory article by discussing where and how the author did NOT meet the person to whom this volume is dedicated. Yet in my case – in our case – I feel this fact has some significance. First of all: even though I could have been, still I never was one of Kati’s students. By a fluke of fate, during my five years of studying English at ELTE, I never attended any of her classes (a real pity, I hasten to add, or else my familiarity with medieval English literature would be much deeper). Only as a doctoral student did I join her elective seminar on reading Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* at Eötvös József College, and discovered, to my utter surprise, that I can actually understand and even enjoy Middle English poetry. I also cannot claim that we share a common professional interest: although I taught survey courses on British history for years at Pázmány, I was always ready to admit that my knowledge about the long centuries before the Tudors is little more than superficial.

Yet Kati and I have known each other for almost a quarter of a century, and that curious fact may require some explanation. I first met Kati when I was 20, under somewhat unusual circumstances. In January 1990, five Hungarian students of the English Department (not yet SEAS) of ELTE were sent to a small town in southern Iowa to study at Graceland College as part of an exchange program between the two institutions. Although the place was certainly not the most exciting part of the US, we were all thrilled to gain first-hand experiences about college life and education in America. Some time around March, our international supervisor invited us to his office and told us in visible excitement that a professor of our home institution named “Miss Halaxee” is going to visit Graceland soon. All five of us were staring at him in utter incomprehension, because none of us have ever heard about anybody under that name. It took us a couple of minutes to work out that it is Kati Halácsy whose name is pronounced so curiously (albeit logically) by him. None of us knew her personally, we had only heard rumors about her, which were somewhat intimidating: we had been told by older students that she had been responsible for the

selection of the participants in the Graceland program, and she had employed very strict criteria. Somebody told us before leaving that we should consider ourselves lucky that she was abroad this year, or none of us would ever have been selected! Based on such a reputation, we expected a stern, rigorous, and distant personality, and felt less than enthusiastic about the entire visit.

Our surprise at our first encounter could hardly have been greater: during our common lunch in the college cafeteria, Kati turned out to be a nice, friendly, and open-minded person who revealed that the real purpose of her visit was to find out to what sort of place she had been sending Hungarian students for several years. She was deeply interested in our good and bad experiences at Graceland, and we shared a couple of good laughs at local oddities. Finally she remarked that she was aware of the college regulations that require all students to leave campus during the week of the spring holiday. So if any of us had no friend or relative to visit, she would be happy to host them for that period.

The invitation was so friendly and amiable that two of us felt encouraged to accept it. A couple of weeks later, Betty and I joined a home-bound Canadian student and made the long trip from Kansas City to Oberlin, Ohio, as passengers and stand-in drivers. Kati and his husband Laci, together with their charming daughters (Anna was a young, tall schoolgirl with a shy smile, while Ildi was still a lovely toddler, occasionally chattering in mixed-up Hungarian and English macaroni language), treated us with such unassuming kindness and friendly hospitality that we felt almost part of the family by the end of the week. We made trips to Cleveland and Lake Erie, enjoyed the pleasant atmosphere of Oberlin College campus, and in general had a wonderful time. So it happened that although I did not have a chance to study *Beowulf* and Old English poetry with Kati, I learned a lot about charity, kindness, hospitality and family spirit during that short week in Ohio.

Our paths crossed again a couple of years later in an interesting twist of fate: following the invitation of Tibor Fabiny, the first chair of the English Studies Institute of the recently founded Pázmány Péter Catholic University, I started to teach British and American history as a greenhorn doctoral student, while Kati was one of the senior professors of literature of the new institution, dividing her time between ELTE and Pázmány. After she succeeded Tibor as chair of the institute in 1998, she persuaded me to join Pázmány as a full-timer. Kati proved to be a patient, pragmatic, and helpful “boss,” who maintained friendly relations with every dean and represented the interests of the English

program with a combination of firmness and flexibility. She was especially devoted to assisting and nurturing the “young guns,” those lecturers in their late twenties and early thirties who made up the bulk of the teaching staff. She consistently employed two sets of criteria when hiring new staff members: besides academic credentials, she always considered the human merits of potential candidates because she wanted to maintain the department as a community of competent, cooperative, and friendly individuals able to work together for common goals.

Throughout most of her decade as institute chair, I was assisting her as an unofficial administrative aide: we worked our way through several different accreditations, producing piles of documents and trying to find the best possible solutions among obscure rules and regulations. I accompanied her to meetings of English consortia, we participated in Faculty Council sessions – all the while I hardly noticed how much I was learning from her about the ways of the academia and management skills. During weekends, I often climbed all the five and a half stories of the building at Karinthy Street where she lived (the elevator required a key that only permanent residents had), and I inevitably found her preparing a huge pile of cookies for the family. I never ceased to be amazed at how a family of four slim individuals manages to devour so many sweets without any consequences while other people’s waistline would grow an inch even by glancing at such delicacies. During these busy and eventful years, without any perceptible transition, we became friends, and ultimately neighbors when Kati and her family moved to the street next to ours.

It took us all by surprise when the Hungarian Accreditation Committee’s new, stricter regulations forced Kati to make a difficult choice between her original institution and her adopted one. After considerable hesitation, she decided to stay loyal to ELTE where she started her academic career. I personally understood and accepted her decision, even though, for obvious reasons, I did not agree with it. She has remained a welcome guest at all our events, from conferences to excursions, and our personal and academic ties have remained strong. I would like to believe that the “young guns,” her one-time protégés, have been able to carry on a very important part of her professional legacy – the Institute of English and American Studies of Pázmány Péter Catholic University – in the way and direction she envisioned more than a decade ago.

Thank you so much and God bless you, Kati!

Ágnes Kiricsi

Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary

Laudatio

It's almost 20 years now that I first entered the classroom of Kati Halácsy's survey course on Medieval English Literature. I had had no idea before what a difference a great teacher could make. She immediately enchanted me into the magical world of the Middle Ages, opened my eyes, and made me want to hear, read, and learn more and more. At last I could see my future path. Now, a medievalist myself, I would like to express my gratitude to her.

She has set a wonderful example to many of us. Kati is not only a scholar, but an outstanding teacher as well. She breathes life into any lesson, she is ready to share knowledge, ideas, and experience. By placing high value on discussion, all her lessons are inspiring and time seems to fly by at them. Kati excels in advising young students and motivating them, she is always available, not only in her office hours, but whenever her students would like to talk to her. She is patient, warm-hearted, and extremely dedicated to her work; a devoted teacher, who introduces her PhD students to the scholarly world, takes them to their conference début and carefully guides their first steps in publication.

Kati's ceaseless enthusiasm, her never-ending love of her subject, her tremendous devotion to teaching has shaped many careers and sharpened many minds. She has been the mother of a new generation of medievalists at the English departments of Hungarian universities. Her establishment of the medieval English PhD program has profoundly influenced today's scholarly scene. Without her, the first thousand years of English literacy would be an abandoned field at our institutions.

Tibor Tarcsay

Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Piliscsaba

Vera Doctrina

Deep and sound knowledge and a charming style. These were my first impressions of Kati – along with generations of students of English. Her presentation of *Beowulf* and Chaucer during the first lectures that I heard from her was compelling, and it was her brilliant discussion of *Sir Gawain* which moved me to read the romance *and* secondary literature about it – diving head first into medieval English literature.

Her seminars always provided a venue for lively discussion, occasionally turning into polemic, about a sweeping variety of topics: Old and Middle English literature, Renaissance drama, sentimental novels, the treatment of women in the Victorian age, arcane matters of theology and philosophy, or sceptical interpretation of hagiographies, and the realisation that humans were just as fallen, or just as blessed, as they are nowadays. It is indeed thanks to Kati that many of us realised that the Middle Ages were not like a foreign planet with aliens doing incomprehensible things, but quite the opposite: the medievals were people like her and me, and they might just have had a similar discussion – no wonder that one of her favourite texts is *Ælfric's Colloquy*.

It was she who first made me realise during these classes that faith, as the opposite of reason, did not equal unreason. One of our discussions to which I often think back was about a church where an angel's feather was kept as a relic – which was, in fact, an ordinary pigeon's feather. The feather was associated with a moment of great significance in the history of that church: a debate (unfortunately, I do not remember over what) was brought before the judgment of God, as it were, and the outcome depended, according to the parties, on whether an angel would appear – and lo, floating down in the air, a feather was beheld. When I sardonically commented that I would have bet it was just a pigeon's feather, she replied that I was correct – but did it make the event any less miraculous? Could that errant bird not have been, in that moment, a messenger of God? This brief exchange proved to be very thought-provoking, and I count it as one of the formative events of my life.

Kati's love and profound knowledge of Old English became apparent through her "special" BA and MA seminars. She evidently admired the Anglo-Saxon composers of prose and verse for their achievement,

how they everything (but especially Biblical stories) “in scopgereorde mid þa mæstan swetnise ond inbryrdnisse geglængdon ond in Engliscgereorde wel geworht forþ brungon”¹ (Miller 343). Her delight in absorbing and analysing the various methods of Anglo-Saxon composition (and especially poetic language, the “fireworks”) proved contagious, and on many occasions, we students were giddy with the same pleasure of perception. Going line by line, we never moved a word forward until we were sure that we exhausted every possibility of interpretation – only to find that the next word, or the next verse, offered new, even richer vistas. Kati’s early morning Tuesday and Thursday doctoral seminars, too, were dynamic workshops: coffee or tea in hand, what could be a better way (for medievalists) to start the day than to participate in discussions covering topics centuries apart, and not only to learn but also to experience the same sort of intellectual buzz which hundreds of years ago yielded the very texts which are the subjects of our disquisitions?

Our personal connection developed during these seminars, while I was working towards my baccalaureate. During my master’s programme, I asked her whether she would be my supervisor: fortunately, she said yes, adding that I should be prepared to face close and unrelenting scrutiny. Her insights into my work, her comments and just criticism of it were highly helpful – and not at all as daunting as she first made me believe. As we got to know each other better, so increased the fruitfulness of our cooperation, something that I hope is also true of the present, and will be of the future. Kati’s willingness to help is especially striking when one considers the many directions her energies have been and are still channelled: lecturing; tutoring and coordinating doctoral students in her free time; mental health and drama therapy; and hospital visitation – to name a few – and all this while managing a happy family. Her ethos wells through her everyday life, and creates around her an atmosphere which is as animating and rousing as the heroic poetry she admires. Kati is one of those rare people who are actually doctors of *philosophia* in its broadest sense; and she is, fortunately, not content with a Stoic approach to life.

All students of medieval English literature in Hungary have her creativity and energies to thank: she brought this field of study from shady amateurism and obscure antiquarianism (relegated to “pre-Renaissance”), and transformed it into science. Her extensive network

1. “in poetic speech with the greatest skill and sweetness embellished and brought forth in the English tongue, well wrought” (my translation).

of colleagues and friends abroad have also been most conducive to this discipline achieving recognition in Hungary, and after decades of neglect finally receiving the treatment it deserves. Her tutelage of the second and third generation of students of the English Middle Ages has been and is formative; and it is not only her academic guidance and help (often in the form of those acquaintances), but also our personal relationships with her, which play an important part in our lives. She is not only a teacher, but also a friend and a role model: if we did our duties (and much more!) with the same conviction and diligence as Kati does, the world would be filled with more light and happiness. I think all that her past, present and future students can say, as our pupil-colleagues did a millennium ago, is:

We cildra biddað þe, eala lareow, þæt þu tæce us . . . Leofre ys us beon geswungen for lare þænne hit ne cunnan, ac we witun þe bilewitne wesan ond nellan onbelæden swincgla us. (*Ælfric's Colloquy* 1–6)²

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- Miller, Thomas, ed. *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History*. London: Trübner, 1890. Print.

2. “We children ask thou, o teacher, to teach us . . . it is better for us to be beaten than to be ignorant, but we know that thou art gentle, and wilt not inflict upon us beating” (my translation).

Paul Mommaers

Professor Emeritus, University of Antwerp

A Misunderstood Theme: God, the Unknowable

Thanks to science we see more and more clearly how intricate and immeasurable reality is, within ourselves as well as without. It is increasingly harder to form an idea, let alone a picture, of the Origin of all things, of the Alpha and Omega, in one word, of God. This may, then, be the right time to draw attention to a theme that is essential to the Christian notion of God, yet one we often fail to appreciate: for the faithful, God is and always remains unknowable.

This “agnostic” view of the God in whom one believes is rooted in the Bible, notably in Exodus, where Moses asks God what his name is, in order to know and understand what God is. Yet, Moses is fobbed off with a combination of a few words (verbal forms) which he is unable to grasp (Exod. 13–15).

This Old Testament thread is picked up by the Greek and Latin Church Fathers (2nd till 7th centuries). Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, for one, sounds quite agnostic as he states that “the most divine knowledge that we can have of God consists in knowing him by not-knowing (ὀλιγόγνωσις)” (7.3; my translation). And Augustine, in an equally decisive tone, asserts that “God is better known by not knowing him (*scitur melius nesciendo*)” (PL 32: 1015; my translation). In the Middle Ages, scholastic thinkers also emphasize this unknowing *in* believing. So does Thomas Aquinas, who maintains that the highest knowledge of God “should know that he does not know God (*sciat se Deum nescire*)” (7.5; my translation).

In the Christian mystical tradition, from Bernard of Clairvaux on, this theme keeps coming to the fore. Jan van Ruusbroec evokes the knowledge of God that comes to the person who perfectly practises his faith as follows:

Here comes Jesus, and sees that man and addresses him in the light of faith: (telling him) that He, according to His divinity, is incommensurable and incomprehensible, and inaccessible and unfathomable, and surpassing all created light and all finite

comprehension. This is the highest knowledge of God that a person may have in the active life: that he recognize, in the light of faith, that God is incomprehensible and unknowable. (994–1000)

Actually, it is an essential characteristic of the Christian believer's awareness of God that He altogether passes human understanding: one always has to be conscious of God's being unknowable and unspeakable. God *is* the Unknowable, absolutely and forevermore. This does not mean that the faithful do not at all know him, or not really, or just a little bit, so that with regard to God they are simply in the dark and struck dumb. But it does mean that the mental act which from times immemorial is called "to know" and that "knowledge" as it is preferably understood nowadays have no grip whatsoever on God. Without twisting the word, we can say, then, that an agnostic attitude of mind not only exists outside or prior to faith but inside as well. Agnosticism, in its non-doctrinal sense, may be considered an integral part of the experience of faith.¹

The problem we presently wish to address is as follows. The believer gets no hold on God, never, in no way, however perfect her or his practising faith and to whatever extent his or her experience of God may have progressed. This incapacity makes itself felt in the inability of the intellect to think about God, a failure that appears where thinking takes shape: in thought and language, in concepts and words. (For convenience's sake thinking and speaking are here distinguished, not separated.)

A passage of Hadewijch's Letter 12 is a suitable introduction to this theme. There is arguably no other text that so vigorously and accurately deals with the problem of our knowledge of God:

All that comes into a man's thoughts about God
and all that he can understand of Him and represent
in whatever figure,
that is not God.
For if a human being could
comprehend Him
and understand

1. According to the Van Dale dictionary, doctrinal agnosticism is "the theory, mainly developed by Spencer and Huxley [not Aldous but Thomas], that we cannot have knowledge of an order that transcends our experience."

with his senses
and with his thoughts,
God would be less than man,
and soon His being lovable would come to an end,
as now is the case for light-minded people
who so soon run out of love. (31–39)

In the first sentence the stress falls on “*is not*,” which shows up all the more because of the repeated “all”: it is by no means possible to have God’s real reality – that which he *is* – entering any conception or representation whatsoever. The thing we think is merely grasped as an object, and the referent we put into words always remains outside of language, however perfect the description, however fascinating the image. No winter landscape exists in which it actually snows, and even those apparently most lifelike and mobile images that make up a movie have in themselves no liveliness. A fortiori God’s *is* will never be found, neither in the soundest conceptions nor in the most sacred words. It is, then, a fatal mistake for the believer to assume that God would ever coincide with whatever “thoughts” or “figures.”

“To comprehend” suggests the why of this substantial limitation. Once we are aware of the original sense of *-prehend*, namely ‘to grip,’² we see how human comprehension implies taking hold of things, so as to transpose them in mental existence and to define them according to our own standards. In that way the thing in itself – what it *is* – keeps existing out of the grip of our understanding, the real thing remaining uncomprehended and appearing as the Other of understanding. Consequently, insofar something is known, it belongs to the one who knows it – he or she owns it – so much so that if we were ever to know God, there would be no “wholly Other” anymore, for “God would be less than man.”

As she draws attention – in the last three lines – to the kind of love that fails in the face of God, Hadewijch indirectly evokes another way to God in which love is not conditioned by our knowledge.

Already in the second book of the Bible, Exodus, it is argued, or rather narrated, that God escapes all concepts and all words. This representation of man’s intellectual impotence regarding God is so striking and well-thought-out that it has an effect on the entire spiritual tradition of Jews and Christians.

2. Nowadays words like “prehension” are still used.

1. The Revelation of the Name of God

But Moses said to God, "If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God [Elohîm] said to Moses: "I AM WHO I AM [*'ehyeh 'aser 'ehyeh*]." He said further, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I AM [*'ehyeh*] has sent me to you.'" God also said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'The LORD [*YHWH*], the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you':

This is my name forever,
and this my title for all generations." (Exod. 3.13-15)

What exactly is the purpose of Moses' asking about the name of God? This question is already introduced early in Chapter 3, when Moses, as he notices the burning bush, reflects that he "must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up" (3.3). The first thing Moses asks is that which we always ask when faced with something: "What is that?" Next, as endowed with reason, we try to give a predicative answer: we seek to say something that is really characteristic of the "something" in question, for example, "this man is tall." In Moses' case, that first question is answered: "I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (3.6). But Moses goes on asking. Once more he does what we, thinking creatures, are doing again and again: we want to say something more about that "something," we want to say – or rather to state, for here it is a judgment we express – what it is that makes this "something" that which it *is*. At this stage, we generalize – bringing the "something" under one heading with similar things – so that we can indicate its essence: for example, "that man, who is a human being, is a rational being."

The "something" with which Moses has to do is God (3.6), and by asking God's name, he puts in his own way the question as to what essentially characterizes God, as to what God *is*. The fact is that Moses shares a magical view of religion which implies the belief that the very own mysterious force of the god dwells in his "secret name." According to the underlying principle that the name and the bearer of the name coincide, it is then assumed that by knowing the name of the god, one is in a position to wield power over the god.

It is rewarding, even for those who (like me) do not know Hebrew, to look at God's answer in the original: *'ehyeh'aser'ehyeh*, followed by one more *'ehyeh*. This *'ehyeh* – the verb that signifies 'to be' – appears three times: it is conjugated twice in the first person and once in the third, and those three forms are put in the future tense. Moreover, this playing with 'to be' (*'ehyeh*) is reinforced by the fact that in YHWH the basic form *haj* 'to be' is heard. As in addition we learn that the Hebrew 'to be' conveys something like 'to be there for someone' and that *'aser* means 'the one who,' we soon see that God's answer is couched in a Hebrew construction that does not allow of a satisfactory translation.³ The answer that is given to Moses sounds like a riddle: 'I will be there as I will be there.'

However, the anonymous God satisfies Moses and his people eager to know the Name: "The LORD . . . is my name forever, and this my title for all generations . . ." (3.15). "My title" is where the gist of these lines lies: God tells them that they are entitled to address him and how this should be done. The Israelites receive a name and a directive with it. "LORD" is not a predicate that might enable them to know what God is, but a term of address fit to approach the Unknowable. "LORD" is the name of God insofar as he comes out of himself so as to enter into contact with the people, yet the name of God in himself remains hidden from them evermore. By attributing two names to God, the Bible points to two different modes of being in God, not to two separated aspects of God. The secret name refers to God's being transcendent, the revealed name to his being approachable.

It is worth noticing, moreover, that the question of God's name is linked to Moses' vocation – a calling for action – as well as to God's taking action in the world. Before the revelation of the Name, Moses heard this command: "I will send you to Pharaoh" (3.10), and immediately after, he is called upon as follows: "Go and assemble the elders of Israel, and say to them, "The LORD . . . has appeared to me, saying: I have given heed to you and to what has been done to you in Egypt. I declare that I will bring you up out of the misery of Egypt . . ."' (3.16–17).

3. As appears from the oldest standard translations, this name is untranslatable indeed. In the Septuagint (the Old Testament translated from Hebrew into Greek by 70 scholars in the 2nd century before Christ) the personal character of the Hebrew name is maintained through the combination of the impersonal *Being* with the finite form of the verb: Ἐγὼ εἶμι ὁ ὢν. The Vulgate (composed by Jerome in the 4th–5th centuries) has *Ego sum qui sum*.

2. Two Theophanies

The fact that it is not granted to Moses to know the Name so as to know what God is does not prevent God from manifesting himself several times. Yet even in those revelations, Exodus brings to the fore the divine unknowability.

First, Moses comes to know God through the phenomenon of the burning bush:

There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up." When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." He said further, "I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. (Exod. 3.2–6)

God manifests himself in a manner both visual and aural: Moses sees the brightness of the flames and he hears the voice that speaks from the luminous form. Thanks to the words, he understands that he is not faced with an amazing natural phenomenon: he learns that he is in the presence of God, who is making himself known. This first theophany is luminous, clear as it is for the eye and the ear. One expects Moses to receive, in the following stage of religious development, more God-given enlightenment and a clearer insight into God.

But what a paradox Exodus has in store as it goes on to evoke Moses' growing knowledge of God! God changes from perceptible to hidden. The seeing-and-hearing is over, gone are the luminous flames and the clarifying words. There is only the short command to enter the darkness, and there God is revealed as the truly Unseen, with regard to whom all insight fails:

Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. The glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the cloud. . . . Moses entered the cloud and went up

on the mountain. Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights. (Exod. 24.15–18)

Is this the final point for the God-fearing Moses? Is this God's refusal of the human mind approaching him? By no means, for here is the crossing where God invites Moses to know him as the Unknown, and to approach him as such, forevermore. From this experience of the cloud of unknowing on, Moses' knowledge of God will continue by following desire. Exodus gives a hint to this just before the third theophany (33.19–23). Although Moses enjoys an incomparable knowledge of God – “Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend” (33.11) – he still longs for more: “Show me your glory, I pray” (33.18).

3. Knowing God

As we have seen, the question of God's name is put in the context of the deliverance from slavery to the Egyptians, which means that the Name is closely connected with the action of Moses as well with God's taking action. Thus a biblical motif was already hinted at that Exodus goes on to elucidate: knowing God is not a matter of contemplation or speculation, for God is to be known by acknowledging him as the One who causes the course of events which, moreover, he has in his own hand. That is why in the first layer of the Bible God is neither thought about nor represented but, so to speak, narrated. The facts tell him.

In passages that specify this way of knowing God, regular mention is made of a “sign”:

But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” He said, “I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.” (Exod. 3.11–12)

Say therefore to the Israelites, ‘I am the LORD, and I will free you from the burdens of the Egyptians and deliver you from slavery to them. . . . I will take you as my people, and I will be your God. You shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has freed you from the burdens of the Egyptians.’ (Exod. 6.6–7)

This “sign” is God’s way of confirming that it was His very own command to go to Pharaoh (first citation), that the Israelites’ rescue from the Egyptians was his very own work (second citation). Clearly such a “sign” is neither a presage nor a kind of instant proof, for it is perceived only later on, after Moses has answered the call and God has taken action. In order to come to the knowledge of God, the Israelites first have to believe that he is effectively present in the disconcerting words they hear and the unbelievable things they go through.

The knowledge of God evoked in Exodus is notable for its earthly character: it arises and persists in the ways of the world. This should not, however, blur the fact that it depends on God’s initiative: man’s knowing God is God’s gift. Yet this gift is not primarily presented to man insofar as he is endowed with reason. It is the human being as gifted with senses, as experiencing the sensible world, whom God touches in the first instance. This may well give us, moderns, food for thought. Inspired by Galileo and Descartes, we live more and more in a world fashioned by natural science. The result is that we tend to put in brackets the sensible within us (the act of feeling) as well as around us (what is felt). Consequently, we are less in touch with the things themselves, for attention goes mostly to the measurable object that lies hidden in them. In this way we threaten to become alienated from our most genuine self, which, as a matter of fact, exists in the tangible world. For is it not by feeling the things which occur that we feel our feeling, and so sense our one and only being? The biblical, “earthly” way of knowing God is no superficial knowledge.

4. The Ban on Images

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath . . . You shall not bow down to them or worship them . . . You shall not make gods of silver alongside me, nor shall you make for yourselves gods of gold. (Exod. 20.2–5, 23)

Images are prohibited for two reasons. For one thing, any image of God, the Living One, would reduce him to a lifeless thing – a “god of silver” – that is not able to move by itself. Only the living human being can be an image of the Living One. Next, images represent that which

in actual fact is absent, so much so that they at best allow a mediate relation with God. An image might well speak in the third person about God, but what the LORD wants is precisely an immediate relation with man, speaking with them in the second person. Therefore the purpose of the ban on images is not that God might maintain his incognito, quite the contrary.

In the following passage it is God who addresses the people:

[Y]ou approached and stood at the foot of the mountain [Horeb] while the mountain was blazing up to the very heavens, shrouded in dark clouds. Then the LORD spoke to you out of the fire. You heard the sound of words but saw no form; there was only a voice. . . . Since you saw no form when the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the fire, take care and watch yourselves closely, so that you do not act corruptly by making an idol for yourselves, in the form of any figure – the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any animal that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water under the earth. (Deut. 4.11–18)

The repetition of “form,” sounding like a litany, impresses once again upon the reader the frozenness of the inanimate idols that lack resilience. However, the point of this text lies in “there was only a voice.” Here, the ban on images is justified by calling to mind God’s manifestation on Mount Sinai, where the covenant was formed: “As the blast of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses would speak and [the voice of] God would answer him in thunder” (Exod. 19.19).⁴ From its first books on, the Bible prefers speaking and listening to any other way of communication with God, a preference which makes itself felt throughout the Christian tradition.

It is worth noticing that often special attention is paid to the voice, as happens here with regard to the ban on images. In fact, it is enough to be aware of that which distinguishes communication brought about by our voice to understand why the Bible is so keen on evoking the image of the “voice of God.” As a means of communication, the voice works immediately, in the sense of both instantly and

4. We insert “voice” according to other recent translations such as the *Traduction oecuménique de la Bible* (TOB): “par la voix du tonnerre”; others just do not mention “thunder.”

directly. Moreover, in conversation the voice comes from deep in the speaker and enters deep into the hearer. It is the tone that carries the oral interchange of ideas and feelings, the basic colour of the linguistic variations we play.

As for the person who hears someone else's voice, she or he undergoes the impression thereof – “im-pression” in the strict sense of the word. The voice of the interlocutor makes itself felt, at once and without any intermediary: it comes like a touch, out of the range of the intellect that understands language. Even before grasping the sense of the words uttered by the speaker, one hears how she or he exists. In his voice the speaker manifests himself. The inflection indicates not only the disposition which he has by nature, but also, more precisely, his state of mind – how revealing is the quivering or the tremulous voice! Quicker than the speaker's words, the voice also expresses, among many other things, his or her authority, or care, or will. Thanks to the voice, the one who hears is given a knowing of the one who speaks that precedes any understanding, so much so that, on hearing the voice, we sometimes forget to listen to the words.

This is then in broad outline the theme of God's unknowability as it appears in the first books of the Bible. We will now turn to three Christian authors who have resumed this theme: Gregory of Nyssa, Jan van Ruusbroec and John Chapman.

5. Gregory of Nyssa (4th Century)

Gregory is a Christian and, originally, a philosopher. Moreover, he is an artful sophist. Thus Greek philosophy and the Christian faith converge in him, or rather: the faith finds expression in the dominating culture. Gregory succeeds in implanting the biblical legacy in the Greek way of thinking, specifically as he puts the Christian awareness of God in the prevailing concepts and words, assimilating, for example, *eros* and *theoria*. As a matter of fact, inculturation is always an absolute necessity when it comes to realizing religious belief, and this is what Gregory has done in a masterly way. True, the faith is a supernatural gift and the believer has his eye on the Invisible, but that does not alter the fact that what inspires him must be tested against the ideas and values of the world he inhabits, in Gregory's case a really autonomous world.

In the Bible Gregory finds the prefiguration of the Christian experience of God. It is the basic testimony that appears mainly in narratives

but also in speculative and poetic texts. It is from this point of view that Gregory reads and discusses Moses' experience related in Exodus and the lovers' experience evoked in the Song of Songs.

In *The Life of Moses* Gregory points out two exemplary moments that relate to the theme we are looking at: Moses' perception of the burning bush and his entering the dark cloud. The following passage shows how this Greek thinker brings to the fore the biblical notion of God's unknowability – represented as “the darkness” – within the speculative pattern of thought of his contemporaries, for whom “to know” is “to see”:

What does it mean that Moses entered the darkness and then saw God in it? What is now recounted seems somehow contradictory to the first theophany [the burning bush], for then the Divine was beheld in light but now he is seen in darkness . . . But as the mind progresses and . . . as it approaches more nearly to contemplation, it sees more clearly what of the divine nature is un contemplated. For leaving behind everything that is observed, not only what sense comprehends but also what the intelligence thinks it sees, it keeps on penetrating deeper until . . . it gains access to the invisible and the uncomprehensible, and there it sees God. This is the true knowledge of what is sought; this is the seeing that consists in not seeing, because that which is sought transcends all knowledge, being separated on all sides by incomprehensibility as by a kind of darkness. (2.162–63)

In the *Homilies on the Song of Songs* Gregory interprets the love poem as the prefiguration of the gradual ascent to God of the Christian believer, who is represented here as the loving soul that seeks the Beloved. In the *Sixth Homily*, Gregory starts by preparing the Greek reader for the biblical “night/darkness” by making use of the speculative expression “to penetrate into the invisible world.” He then goes on to mention “love,” which, as appears in the other homilies, dares to thread its way through the “darkness,” as opposed to “reason,” which is stopped by its demand for clarity: reason first wants to know what is the “essence” of the biblical “I am who I am.” But as long as the “loving soul” tries to grasp what God is by naming him, she does not make headway anymore. She first needs to let go of the intention of using in a predicative way the names that are attributed to God:

When I [the soul that seeks God] was penetrating into the invisible world . . . I was surrounded by the divine night, looking for the one who hides in the darkness. I was bearing love for him whom I desired, but the object itself of this love was fleeing, not allowing my reason to embrace him. I was seeking him . . . during my nights, in order to know what his essence is, what his beginning, what his ending, and what makes that he *is*. But I did not find him. I tried calling him by the name that can be attributed to the one who cannot be named. Yet, no designation whatsoever can be applied to him whom I desire. How is he to be found who is above any name, even as one calls him by whichever name? (145; my translation)

6. Jan van Ruusbroec (14th Century)

In the introduction to this contribution we have already quoted from *The Spiritual Espousals*, where Ruusbroec strongly expresses the unknowability of God with which the believer is faced, precisely “in the light of faith” (994–1000).

However, the fact that it is impossible for the believer to grasp what God is, and so to penetrate him, does not contradict the conviction that he or she receives from the Jewish-Christian tradition a notion of God that is true without being exhaustive at all, a notion of God put into words that are correct but which only point to the One who escapes them. From the Church Fathers on, the paradox of a knowing that is unknowing is again and again indicated by stating that God, whose very own name remains hidden from us, may be named by us by means of many different names (see how Ruusbroec puts the biblical name LORD apart). There is, however, one condition: we have to understand all those names “under the fathomless aspect of divine nature.” Where similarity holds, dissimilarity is always greater, so much so that the understandable word turns unfathomable.

With whatever modes or with whatever names [the believer] represents God as Lord of all creatures, it is always right for him . . . If he considers God as Savior, Redeemer, Creator, Ruler, Beatitude, Majesty, Wisdom, Truth, Goodness, all under the fathomless aspect of divine nature, he does right. Though the names which we attribute to God are many, the sublime nature of God is a simple unity, unnamed by creatures. But because of His

incomprehensible nobility and sublimity, we give Him all these names, since we can neither name Him nor fully express Him in words. (769–77)

7. John Chapman (20th Century)

Finally, we will have a look at the evocation of God's unknowability by a Benedictine who, between the two World Wars, counselled people who were doing their best to serve God and to know him. The following passages from Chapman's *Spiritual Letters* come so still and simply worded from the praying heart that they need no commenting, just stilled reading:

You remember that I sent you a series of papers of theology . . . Now, oddly, I can't say that any of that is my real spiritual life . . . It is my Faith – it leads me to God – it is most useful outside of prayer. But in prayer always – and out of prayer also – the mainspring of everything is wholly *irrational*, meaningless, inexpressible. "I want God" – and the word "God" has absolutely no meaning . . . Of course it simplifies people's spiritual life into nothing but the desire of God's will. The whole object of life becomes to want nothing that is not God. *Only there is no reason for it*. The word 'God' means *nothing* – which is, of course, theologically quite correct, since God is nothing that we can think or conceive. (248)

The time of prayer is passed in the act of wanting God. It is an idiotic state, and feels like the completest *waste of time*, until it gradually becomes more vivid. The strangest phenomenon is when we begin to wonder whether we mean anything at all, and if we are addressing anyone, or merely repeating mechanically a formula we do not mean. The word *God* seems to mean nothing. (290)

8. An Open-Ended Conclusion

In the course of this essay we saw more than once that the unknowability of God, however much impregnable, is not a blank wall. The "dark cloud" with which, ever since the days of Moses, the believer is faced,

is to be understood as an invitation, not a refusal. Jan van Ruusbroec puts it this way: “But where intellect remains outside, there longing and love go in” (855).

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Paul E. Szarmach

Emeritus Professor of English and Medieval Studies

Western Michigan University

The Life of Martin in Cambridge, Pembroke College 25

Gibbon, it would appear, had a surprising regard for Martin of Tours when he listed without any acid remark the saint's many roles: "a soldier, a hermit, a bishop and a saint [who] established monasteries in Gaul" (5). Some of the praise buried below the line is undoubtedly a reflection on Sulpicius Severus, whom Gibbon appreciates as Martin's "eloquent historian" who produces a "champion" to equal the Desert Fathers. To be sure it was Sulpicius whose engaging style made Martin a saintly celebrity and spread his name throughout the West and more.

Holiness had something to do with it, of course, but so did a remarkable transmission engine that spread Martin's words and holy works in various forms. The *Vita* alone could not tell Martin's story with the result that "by-forms" began to flourish. The most significant is the *Martinellus*, a bibliographical form of various and variable works on Martin, generally including the *Vita* and three letters about him and, added later, works by other Christian writers as the legend develops. Fontaine marks the importance of the *Martinelli* when he uses three ninth-century *Martinelli* in his magisterial edition (1: 222), while Van Dam sketches the contextual background that indicates the importance of that tradition (308–09).¹ But there are witnesses to be found in the homiliaries. Grégoire prints three homiletic pieces found in the *L'Homélie Romain* items 76, 77, 78, taken from respectively the *Vita*, the *Epistola ad Bassulam*, and Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* 1.48 (Grégoire, *Homélie Liturgiques; Les Homélie* 63). There are extracts in the *Homiliary* of Alan of Farfa, Winter cycle items 76, 77, 78, as in the *Roman Homiliary*. The Cotton-Corpus Legendary BL, Cotton Nero E.1 and Cambridge, Corpus Christi 9 (275–99, 302–19) contain the *Vita* and various texts and *Dialogi* 2 and 3.² Some sense for the

1. F. R. Hoare provides a serviceable translation with useful notes (*The Life of Martin* occurs on pp. 1–60, the *Dialogues* on pp. 63–144).

2. For the Cotton-Corpus Legendary, which has a special significance for Old English Homiletics, see Zettel, with special reference to Martiniana. Jackson and Lapidge review and update Zettel's work.

subtleties of the textual relations, mentioned here only selectively, and their significance is apparent in Frederick M. Biggs' study of "Ælfric as Historian," where Ælfric favors Sulpicius' work to Alcuin's redaction in an act of good historical judgment.³

It is the Alcuin redaction that is the subject of this paper. This redaction has two parts in Pembroke 25: item 65 *Omelia in natale Sancti Martini Episcopi* (fols. 133v–36r); item 66 *Item alia. Oportet nos unanimiter gaudere* (fols. 133v–36v). Jullien and Perelman offer the basic textual, incipit/explicit, manuscript, and bibliographical information to support study, including consideration of the question of whether the two pieces were written at the same time as well as I Deug-Su's view that the two works are different (Jullien and Perelman 498–501). Outside of Pembroke 25 titles vary, e.g.: *Vita* and *Sermo* appear respectively as *Laudatio* I and II. In Pembroke 25 the two pieces are numbered but not by the main hand. The texts as rendered by Migne (101: 657–62) carry with them sixteen consecutively numbered paragraphs each with subtitles, but these extra-textual elements are not in the Pembroke manuscript.

Before looking at some specific passages to characterize the two texts, i.e. the full *Vita* and the letters on the one hand and the text in Pembroke 25, some general comparative points might be helpful. What has contributed to the literary success of the *Vita Martini* is the strong narrative voice of Sulpicius. Putting to the side of whether the miracles and the *testimonia* are "true," the *Vita* conveys the fiction as fact. Sulpicius (and others) are witnesses to this truth. Sulpicius is a narrator whose presence is felt everywhere in the text. He is not a true first-person narrator or an omniscient one, but rather one who artfully controls audience response based on his witness. Sulpicius is a major part of the story of Martin. The *Vita* unfolds as an account of *historia*. The voice of the narrator of Pembroke 25 by contrast is hard to find or to locate. No doubt some of the absence is the result of detail, and amplification contributes to the spare narrative and brings about a focus on Martin himself.

There are several places in the *Vita* that highlight Alcuin's methods and his approach. Without doubt the most iconic episode in the *Vita* is Martin's encounter with the nude beggar at the gates of Amiens. Sulpicius builds the narrative in a series of steps. At first it seems that the theme is Martin as catechumen and candidate for Baptism. Martin

3. Biggs appends a transcription of the Latin found in fols. 133v–36v. I follow the Biggs transcription here where appropriate.

was turned away from his desire to be a catechumen because of his youth and the opposition of his father. His career in the military, another Sulpician theme (about which more below), was progressing well. One day in the middle of winter, carrying his weapons and (only) his uniform, Martin ran into a coatless beggar. The winter was so harsh that people were dying, and the beggar was asking those who passed by for their pity. Martin had already given away what he had. Then he realized that the beggar was there for him: “Quid tamen ageret. Nihil praeter chlamydem, qua indutus erat habebat. iam enim reliqua opus simile consumpserat. Arrepto itaque ferro quo accinctus erat, mediam dividit partemque eius pauperi tribuit reliqua rursus induitur” (1: 256).⁴ The ablative absolute, *arrepto . . . ferro*, carries force and resolve as an answer to Martin’s question *quid tamen ageret*. The ill-clad Martin inspired some to laugh at him, but others who were well-clad knew that they could have clothed the beggar, for they had more. The incident, so far as it goes, offers an exemplum of good behavior, but Sulpicius does not stop here. He has more teaching to do, and so he relates Martin’s dream vision: “Mox ad angelorum circumstantium multitudinem audit Iesum clara voce dicentem, ‘Martinus adhuc cathecumenus hac me veste contexit’” (1: 258).⁵

Martin sees the very same cloak he gave the beggar. The staging of Christ’s words, so to speak, puts an interesting spin into play. Martin hears Christ talking to the angels – Christ does not talk to him directly. Presumably the indirection is a form of validation of Christ’s words or perhaps a dramatic confirmation of them. Yet Sulpicius has one final move, the citation of Matt. 25.40: “Quamdiu fecistis uni ex minimis istis, mihi fecistis, se in in pauper professus est vestitum” (1: 258).⁶ The picture of Martin thus grows from catechumen to visionary. Sulpicius lets his narrative unfold in stages that surprise.

Alcuin sharply reduces the incident to the essential thematic elements to an extent that may imply that the audience already knows the story. Thus there is mention of Amiens and the horrid, killing winter, but not much more (in Migne Amiens is not mentioned, e.g.). Christ’s

4. “But what was he to do? He had nothing with him but the cape he had on, for he had already used up what else he had, in similar good works. So he took the sword he was wearing and cut the cape in two and gave one half to the beggar, putting on the rest himself again” (Hoare 14).

5. “Then he heard Jesus say aloud to the throng of angels that surrounded him: ‘Martin is only a catechumen but he has clothed Me with this garment’” (Hoare 14).

6. “But Our Lord Himself had once said: ‘In doing it to one of these least regarded ones, you were doing it to Me’” (Hoare 15).

indirect acknowledgment of Martin's charity is noted, and the quotation of Christ's words in the presence of the angelic army has powerful effect. Martin's slight hesitation to act disappears from the account, and the deft phrase *arrepto . . . ferro*, the detail that gives us an entry into Martin's mind, drops out of the telling. Alcuin does end the passage with the citation of Matt. 25.40. The two quotations are nearly half of the story of Amiens.

Martin as catechumen and candidate for Baptism is a major theme of the early chapters of the *Vita*. Equally important is the theme of Martin as a soldier. The two themes run alongside each other until Martin met Hilary and left the army. Martin, like so many who were headed for sainthood, showed at an early age that he sought Christianity and an opportunity to serve God. His parents were pagan, and his father rose to military tribune. Martin's longing for the desert life ran counter to his father's wishes. Martin served involuntarily under Constantius and Julian.⁷ The emperors issued an edict that sons of veterans had to be registered for military service; Martin's father betrayed him to the authorities, and Martin was in the army in chains. Yet he did lead a satisfactory life as a soldier, behaving more like a monk than a soldier bound by an oath. He had only one servant, with whom he shared service reversing servant-master roles, including polishing boots, and with whom he took meals. He was clothed in the good works of Baptism: "Necdum tamen regeneratus in Christo, agebat quendam bonis operibus baptismi candidatum: adistere scilicet laborantibus opem ferre miseris, alere egentes, vestire nudos, nihil sibi ex militia stipendiis praeter cotidianum victum reservare" (1: 256).⁸

The world of war begins when the barbarians invade Gaul. Martin was expecting to leave military service and to return the *donativum* (Lewis and Short s.v.) to the emperor, for he felt it would not be honest to take it if he were not going to fight. He says to the emperor: ". . . militavi tibi. patere ut nunc militem Deo Donativum pugnaturus accipiat; Christi ego miles sum. Pugnare mihi non licet" (1: 260).⁹ The emperor is duly enraged, charging Martin with cowardice and fear. Martin re-

7. Hoare indicates the problems of chronology that Sulpicius brings to Martin's military biography (12–13).

8. "Though not yet reborn in Christ, he acted as one already robed in the good works of baptism – caring for the suffering, succoring the unfortunate, feeding the needy, clothing the naked, keeping nothing for himself out of the army pay beyond his daily food" (Hoare 14).

9. "I have been your soldier up to now. Let someone who is going to fight have your bonus. I am Christ's soldier. I am not allowed to fight" (Hoare 16).

sponds with his own challenge: he will stand unarmed and go through the enemy line in the name of Jesus protected by the sign of the Cross. The next day the barbarians sue for peace. Sulpicius asks rhetorically, and turning the point away from any question of the miraculous, who can doubt that Martin had the Lord's protection from harm and from witnessing the death of men.

It was some 800 years between the *Vita* and Pembroke 25. What would an eleventh-century redactor know or understand about fourth-century Roman military personnel practices? Would they know about the *donativum*? Alcuin sidesteps any kind of contextual information. Martin, the military, and the emperor create a drama in the interchange with the emperor that in a few sentences sketches the implications of conscience.

The *Vita* stresses Martin's miracle-working powers, which triumphed over the dead, over nature gone out of control, over devils, over heretics, over political enemies, over crowds. Here a few examples will have to suffice. The *Vita* gives the story of a serf on the farm of one Lupicinus, a man honored in the world. The young serf had hanged himself. Martin heard the cries of anguish and enquired. He went to the *cellulam* where the body lay, shut everyone out, and laid himself on the body, praying for a while. The young man slowly regained consciousness, his face coming to life, his eyes exhausted. He arose and walked to the door, the whole crowd looking on. The detail is striking, as is the medical technique, which (rationally) must have been a form of resuscitation. The narrative economy in this 12-line account is excellent. In the Pembroke 25 version there is but a hint of the narrative depth: "Alterum in Lupicini cuiusdam uiri honorati agro laqueo suspensum, sacris orationibus pristinae restitit vitae" (transcript by Biggs 304).¹⁰ The assembled crowd merely looks on this triumph over death. The Sulpician Latin is economical, the Alcuinian Latin is abbreviated.

Martin cures the sick as well. The daughter of Arborius, who was a good man of prefectorial rank, suffered from fever. A letter from Martin was brought to him and placed on the daughter's chest. Her fever left her and Arborius offered her to God and to perpetual virginity. Arborius presented the daughter to Martin as proof that he cured her at a distance and would not allow the daughter's ceremony, her clothing, and her consecration as a virgin, to be performed by anyone

10. "On the farm of a certain honored man Lupicinus he restored with holy prayers the former life of another hanged by a noose" (my translation).

other than Martin. A man named Paulinus has begun to suffer from a sharp pain in the eye and a thick film had grown over his pupil. Martin touched the eye with a paint brush, restoring his eye and banished his pain [Cataracts?]. Even Martin needed his restorative powers when he fell down a staircase. As he writhed half-dead in pain, an angel ministered to his needs washing him, tending to his wounds and administering an ointment. Sulpicius notes: “Sed longum est ire per singula” (1: 294).¹¹ And so one may agree:

Filia Arborii prefecti per impositionem aepistulae sancti Martini a gravissimis liberta est febribus. Paulini oculum penniculo superposito sanavit a dolore atque caligine. Idem quoque sanctus Martinus cadens super gradus caenaculi, graviter pene totis adritus est membris; et nocte ab angelo Dei ad integram recreatus est sanitatem . . . (transcript by Biggs 305)¹²

Sulpicius draws out another iconic incident, this time from *Epistola* 3. Martin, who had already foretold his imminent death, went with an entourage to a parish church where there was friction and quarrelling, in order to restore peace. On the river there were waterfowl (*mergos*) diving for fish and gorging on them. Martin said: “‘Forma,’ inquit, ‘haec demonum est: insidiantur incautis, capiunt secientes, captos devorant, exsaturarique non queunt devoratis’” (Fontaine 1: 338).¹³

Martin dismisses the birds with the same authority with which he dismissed demons. The birds formed themselves into a flock and left the river for the mountains and forests as Martin had banished them. There were many witnesses, who were astonished that Martin had the power to give orders to birds. The incident has a dynamic and pictorial quality; it has a progression: devils lying in wait, catching the unwary unbeknownst, devouring them, remaining unsatisfied. The demonic

11. “But it would be tedious to go through all the instances” (Hoare 32).

12. “The daughter of the prefect Arborius was freed from a severe fever by means of the imposition of a letter of Saint Martin. He cured the eye of Paulinus, a fine pen having been superimposed [on the wound], from the pain and the darkness. Indeed Saint Martin himself, falling over steps, gravely injured his whole body. And in the night by the angel of God he was made whole and well” (my translation).

13. “‘There,’ he said ‘You have a picture of the demons. They lie in wait for the unwary, catch them before they know, devour them when they have caught them, and are never satisfied with those they have devoured’” (Hoare 57).

energy contributes to the effective tableau. Martin's mission, however, was to restore peace, which is the theme that concludes the *Vita* with citation of the beatitude: Matt. 5.9, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the Children of God," and John 14.27, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." In the *Vita* the theme of peace has no such strong biblical emphasis, but Pembroke 25 carries the theme before an account of the waterfowl. The independence of the Pembroke account is a signal that the two texts are moving away from each other. Thus, Pembroke lets us know that Martin had many holy visitors: very often he enjoyed angelic visitations and familiar conversations, and indeed the Blessed mother of God and our Lord Jesus Christ, the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and the holy virgins Thecla and Agnes this man of God honored and comforted.

The aim of this paper is to suggest how Alcuin came to terms with the compositional problems he faced in rendering the *Vita Martini*. The first of these problems was how to render one of the classic texts of western spirituality. The problem is not the obvious one of size and length, but rather one of scope and "literary vision." Here Sulpicius had the advantage of personal acquaintance with Martin to feed his moral and literary imagination. Alcuin's thought processes were more selective, perhaps more guarded or bookish. The absence of details contributes to the feeling that not all is fully told. Certainly, the iconic passages concerning Amiens and concerning the waterfowl, thanks to any comparisons with the *Vita*, lose their impact. One possible inference is that Alcuin is seeking to limit length for oral delivery. The more tempting inference is that this life of Martin is a remnant of Alcuin's own homiliary, now lost.¹⁴

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Matti Kilpiö

University of Helsinki

Gildas' *De excidio Britanniae* and *Beowulf*

With Special Reference to *Beo* 3069–75

The purpose of this essay is twofold: to suggest a connection between certain passages of *Beowulf* and Gildas' *De excidio Britanniae* and to offer a new reading for what is arguably one of the most intriguing cruces of *Beowulf*, lines 3069–75. As this new reading is closely, albeit not inseparably, linked up with the hypothesis that there is a connection between the two works, I first discuss passages other than *Beo* 3069–75 where I see a possible influence of *De excidio* on *Beowulf*.

1. Concern for the Kingly Code of Conduct: Reproaches and Exhortations

For there to be even a possibility of influence by *De excidio* on *Beowulf*, we must of course assume that the *Beowulf* poet was a man versed in Latin letters.¹ If this possibility is granted, then *De excidio* in fact suggests itself as a very plausible source for *Beowulf*. Thematically, it partly deals with the same moral problems as certain passages of the poem in particular, and, more generally, like *Beowulf*, *De excidio* presents a picture of an ideal ruler which is in startling contrast with the relentlessly negative portrayals Gildas draws of British kings (Whitman 277–78, particularly 284). It is noteworthy that, with the exception of the last correspondence, all the other parallels proposed in this section come from Hrothgar's "sermon," a passage characterized, in the words of Klaeber, by a "high moral tone" (Klaeber 3, 190).

Much of *De excidio* consists of biblical quotations, systematically drawn from the Old and New Testaments (Winterbottom 6). This is particularly true about sections 37–64 in the part of the complaint dealing with the kings and about sections 69–109 in the part of the

1. For a detailed account of the breadth and depth of the literary echoes, classical and biblical, in *Beowulf*, see Orchard (130–68).

This description has points of connection with the characterisations Gildas gives of Aurelius Caninus. Consider the following passage (*De excidio* 30.1–2):

(1b) Quid tu quoque, ut propheta ait, catule leonine, Aureli Canine, agis? Nonne eodem quo supra dictus, si non exitiabiliore parricidiorum fornicationum adulteriorumque caeno velut quibusdam marinis irruentibus tibi voraris feraliter undis? nonne pacem patriae mortiferum ceu serpentem odiens civiliaque bella et crebras iniuste praedas sitiens animae tuae caelestis portas pacis ac refrigerii pracludis? Relictus, quaeso, iam solus ac si arbor in medio campo arescens recordare patrum fratrumque tuorum supervacuum fantasiam, iuvenilem in maturamque mortem. (Winterbottom 100)

What are you doing, Aurelius Caninus, lion-whelp (as the prophet says)? Are you not being engulfed by the same slime as the man I have just talked of, if not a more deadly one, made up of parricides, fornications, adulteries; a slime like sea-waves rushing fatally upon you? Do you not hate peace in our country as though it were some noxious snake? In your unjust thirst for civil war and constant plunder, are you not shutting the gates of heavenly peace and consolation for your soul? You are left like a solitary tree, withering in the middle of the field. Remember, I pray you, the empty outward show of your fathers and brothers, their youthful and untimely deaths. (Winterbottom 30–31)

There are two points of connection between the two passages. The first is between *Beo* 1709–14a and the references in Gildas to Aurelius' parricides and his eagerness for civil war: both Heremod and Aurelius Caninus become killers of their own people. The second point of connection between the passages is the reference to the king being left alone: *oþþæt he ana hwearf / iam solus ac si arbor in medio campo arescens*.

For one more detail in the description, compare

(2a) Ðeah þe hine mihtig god mægenes wynnum,
eafeþum stepte, ofer ealle men
forð gefremede, hwæþere him on ferhþe greow
breosthord blodreow. (1716–19)

Even though mighty God exalted him in power and in the joys of strength and advanced him above all men, nevertheless the heart in his breast grew bloody and cruel of spirit.

with *De excidio* 33.2, where the author reproaches Maglocunus with the following words:

(2b) Quid te non ei regum omnium regi, qui te cunctis paene Britanniae ducibus tam regno fecit quam status liniamento editiorem, exhibes ceteris moribus meliorem, sed versa vice deteriorem? (Winterbottom 102)

The King of all kings has made you higher than almost all the generals of Britain, in your kingdom as in your physique; why do you not show yourself to him better than the others in character, instead of worse? (Winterbottom 32)

Here the correspondence between the Latin and Old English passages is extensive. God has raised both Maglocunus and Heremod to a high position, but morally neither of them behaves according to his elevated status.⁴

Considering the total of the correspondences suggested above it would be an exaggeration to say that the description of Heremod shows a close similarity to the Latin passages quoted: still it seems plausible to me that the invectives against thoroughly corrupt British kings in *De excidio* may have provided the *Beowulf* poet with illustrative material, such as certain themes like a king failing the hopes of his people by turning against them (1711–14a), his remaining alone in the end (1714b), and his failure to act morally according to the status to which God has raised him (1716–19).

My hypothesis receives further support in the fact that a little after the Heremod episode, Hrothgar addresses Beowulf in words which bear a strong resemblance to section 32 in *De excidio*, where Cuneglasus is exhorted:

4. The same contrast is seen in the following passage from a letter (746–747) from Boniface and his fellow bishops to King Æthelbald: “[B]ear in mind how vile a thing it is through lust to change the image of God created in you into the image and likeness of a vicious demon. Remember that you were made king and ruler over many not by your own merits but by the abounding grace of God, and now you are making yourself by your own lust the slave of an evil spirit” (Emerton 127). I wish to thank John Blair for pointing out this parallel to me.

- (3a) Bebeorh þe ðone bealonið, Beowulf leofa,
secg betsta, ond þe þæt selre geceos,
ece rædas; oferhyda ne gym,
mære cempa. (1758–61)

Guard yourself against this insidious evil, dear Beowulf, most noble man, and choose for yourself the better part, everlasting gains; repudiate presumptuousness, renowned warrior.

- (3b) Noli, ut ait apostolus, superbe sapere vel sperare in incerto divitiarum, sed in deo, qui praestat tibi multa abunde, ut per emendationem morum thesaurizes tibi fundamentum bonum in futurum et habeas veram vitam, perennem profecto, non deciduam; (Winterbottom 102)

Do not, as the apostle says, be haughty; do not trust in the uncertainty of riches, but in God, who gives you much in abundance, so that by reforming your character you may lay up a good foundation for the future and have a true life – eternal, not mortal. (Winterbottom 32)

With (3a) and (3b) we have moved onto a slightly different kind of correspondence in that the Latin is a Bible quotation: it covers 1 Tim. 6.17 and 19 in a *Vetus latina* version.⁵ Gildas has modified the text considerably. Verse 17, which in the original begins with *divitibus huius saeculi praecipe non superbe sapere* addressed to Timothy is converted into a 2nd person command addressed to Cuneglasus: *Noli . . . superbe sapere*. Cuneglasus remains the addressee throughout the citation. Gildas adds a short metatextual comment clause *ut ait apostolus* and

5. Frede (642, 644, 646) gives the Gildas version among parallel texts, a clear indication that the Latin Bible of Gildas is of a *Vetus latina* type. To facilitate comparison of the abbreviated version of Gildas and *Vetus latina* versions of verses 17–19, I give here the latter in two versions (text types D and I):

D: (17) *divitibus huius saeculi praecipe non sublime sapere neque sperare in incerto divitiarum sed in deo vivo qui praestat nobis omnia abundanter ad fruendum* (18) *benefaciant divites sint in bonis operibus facile tribuant communicent* (19) *thensaurizent sibi fundamentum bonum in futurum ut adprehendant veram vitam*.

I: (17) *divitibus huius saeculi praecipe non superbe sapere neque sperare in incerto divitiarum sed in deo vivo qui praestat nobis omnia abundanter ad fruendum* (18) *in voluntate bonorum operum divites esse factis bonis ad in-pertiendum communicatores* (19) *thensaurizent sibi fundamentum bonum in futurum ut adprehendant veram vitam* (Frede 636, 639, 641, 645 and 647).

turns verse 19 into a clause of purpose introduced by *ut*. The prepositional phrase between the two verses, *per emendationem morum*, could possibly be seen as a free, compressed summary of the omitted verse 18.

Gildas' modified citation offers itself more readily than the *Vetus latina* versions cited in fn. 5 as a possible model and inspiration for the OE passage: *Noli . . . superbe sapere* finds a close parallel in 1760b *oferhyda ne gym*, the short addition *per emendationem morum* could be seen to have a free counterpart in 1759b *þe þæt selre geceos*, and finally, at the end, *et habeas veram vitam, perennem profecto, non deciduam*⁶ has the same emphasis on eternal values as 1760a *ece rædas*. The remaining Latin passages cited in this essay share the same feature: they are Bible citations used by Gildas as part of his argumentation. The following parallel is from the passage in *Beowulf* where the old man grieves over the death of his son:

- (4a) Gesyhð sorgcearig on his suna bure
 winsele westne, windge reste
 reote berofene. Ridend swefað,
 hæleð in hoðman; nis þær hearpan sweg,
 gomen in geardum, swylce ðær iu wæron.
 (2455–59)

Grieving and distressed he surveys his son's apartment, the abandoned wine-hall, a lodging-place for the wind, devoid of cheer; the heroes and the horsemen sleep in the grave, the music of the lyre is there no more nor the sound of joy in the courts, as once they were there.

- (4b) Ingemiscent omnes qui laetantur corde, cessabit gaudium tympanorum, quiescet sonitus laetantium, conticescet dulcedo citharae, cum cantico non bibent vinum, amara erit potio bibentibus illam. Attrita est civitas vanitatis, clausa est omnis domus

6. The *De excidio* ending of verse 19 is longer and more emphatic than the D and I versions, which end with *veram vitam*. It is possible that *perennem profecto, non deciduam* is at least partly an addition by Gildas. Another manuscript of *De excidio*, GI (Var), ends the verse with *veram et perennem vitam*. The addition of an adjective meaning 'eternal' is not, however, unique to the Gildas versions: for example, the Vulgate version printed by Frede has two variant readings for *veram vitam*: *aeternam vitam* and *aeternam vitam veram*.

nullo introeunte. (Winterbottom 109)

All who rejoice at heart shall wail. The joy of the drums shall cease, the sound of the glad grow still, the sweetness of the lute fall silent. They will drink no wine with a song, and drink shall be bitter in the mouths of the drinkers. The city of Folly is broken down; every house is shut, and none enters. (Winterbottom 41)

Here the passage from Isa. 24.7–10, cited in section 45 of *De excidio*, contains several elements, like the cessation of rejoicing, drinking and music⁷ and the desolation of a place formerly full of feasting people, all of which are also found in *Beo* 2455–59. The echo from Isaiah could naturally have come directly from the Bible without the mediation of *De excidio*.⁸

2. Plundering the Wheat Field before Harvest Time

I now turn my attention to *Beo* 3069–75, which can be regarded as one of the most difficult cruces in the whole of *Beowulf*:

(5a) Swa hit oð domes dæg diope benemdon
þeodnas mære, þa ðæt þær dydon,
þæt se secg wære synnum scildig,
hergum geheaðerod, hellbendum fæst,
wommum gewitnad, se ðone wong strude,
næfne goldhwæte gearwor hæfde
agendes est ær gesceawod.⁹

7. For the translational correspondence between Old English *hearpe* and Latin *cithara*, see BTS s.v. *hearpe* and, in a comment on *Vita S. Dunstani*, Lapidge, “The Hermeneutical Style” 81–82, fn. 2.

8. Of the three main versions in Gryson’s edition, H comes closest to the one cited by Gildas: *luxit vindemia infirmata est vitis ingemuerunt omnes qui laetabantur corde cessavit gaudium tympanorum quieuit sonitus laetantium conticuit dulcedo citharae cum cantico non bibent vinum amara erit potio bibentibus illam attrita est civitas vanitatis clausa est omnis domus nullo introeunte* (Gryson 510–12). The main difference between the *De excidio* version and H is that Gildas starts the citation after *luxit vindemia infirmata est vitis*. Variant readings from *De excidio* are given in the critical apparatus. For a thorough discussion of the presence of the Latin Old Testament in Anglo-Saxon England, see Marsden.

9. Like Klaeber 3, I emend 3073 MS *strade* into *strude*, and 3074 MS *næs he* into *næfne*. For the <a>/<u> variation, see Lapidge, “The Archetype.”

It is not my intention to give a detailed account of the tangled interpretational history of this passage.¹⁰ However, before I discuss some interpretations of this passage which I consider problematic, I shall comment on syntactic and semantic points relevant to my reading. In my interpretation:

- (a) The pronoun *ðæt* in 3070b is anticipatory, anticipating the noun clause introduced by *þæt* in 3071a. Thus *ðæt* in 3070b has no concrete reference but a purely syntactic function with cataphoric reference; for this use, see Mitchell (par. 1478).
- (b) *þær* (3070b) does not have a concrete spatial meaning: it goes under what BT, s.v. *þær* II, calls “metaphorical usages.” The following instance cited in BT (s.v. *þær* II 1) comes close to the use of *þær* in 3070b: *Geðence he þæt he biþ self suiðe gelic ðam ilcan monnum ðe he ðær þreataþ* (Past. 17; Swt. 117, 16). In this instance, the adverb *ðær*, although BT (s.v. *þær* II 1) gives the “metaphorical” senses ‘there, in that case, then,’ is virtually devoid of meaning and could even be omitted in translation. This also applies to *þær* in *Beo* 3070b.
- (c) The finite verb *dydon* (3070b) is causative (see DOE s.v. *dōn* III.B.). It has two direct objects, the anticipatory object *ðæt* (3070b) and the *þæt* clause (3071a).
- (d) As already pointed out in fn. 2, I accept the widely adopted emendation of MS *næs he* to *næfne*.
- (e) I take 3074a *goldhwæte* to be a compound noun meaning ‘golden wheat’; it is in apposition to 3075a *agendes est*. The compound is a *hapax legomenon* but transparent. For the association of the colour of gold with a ripe crop in Present-Day English, see the following example: . . . *baked to the colour of the golden fields of August* . . . (BNC: GUX 86). In my interpretation 3073b *ðone wong* and *goldhwæte* jointly form a metaphor; thus it is natural to translate *wong* as ‘field.’
- (f) The subject of 3074–75 *hæfde* . . . *gesceawod* has been ellipped; it is coreferential with *se* (3073b). For this type of ellipsis, see Mitchell (par. 1512).
- (g) The two singular subjects in the passage, *se secg* (3071a) and *se* (3073b), are coreferential. Their reference is not specific but generic: for generic relative clauses of the “he who” type, see Rydén 6, 72, and elsewhere.

10. For useful summaries of the previous research, see Dobbie (272–4) and Klaeber 4 (265–7).

Lines 3069–75 could be translated as follows:

As famous rulers solemnly stipulated it until doomsday, they who brought it about that that man would be guilty of sins, confined in idol-fanes, bound to the fetters of hell, punished with evils who would plunder the field unless he had previously more clearly seen the golden wheat, the bounty of the owner.

I shall now briefly point out details where my interpretation avoids a number of problems present in earlier readings of the passage. I refer to points (a) – (g) above.

Points (a) and (b): Giving concrete meanings to 3070b *ðæt* and *þær* is common but problematic. There is nothing in the previous context which *ðæt* could anaphorically refer to: it comes entirely “out of the blue.” The deictic *þær* is “hanging in the air” in a comparable way in not having a referent in the preceding context.

Point (c): The reading ‘put’ for 3070b *dydon* is only possible if the problematic concrete readings of 3070b *ðæt* and *þær* are adopted. Otherwise, the causative reading I suggest remains the only possible alternative.

Points (d) and (g): The retention of the MS reading 3074 *næs he* creates a problem of reference quite regardless of whether *næs* is taken as a preterite indicative ‘was not’ or as a negative adverb ‘not (at all)’. If the MS reading is kept, a situation easily arises where *se secg . . . se* (3071a, 3073b) is interpreted as generic, but 3074 *he* as specific, understood as referring to Beowulf. From the point of view of information structure, the specific reading of *he* is problematic as in that case, as with 3070b *ðæt* and *þær*, the specific reference is not supported by the immediately preceding context; the previous specific reference to Beowulf is the pronoun form *his* in *his worulde gedal* in line 3068a, before the generic *se secg* in line 3071a.

Point (e): I restrict the discussion here to interpretations where the MS reading *goldhwæte* is left unemended. There are problems with the adjectival reading of *goldhwæte*, particularly if the adjective *goldhwæt* is taken to mean ‘eager for gold.’¹¹ These problems are minimized if *goldhwæte* is analysed as an acc.sg.fem. form of an adjective *goldhwæt* ‘gold-bestowing’ modifying 3075a *est* (see Mitchell and Robinson 157, 265; Orchard 154). It is true that the phonological variation between

11. This reading is emphatically rejected by Hoops (319).

3074a *-hwæte* and (-)*hwate* in lines 1601, 1641, 2052, 2476, 2517, 2042 and 3005 is biased in favour of <a>-spellings;¹² still, the <æ> spelling in *goldhwæte* can be explained as non-WS (see Campbell par. 643). As I see it, there is, however, a syntactic problem: the adjective is rather far removed from the noun head it modifies.

Klaeber 4 interprets *goldhwæte* as an acc.sg. of a *hapax* feminine noun *goldhwatu* ‘gold-spell, curse on gold.’ According to the editors, the determinatum of this compound is the attested noun *hwatu* ‘augury, omen, prediction’ (see BTS s.v. *hwatu* and the glossary of Klaeber 4). Intriguing as this reading is, there are problems with it. The translation the editors recommend, “[h]e had not by any means sought out (or expected?) a curse on gold, rather the owner’s favor” (Klaeber 4, 267) is problematic in two respects: the sense ‘curse on gold’ is quite far removed from the meanings of *hwatu*, and, even more importantly, the interpretation of *gearwor* as a contrastive connector meaning ‘rather’ is not supported by the DOE (s.v. *gearwe* adv.).¹³

Point (f): Accepting the ellipsis of the subject of *hæfde . . . gesceawod* makes Orchard’s addition of *he* after *næfne* unnecessary (Orchard 153).

In all fairness I must also point out that my reading of lines 3069–75 possibly creates a syntactic problem: in my interpretation, the noun clause beginning in line 3071a, *þæt se secg wære . . .* has two “governing” verbs, 3069b *benemdon* and 3070b *dydon*. The presence of two clauses which are superordinate to one and the same subordinate *þæt*-clause is attested in Old English: Mitchell (par. 1965) cites the following example where the *þæt*-clause functions as the direct object of *ic gelyfe* in the first of two coordinated main clauses and as subject complement of *þes is min geleafa* in the second main clause: ÆCHom ii. 422. 18 *Ic gelyfe and þes is min geleafa fram ðissere tide, þæt Crist is þæs Lifigendan Godes Sunu* ‘I believe and this is my belief from this time onwards that Christ is the son of the living God.’ This instance, albeit syntactically different from the *Beowulf* instance, attests to the possibility in Old English of added complexity in the interplay of matrix

12. A search in the DOEC shows that this bias is also found in poetry outside *Beowulf*: there are only two *-hwæte* spellings as against fourteen spellings with <a>: the simplex *hwate* (1x), compounds ending in *-hwate* (12x) and one compound ending in *-hwates*.

13. The Klaeber 4 line of argumentation is already presented by Fulcr (361–63). After submitting my essay I noticed that Gwara (283, fn. 121) had already drawn attention to the fact that *gearwor* in the meaning ‘rather’ is unattested in Old English.

clauses and subordinate clauses. Even accepting the possibility of a problem with the *Beowulf* instance here discussed, my interpretation of lines 3071–75 is not invalidated.

The core of my interpretation is unseasonableness. The person who would plunder the field before the wheat growing there is ripe – this is indicated by its golden colour – would be subject to severe punishments. I see here a biblical parallel in Job 24.6–7 and 14, cited in sections 59.3–4 of *De excidio*:

(5b) [A]grum ante tempus non suum demessi sunt, pauperes potentium vineas sine mercede et sine cibo operati sunt, nudos multos dormire fecerunt sine vestimentis, tegmen animae eorum abstulerunt. Et post pauca, cum ergo sciret eorum opera, tradidit eos in tenebras. (Winterbottom 115)

“They have reaped the field of another before due time. The poor have laboured in the vineyards of the powerful with no pay and no food. They have caused many to sleep naked without coverings, and removed the protection that kept them alive.” And a little later, “knowing their deeds, he handed them over to the shades.” (Winterbottom 48; the second pair of quotation marks has been added in order to highlight the metatextual comment “And a little later . . .”)

In the form it has in *De excidio*, the Job citation represents a *Vetus latina* recension of the Bible.¹⁴ Importantly from the point of view of my interpretation, the adverbial of time *ante tempus* ‘before due time’ is present in *De excidio* (see the *Brepols Vetus Latina Database*) but absent in the Vulgate version of verse 6. The *De excidio* reading of verse 14, *cum ergo sciret eorum opera, tradidit eos in tenebras* is, according to the *Brepols Vetus Latina Database*, entirely missing in the Vulgate version. The phrase [e]t post pauca in the Latin passage is not part of the scriptural citations but a metatextual comment ‘and a little later (in this text).’

The differences between the *Vetus latina* and the Vulgate strongly point to the former being the source for two images in *Beo* 3069–75. The Vulgate version would not have suggested either the untimely

14. Interestingly, Marsden, while discussing the time of Gildas and referring to research carried out by F. C. Burkitt, points out that “most books of the Old and New Testaments were being read in the new version in Britain at this time, with the exception of Ezekiel, the Minor Prophets, most of the wisdom books, *Job* and the Gospels” (50, emphasis added).

reaping of the field or the condemnation of the culprits to a dark abode, both of which are present in the *Vetus latina* quotation.

A relevant question is whether the *goldhwæte* metaphor could have been directly triggered by a *Vetus latina* recension of the Bible or through the mediation of the citation from Job in *De excidio*. I would opt for the latter alternative as the telescoped citation offered by Gildas brings the crimes listed in Job 24.6–7, including the plundering of the field before due time, closer to the punishment referred to in the *Vetus latina* version of Job 24.14.

The theme of unseasonableness arising from my interpretation is not developed any further in *Beowulf*. It is just one of the many forebodings of future doom occurring in the dragon episode (for a comprehensive discussion, see Orchard 256–64). *Beowulf* is of course unaware of the untimeliness of his action and this adds to the *hamartia* of his predicament.

3. Conclusion

I arrived at my interpretation of *Beo* 3069–75 as a result of associations arising from my readings in both *Beowulf* and *De excidio*. A link between the two works is not, however, a necessary precondition for reading the passage in the way I do. The poet could have hit upon the expression *goldhwæte* ‘golden wheat’ as a metaphor referring to the treasure even unaided by the passage from Job discussed above. However, in the light of the resonances I have detected between the two works in passages dealing with important moral issues, I hope that I have made a fairly strong case for regarding the link between *De excidio* and *Beowulf* as a possibility. If this is accepted, it certainly lends support to my reading of lines 3069–75.¹⁵

Works Cited

BNC = *The British National Corpus, version 3 (BNC XML Edition)*. Distr. Oxford University Computing Services on behalf of the BNC Consortium. Web. 17 June 2014.

15. I dedicate this essay to my friend Kati Halácsy, an exemplary scholar who has been instrumental in raising a whole generation of Hungarian Anglo-Saxonists, a golden crop any academic teacher could be proud of.

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Joyce Hill

University of Leeds

The Selection of Saints' Lives in Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies*

In the Latin letter he sent to Archbishop Sigeric to accompany his copy of the First Series of *Catholic Homilies*, Ælfric described his enterprise of producing liturgically-arranged homilies in the vernacular as being intended “ob edificatiōem simplicium” ‘for the edification of the simple,’ people who understood English “siue legendo, siue audiendo” ‘either through reading or hearing it read’ (*Catholic Homilies: The First Series* 173, lines 7–8).¹ To meet this need, in the first set of forty items he had put together “Nec solum euangeliorum tractatus . . . uerum etiam sanctorum passiones uel uitas ad utilitatem idiotarum istius gentis” (lines 18–20), ‘not only homilies on the gospels . . . but also the passions or lives of the saints for the benefit of the uneducated among the people.’ He went on to explain that the second set, which was in progress, would be made up of “illos tractatus uel passiones . . . quos iste amisit” (line 23), ‘those homilies and passions . . . which this one has omitted.’ He made it clear, however, that the two sets, even when taken together, would not be exhaustively comprehensive; he had, rather, a more modest aim of providing “illa tantummodo quibus speramus sufficere posse simplicibus ad animarum emendationem” (lines 24–26), ‘only those which we hope to be sufficient for the simple for the improvement of their souls.’ Ælfric was thus exercising various layers of choice: what to include in the First Series, what to include in the Second (*Catholic Homilies: The Second Series*),² and what choices to make, over-all, from the much more extensive corpus of texts on liturgical lections and calendrical saints that were familiar to the more learned ecclesiastics. This article examines his *sanctorale* choices in the First and Second Series of the *Catholic Homilies*, with particular reference to those items which have no parallel in the Carolingian homily-collections that were his models. Taking his career as a whole, Ælfric was responsible for about

1. Hereafter CH I where abbreviated. All translations from Latin and Old English are my own.

2. Hereafter CH II where abbreviated.

two-thirds of the surviving corpus of saints' lives in Old English, thoroughly justifying the description of him by Gordon Whatley as "one of the most prolific hagiographers of the early Middle Ages" (431). Given this exceptional position, his early production of saints' lives in the context of the *Catholic Homilies* seems a suitable topic for exploration as an offering in this festschrift for Kati, whose interest in hagiography is reflected in this volume.

1. Ranking the Saints

Patrick Zettel, in his Oxford thesis of 1979, examined the relative popularity of saints in Anglo-Saxon England as a means of establishing a useful perspective on Ælfric's choices for the *Catholic Homilies* (74–79). The bases for his rank-ordered list were the Anglo-Saxon liturgical Calendars: which saints were included, with what frequency, and how their feast-days were graded in importance, as indicated by various markers such as "in cappis" 'in copes' (high-ranking first class), "in albis" 'in albs' (lower ranking first class), and grading numerals, where included. He allotted points to these various indicators and then ranked the saints according to their cumulative scores. Almost all of the first thirty highest-scoring saints in Zettel's list are included in the *Catholic Homilies*. Equally striking is the fact that the two Series of *Catholic Homilies* include none of the saints lower than this in Zettel's list, although several of them were to be treated in Ælfric's later specialised hagiographical collection, the *Lives of Saints*, which explicitly reflected monastic usage.³ The only exceptions from Zettel's top thirty saints, as far as the *Catholic Homilies* are concerned, are the apostle Matthias (chosen to replace Judas Iscariot, as described in the Acts of the Apostles), Augustine of Canterbury, King Edward (murdered by supporters of his younger half-brother Ethelred, who then became king and was in power for the whole of Ælfric's writing career), the apostle Thomas, and the feast celebrating the Nativity of the Virgin Mary. Ælfric never wrote on Matthias, Augustine, or Edward, and he had doubts about the narratives of Thomas and the Nativity of Mary, which he never fully overcame, even though he did provide for their feast-days later on.⁴ But there is recognition in the *Catholic*

3. See the Latin Preface in Skeat 1: 2–4 and the Old English preface, 1: 4–6, for the monastic focus of this later collection.

4. For Thomas, see Skeat 2: 399–425, which Ælfric prefaced by a note on his continuing concerns about the narrative. For the Nativity of the Virgin,

Homilies that Thomas and the Nativity of Mary might well have been expected inclusions since for each he gives an account of why they are not present, based on his views on the subject material he would need to address (see CH II 271 [Nativity of the Virgin] and CH II 297–98 [Thomas]).

Another approach to the question of popularity and lay familiarity can be made by considering the feast-days included in the vernacular poem traditionally known as the *Menologium* (Dobbie 49–55). This survives uniquely in British Library MS Cotton Tiberius B i, and is in a hand of the mid-eleventh century, although it may have been composed when the Benedictine Reform was at its height, which would make it roughly contemporary with Ælfric's work. It is uncertain where it was written, but Canterbury is a distinct possibility, notable as the ecclesiastical centre that played a major role in the wide dissemination of the *Catholic Homilies*.⁵ The poem's value in the present context is its selection of liturgical observances since its form and language indicates a lay audience, with the last four lines perhaps pointing to a royal commission (Lapidge 249–50).

The fixed-date ecclesiastical feasts in this versified calendar are as follows:

- The Birth of Christ (Dec 25, or perhaps the Vigil on December 24)
- The Circumcision of Christ (January 1)
- Epiphany (January 6)
- The Purification of the Virgin Mary (February 2)
- St Matthias (February 24)
- St Gregory the Great (March 12)
- St Benedict (March 21)
- The Annunciation to the Virgin Mary (March 25)
- St Philip and St James [the Less] (May 1)
- The Invention of the Cross (May 3)
- St Augustine of Canterbury (May 26)
- The Nativity of John the Baptist (June 24)
- St Peter and St Paul (June 29)
- St James [the Great] (July 25)

see Assmann 24–48, where Ælfric's persistent unease with this material is evident through direct comment and the homily itself, which carefully avoids any direct treatment of the apocryphal material.

5. On the date and provenance, see Dobbie lxx–lxxvi. On Canterbury's role in the dissemination of the *Catholic Homilies*, see Clemoes 162–63.

St Laurence (August 10)
The Assumption of the Virgin Mary (August 15)
St Bartholomew (August 25)
The Beheading of John the Baptist (August 29)
The Nativity of the Virgin Mary (September 8)
St Matthew (September 21)
St Michael the Archangel (September 29)
St Simon and St Jude (October 28)
All Saints (November 1)
St Martin (November 11)
St Clement (November 23)
St Andrew (November 30)
St Thomas (December 21)

The poem ends, as it begins, with the Nativity of Christ. It also includes the movable feast of Easter; the movable feast of the three-day Rogationtide preceding Ascension Day, which occurs forty days after Easter; Lammas Day on August 1, when the Mass was celebrated with bread made from the first ripe corn, probably as thanksgiving for the harvest; and a number of other marker-days in the year, such as the beginning and ending of winter and summer, and the spring and autumn equinoxes.

There is a high degree of agreement between this list and that in the Old English Prose *Menologium*, although the prose text omits some of the poem's items and adds St Cuthbert (March 20) (as noted by Dobbie lxii). This is a text which survives in two manuscript copies, one from the first quarter of the eleventh century (British Library MS Harley 3271) and the other from the middle of the same century (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 422) (Ker, items 239 and 70). As a compilation which was most probably made independently of the Old English calendrical poem, but presumably for lay use in a similar way, it reinforces our sense of which were the important saints in England outside what one might call professional ecclesiastical circles. All of their *sanctorale* items fall within Zettel's top-thirty category, and all – with the exception of Matthias and Augustine of Canterbury, whose omission by Ælfric throughout his career has already been noted – are either treated by Ælfric in the *Catholic Homilies* or, as in the case of Thomas and the Nativity of the Virgin, are effectively acknowledged as meriting inclusion, even though, for reasons of his own, Ælfric sidestepped their narratives in this immediate context.

Another undoubted influence on Ælfric's choices for the *Catholic Homilies* were the Carolingian homiliaries that served as his models and often his source-texts. In common with his own collection, these mixed compilations, by Paul the Deacon,⁶ Smaragdus,⁷ and Haymo,⁸ combined exegesis of the gospel lections and saints' lives. They have a high level of agreement in their selection of saints, and Ælfric in turn agrees closely with them, as I have demonstrated in detail elsewhere ("The Context of Ælfric's Saints' Lives"). The only saints found in them for which Ælfric does not make provision in the *Catholic Homilies* are Cyprian (in Paul the Deacon, but not in Smaragdus or Haymo), Felicity (in Smaragdus but not in Paul the Deacon or Haymo), and Agnes (in Paul the Deacon but not in Smaragdus or Haymo). Ælfric does, however, include some saints which are not catered for in these three Carolingian homiliaries. In the First Series these are Bartholomew, All Saints, and Clement. In the Second Series they are Gregory the Great, Cuthbert, Benedict, the Invention of the Holy Cross together with Alexander, Eventius and Theodolus, James the Great, The Seven Sleepers, Simon and Jude, and Martin. The importance within a lay context of the three additional saints in the First Series – Bartholomew, All Saints and Clement – is signalled by their presence in the Old English Poetic Calendar (the *Menologium*). For the Second Series the evidence of the poetic Calendar covers Gregory the Great, Benedict, the Invention of the Holy Cross, James the Great, Simon and Jude, and Martin, while Cuthbert is covered by the prose Calendar. This means that only two *sanctorale* observances – the story of Alexander, Eventius and Theodolus, and that of the Seven Sleepers – are not acknowledged in either of these lay-oriented lists.

In what follows I scrutinise more closely Ælfric's treatment of these additional and for the most part relatively popular saints as a means of understanding their pastoral and didactic usefulness for him

6. Ælfric's use of Paul the Deacon's homiliary was demonstrated by Smetana, "Ælfric and the Early Medieval Homiliary." However, for the contents of this anthology reference should not be made to Smetana's summary, which is dependent on nineteenth-century scholarship, but to Grégoire 423–79. See also Hill, "Ælfric's Manuscript."

7. The only edition of Smaragdus's homiliary is that in *Patrologia Latina* 102, cols 13–594. On Ælfric's use of this homiliary, see Hill, "Ælfric and Smaragdus"; "Ælfric's Sources Reconsidered"; "Ælfric's Authorities"; "Authority and Intertextuality."

8. Ælfric's use of Haymo's homiliary was identified by Smetana, "Ælfric and the Homiliary of Haymo." In identifying the author as Haymo of Halberstadt, Smetana was following the practice in the sole edition in *Patrologia Latina* 118, cols 11–804. The author is now known to be Haymo of Auxerre, but this does not invalidate Smetana's analysis. See further Hill, "Ælfric and Haymo."

in the *Catholic Homilies* context. However, I make an exception for the additional Second Series homilies on Gregory the Great, Cuthbert and Benedict: these are not discussed below because their cultural significance in Ælfric's England, and thus the justification for their inclusion, has been authoritatively demonstrated by Mechthild Gretsch (chapters 2 [Gregory], 3 [Cuthbert] and 4 [Benedict]).

2. Bartholomew (CH I, ed. Clemons, hom. xxxi, pp. 439–50)

Godden begins his commentary on this homily by noting that:

The Gospel text for St Bartholomew's day is Luke 22.24 ff, describing the disciples competing among themselves for supremacy, and Ælfric's copy of Paul the Deacon's homiliary probably included Bede's homily on this text for the occasion. (*Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: Introduction* 256)

However, since Ælfric makes no use of this lection, it is difficult to understand the basis for Godden's supposition that Bede's homily, which Ælfric consequently also does not use, was included in his copy of Paul's homiliary where it would have had to be an additional item since it was not part of the original compilation.⁹ In any event, with no reference to the lection or its exegesis, and with practically no information about the apostle available in the New Testament, where he is mentioned only briefly, in Matt. 10.3, Mark 3.18, Luke 6.14, and Acts 1.13, Ælfric wrote on Bartholomew's life as known from hagiographic legend, focusing on the saint's successive confrontations with devils and devil-inspired images and pagan gods, leading to his final confrontation in martyrdom.

Ælfric's narrative gives instances of how people lose their souls in devil-worship, often through devotion to devil-inhabited idols or pagan gods, and how, through the offer of rich gifts, they seek to buy relief within this world from the afflictions that the devil wickedly visits upon them. But Bartholomew shows repeatedly that the power of Christ is greater than the power of the devil, and that the true faith does not require the gift of earthly riches. Rather, as he both demonstrates and preaches, what is required is commitment of life, possible for everyone, whether they are in a position to give gifts or not, and that beyond the afflictions of the present, the faithful can hope

9. See note 6 above regarding the contents of Paul the Deacon's homiliary.

for the everlasting joy, the eternal riches, of the kingdom of heaven. Bartholomew's message is thus universally applicable: faith in an all-powerful and true God offers far greater rewards than any devils can ever do, and offers them to all. Even within the narrative, therefore, up to the point of Bartholomew's death and its aftermath, Ælfric's emphasis is already explicitly didactic, not simply exemplary, as is often the case with saints' lives. Moreover, the didacticism has very obvious usefulness for a listening congregation since Bartholomew's teaching summarises the Redemptive cycle, from Fall to Resurrection, in addition to explaining the universal rewards of Christian commitment, for which gifts to God or his ministers are not necessary. The narrative is unavoidably sensational and was no doubt enjoyable for that very reason, but as far as possible Ælfric shifts attention elsewhere. In this respect it can be contrasted with the entry for Bartholomew in the *Old English Martyrology* (Rauer 167), where a significant part of the passage deals with the terrifying appearance of the god Ashtaroth, before concluding with a summary of how Bartholomew was martyred and how King Astyrges and the pagan bishops became insane and died. There is no allusion in this account to the substance of Bartholomew's preaching, and at the end there is no reference to the counterbalancing detail of the edifying life of Astyrges' brother, King Polymius, who, as we find in Ælfric's narrative, was converted by Bartholomew and spent twenty holy years as a miracle-working bishop.

Up to the point of Bartholomew's death and the career of Polymius, Ælfric's text is 243 lines in Clemoes' edition, which would be an exceptional length for the *Catholic Homilies*. But Ælfric then adds what, for a saint's life, is an unusually long passage of direct pastoral teaching, extending from line 244 to line 334. The examples that the narrative had provided of wrong belief concerned the worship of idols and pagan gods in a land far off and a time long ago. But in drawing out the significance of the story, Ælfric domesticates the situation by preaching against practices more likely to be found in Anglo-Saxon England: enchantments, witchcraft, worship of stones and trees, and the use of charms. People should instead turn only to God, the true healer, to the cross and to saintly relics. Although herbal charms are firmly condemned, Ælfric advises that it is permitted to use herbs in a medicinal way, but he reminds his audience that in such cases it should always be recognised that their efficacy comes from God.

The question of recourse to pagan practices, superstition, and idolatry in its widest sense (i.e. commitment to a supposed power other

than God) is a recurrent theme in Ælfric's homilies (see Meaney). But although this is dealt with in some detail at the end of the text and is thus in a prominent position in the pastoral teaching, the main purpose of Ælfric's exhortations is to address the difficult question of how a Christian should understand and respond to affliction in this life. He begins by emphasising that salvation is through Christ alone, which relates very obviously to the preceding narrative with its recurrent instances of misdirected trust, but he then goes on to explore the circumstances in which, within a world ruled by God, affliction may nevertheless be experienced. At one level, this teaching directly links with the Bartholomew narrative, where bodily affliction imposed by the devil was what drove the worshippers to appease the false gods. Ælfric makes it clear that such attempts to buy the devil's favour through worship and through gifts are wrong. But he also teaches that the understanding of affliction shown by the pagans in the narrative is itself an error, and that the afflictions visited upon mankind by the devil, which serve his own selfish interests, are in any case themselves of a different order from those allowed by God, which serve the interests of mankind. The result is a powerfully pastoral homily, long by the standards of the *Catholic Homilies*, but highly relevant to contemporary believers.

3. All Saints (CH I, ed. Clemons, hom. xxxvi, pp. 486–96)

Although the practice of honouring the saints collectively is traceable to the fourth century, it was Pope Boniface IV's rededication of the Pantheon in Rome in 609 or 610 that began to establish the practice in the Western Church. Appropriately enough in view of its original collective consecration to all the gods, the new Christian dedication was to St Mary the Virgin in association with the Christian martyrs (*dedicatio S. Mariae ad martyres*), with the observance thereafter being kept on May 13, the anniversary of the rededication. But in the eighth century Pope Gregory III (731–41) dedicated a chapel to All the Saints in St Peter's Basilica in Rome, and from then onwards the anniversary of this event, on November 1, was adopted as All Saints' Day. It was finally given official sanction by Pope Gregory IV (827–44), who ordered its universal observance. It is evident that, as an observance on November 1, this quickly became a feature of the liturgy in England since it already occurs in an eighth-century Latin versified calendar from York (as noted by Lapidge 248); following the decree of its universal observance, it is found in all liturgical calendars surviving from Anglo-Saxon England

(Rushforth). Paul the Deacon and Smaragdus do not include All Saints in their homiliaries, but this is not surprising because their compilations predate the decree of Gregory IV. Haymo's homiliary, written a little later than the other two, does not include it either, but the mixed Carolingian homiliaries are in any case highly selective as far as *sanctorale* items are concerned and there was no reason why Haymo should choose to cater for a feast-day that had only very recently become an official universal observance. It was altogether different for Ælfric, writing at the end of the tenth century, when the feast-day was very well established. Furthermore, it was crucially important in the calendar of the lay community because it was one of the days on which they had to pay tithes and taxes (Fowler 12, 13 [chapter 54 in both versions]). His decision to make provision for All Saints in the context of the First Series of *Catholic Homilies* is thus entirely understandable.

Ælfric begins with an introduction explaining the reason for the feast, then quotes John's vision of the saintly multitude (Rev. 7.9–12), and continues with a survey of eight different kinds of saints: angels, patriarchs, prophets, John the Baptist and the Twelve Apostles, martyrs, confessors, anchorites, and virgins, led by Mary. This is followed with a prayer whose essence is that "we þurh heora þingrædene him geferlæhte beon moton" (lines 139–40), 'we, through their intercession, may be associated with them.' The people are urged to use this great festival to complete whatever has been less perfectly performed on other festivals during the year: the collected saints are put forward as a collective inspiration for the spiritual effort of each individual.

Following this survey and exhortation, Ælfric embarks on the gospel for the day which was Matt. 5.1–12, the Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount (Lenker 371). The change to the lection and its exegesis is signalled in the best extant manuscript by the heading "De Evangelio" in majuscules (a formal marker which, with some variation of wording, is found also in several later recensions), after which comes the usual sequence of the Latin *incipit* of the lection, Ælfric's vernacular rendering of the text, and the exegesis.¹⁰ Structurally the exposition of the lection is similar to that of the first part of the homily in that it is an expository survey of eight different categories, in this case those identified in the Beatitudes: the poor, the meek, the mourners, those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and those who suffer persecution. But Ælfric does not make a retrospective link between these qualities and the saints he

10. For the manuscript presentation, see Clemoes 491.

has surveyed; instead, he deals with what they mean in terms of daily living. As he explains towards the end, “ðā eahta eadignyssa belimpað to eallum geleafullum mannum” (lines 252–53), ‘the eight beatitudes belong to all believing men.’ Thus, following his decision in the first part of the homily to instruct the laity on the religious meaning of a day that had a rather different practical significance for them, we see Ælfric in the second half providing pastoral guidance for all.

4. Clement (CH I, ed. Clemons, hom. xxxvii, pp. 497–506)

Clement, successor to St Peter as Pope in Rome,¹¹ was commonly identified in medieval tradition with the Clement who was Paul’s fellow-labourer in Phil. 4.3, so that, in addition to his relative popularity in English observance, as indicated by the various forms of liturgical calendars referred to above, there was the advantage from Ælfric’s point of view that he was a biblical figure. The same is true of Dionysius who also plays a part in the narrative. He was traditionally identified with Dionysius the Areopagite, whose conversion by Paul is recorded in the Acts 17.34.

As I have shown elsewhere (“Ælfric’s Homily for the Feast of St Clement”), Ælfric’s story of Clement is highly selective, dealing only with his sponsoring of Dionysius, his exile, and his death and subsequent post-mortem miracles, of which only one is related in detail. The meeting with Dionysius, which takes place before Clement’s exile, is not in the saint’s *passio* but was developed by Ælfric within his Clement narrative using a different source. In his hagiography it is the defining episode attributed to Clement’s time in Rome, and it makes Clement into a precursor of Gregory the Great, so beloved of the English: a papal apostle of northern heathens through his support of the work of others. When in exile, Clement himself is presented as an effective missionary, “swa þæt binnon anes geares fyrste næs gemet hæþengyld geond hundteontig mila neawiste” (lines 87–89), ‘so that within the space of one year idolatry was not found over a neighbourhood of a hundred miles.’ Likewise, his post-mortem miracles mean that “wurdon ealle þa ungeleafullan cristene. swa þæt nateswhon næs gemet on þan earde. naþor. ne hæþen ne iudeisc þe nære gebiged to cristenum geleafan” (lines 119–21), ‘all the unbelievers became Christians, so that there

11. On the differing traditions regarding Clement’s position in the papal succession, see Godden, *Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies: Introduction* 309.

was not found anyone at all in the country, neither heathen nor Jew, who was not converted to the Christian faith.’ As an indication of his moral leadership, Ælfric chooses to emphasise his charitable approach to heathens and Jews – not insulting their gods, but seeking to win them away from their misdirected worship – and his exhortations to the rich and affluent to alleviate the poverty of their fellow Christians. Thus the story is to a degree domesticated for the English, creating out of Clement’s narrative the familiar figure of the missionary-pope, whilst at the same time allowing Ælfric to demonstrate the power of the true faith over idolatry and to invoke Clement in preaching the necessity of the rich supporting the poor; a lesson with obvious pastoral relevance.

The homily then continues with a number of examples of how, despite allowing heathens to slay the holy, God has the power to save them from perils within this life. The examples cited are Hezekiah’s defeat of the idolatrous Sennacherib (Isaiah), the Children in the Fiery Furnace (Daniel), Daniel in the Lions’ Den (Daniel), two instances of apostles being freed from prison (Acts of the Apostles), two instances of John the Evangelist being saved from persecution under Domitian (from his *passio*) and two instances of Paul being saved (the first apocryphal, the second in Acts). Godden points out that these instances run counter to the story of Clement, where the saint is not saved, and he argues that this awkwardness “is a striking testimony to the problems raised by adapting hagiographic material to a vernacular readership” (*Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies: Introduction* 308). But while this is superficially true, it is important to recognise what Ælfric was setting out to do. He wishes to show, by these instances, that God has the power to intervene; saintly martyrdom is thus not due to any weakness on God’s part. As he explains in his concluding remarks, God can release his chosen in two ways: openly and secretly. Those who are saved from perils in this life, in the eyes of men, are released from suffering openly; those who are martyred have secret release in the life hereafter, that is to say, release hidden from the eyes of men. Martyrdom leads to fellowship with the saints. But to suffer on earth in a state of sin and to pray to God for mercy, as did the penitent thief on the cross, will lead to the joy of paradise. The laity are reminded that “þeah ðe se reþa reafere us æt æhtum bereafige oððe feores benæme he ne mæg us ætbredan urne geleafan ne þæt ece lif gif we us sylfe mid agenum willan ne forpærað” (lines 276–78), ‘though the cruel robber may steal our possessions or deprive us of life, he cannot take away our faith or the eternal life, if we, of our own will, do not bring about our own ruin.’

The concluding prayer is thus for salvation from perils on earth, and for everlasting salvation in heaven. Although the contrast between the experience of Clement in the first half of the homily and the various figures in the second half seems stark, both elements are thus essential to Ælfric's didactic purpose and to his pastoral care for those of slight faith, "hwonlice gelyfede men" (line 148), who may, on hearing the story of a saintly martyr, be prompted to ask the wrong questions.

5. The Invention of the Holy Cross (CH II, ed. Godden, hom. xviii A, pp. 174–76)

It is easy to see why Ælfric should have chosen to include a homily for the Feast of the Invention of the Holy Cross on May 3 since this was an opportunity for explaining how the cross came to be the central symbol of Christianity, ever to be honoured by the faithful as a memorial of the Redemption.¹² Additionally, as he explains, he was keen to provide the people with an accurate account, based, as he understood it, on the authority of Jerome:

Ðus wrat hieronimus. se wisa trahtnere be ðære halgan rode.
hu heo wearð gefunden; Gif hwa elles secge. we sceotað to him.
(lines 51–53)

Thus wrote Jerome, the wise expositor. If anyone says otherwise, we appeal to him.

This homily, then, supports the overarching aim of the *Catholic Homilies* of correcting "gedwyld" 'error,' an aim set out in the Old English preface to the First Series (Clemoes 174–77). There, Ælfric recorded his general anxiety about some of the material circulating in English books. Here, in relation to Constantine's vision at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge and the finding of the Cross itself, he probably had in mind such texts as the Old English poem *Elene* (Krapp 66–102) and the anonymous homily on Invention of the Cross, now extant in Oxford Bodleian Library MS Auctarium F.4.32, from the second half of the eleventh century, and Cambridge, Corpus Christi Library MS 303, from the twelfth century (Bodden). Ælfric's particular concern may have been to correct a popular but wildly unhistorical account of the Battle of

12. For a detailed discussion of this homily and the homily on the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, included in Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*, see Hill, "Preaching."

the Milvian Bridge, as evidenced in these two texts, where the battle is fought on the Danube, and Constantine's opponents are invading heathen, particularised in *Elene* as Goths, Huns, Franks and Hugas. In reality, of course, Constantine and his opponent were pagan rivals for imperial power and were engaged in civil war, with the Battle of the Milvian Bridge taking place on the banks of the Tiber, just outside Rome. If Ælfric were primarily concerned with providing a corrective to popular accounts of this episode, it would explain why his narrative is curiously unbalanced, devoting considerably more space to Constantine's battle than to the subsequent finding of the cross by Helena. The result is a very brief, business-like – if somewhat skewed – historical summary, accompanied by careful comments about its authoritative validation. It takes up just over 52 lines in Godden's text. By way of conclusion, Ælfric provides just over seven lines of pastoral exhortation, explaining why the cross is honoured and why people bow to it in their prayers.

The total length of just over 60 lines in Godden's edition is far shorter than the norm for the *Catholic Homilies*, despite the fact that this was a feast-day which was widely recognised in the Anglo-Saxon church. However, it does not stand as an independent homily. In Cambridge, University Library MS Gg.3.28, which is the manuscript of the *Catholic Homilies* closest to Ælfric, there is no closing "amen."¹³ Additionally, Ælfric's claim, in the Latin letter he sent to Archbishop Sigeric to accompany a copy of the Second Series, that his second collection included forty items suggests that he counted the Invention of the Holy Cross together with the immediately following story of Alexander, Eventius and Theodolus as a single item, even though they are completely unconnected, except for sharing May 3 as their date of observance (see Sisam 164).

6. Alexander, Eventius and Theodolus (CH II, ed. Godden, hom. xviii B, pp. 176–79)

Alexander, Eventius and Theodolus are noted as a second entry for May 3 in most Anglo-Saxon liturgical calendars, but less consistently than the Invention of the Holy Cross on the same day, which was clearly a much more significant feast. As a result, this group of saints does not figure in the top thirty in Zettel's list, and their feast-day is also not listed in the vernacular texts discussed above. We may consequently

13. For the manuscript presentation, see Godden, CH II 176. The manuscript is discussed by him on p. xliii.

regard this observance as essentially monastic. One wonders, therefore, why Ælfric included it here. It is not difficult to imagine how, if he had chosen to do so, he could have made more of the Invention of the Holy Cross, both narratively and pastorally. Yet he moves on to a subject that does not really fit the *Catholic Homilies* – except in so far as any hagiography can be deemed to be edifying. But then, why this group of saints, and not other saints of monastic observance on other days? One possible explanation is that he wished to give complete coverage for the day, which was relatively unusual in having two unconnected observances. That this might have been the case is suggested by the presentation in Cambridge, University Library MS Gg.3.28, where, following the termination of the first topic, without a concluding “amen,” the new topic is marked by a heading in majuscules, “Eodem die Sanctorum Alexandri. Euentii. et Theodoli” ‘On the same day [a homily] of the saints Alexander, Eventius and Theodolus,’ a marker that is preserved in later manuscripts which retain this two-topic provision for May 3.¹⁴ If Ælfric was responding to the liturgical calendar in terms of days rather than individual observances, perhaps he felt that, having committed himself to provide for May 3 (as the importance of the Feast of the Invention of the Holy Cross required), the secondary observance for the day could not be left out. None of the other items in either of the two Series of *Catholic Homilies* which were drawn from the *sanctorale* presented him with this situation. Some saints share an observance by traditionally being paired, as for example Philip and James the Less (May 1), Peter and Paul (June 29), and Simon and Jude (October 28), who all appear in the liturgical calendars linked by “and”; and in the *Catholic Homilies* Ælfric duly dealt with them as pairs. But that is very different from the liturgical observances of May 3, which are for two discrete commemorations.

Certainly, Ælfric did not draw back from his original decision to include Pope Alexander and his priestly companions because later in his career, when revising and augmenting his public homily collection, he added the rest of their story. In the Second Series of *Catholic Homilies* as originally issued, he told only of their persecution at the hands of Aurelianus, but he later added the prequel (Pope 2: 734–48). Yet in the Second Series version, which plunges into the narrative very abruptly, without explanation or contextualisation such as Ælfric often provides, no attempt is made to draw out any pastoral message. There is simply a sequence of torments, culminating in martyrdom. God’s voice is heard

14. For the manuscript presentation, see Godden, CH II 176.

promising hell for Aurelianus and joy for the holy martyrs, who have so heroically refused to apostacise, but that is all. The narrative concludes with the brief doxology: “Sy ðam ælmihtigan lof. se ðe ana ricsað. on ecnysse god; amen:-” (lines 155–56), ‘Praise be to the almighty, who alone reigneth God for eternity. Amen’ which is all that there is to round off the two-part homily as a whole. The later prequel likewise has no direct pastoral teaching for the listening audience (unlike, for example, the homilies on Bartholomew and Clement, discussed above), but there is a short explanatory introduction, and the narrative itself, in presenting sustained verbal exchanges, expresses some of the essential tenets of the Christian faith, so that, when the two elements are combined, the whole is more satisfactory as an uplifting hagiography and can be seen to be quite carefully adapted from its Latin source in order to make sense to a lay congregation. Attempts have been made to find thematic links between the two parts of CH II hom. xviii, but they are not convincing (Rosser). Perhaps, then, we need to return to the idea that the two parts of this homily reflect an ingrained habit on Ælfric’s part of “thinking in days,” and that, feeling therefore compelled to include a narrative that would be unfamiliar to a lay audience alongside the unavoidable Invention, he saw that it was necessary for him to take some care in producing an effective story-line which they could understand. Evidently he felt that he had not succeeded at the first attempt and so returned to it later. Perhaps this hagiographical item, as a secondary observance for May 3, was one of the pieces which suffered from the pressures of time caused by the disruptions of piratical (Viking) raids, to which he refers in the Latin letter to Archbishop Sigeric that accompanied his copy of the Second Series (Godden, CH II 1, lines 13–16).

7. James the Great (CH II, ed. Godden, hom. xxvii A, pp. 241–47)

James, the son of Zebedee and brother of John, figures prominently in the New Testament, and was traditionally regarded not only as one of the apostles particularly close to Jesus, but also as being related to him, as Ælfric indicates in his opening comments. His decision to include James in the *Catholic Homilies* is thus understandable in terms of the apostle’s intrinsic status, which is also reflected in the Anglo-Saxon liturgical calendars and in the more selective vernacular lists detailed above. Godden surmises that Ælfric might have known the homily by Bede on Mat. 20.20–23 (Hom. II.21), used for St James’s day in later versions of Paul the Deacon’s homiliary, and perhaps also Haymo’s

homily on this text (*Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: Introduction* 575). But since Ælfric does not use either of these homilies and does not refer to this lection, there is no basis for supposing on the one hand that his manuscript of Paul the Deacon had this Bedan augmentation, nor for supposing that, in writing for St James's day, on July 25, he would have thought to turn to the Wednesday after the Second Sunday in Lent, even if his manuscript of Haymo included this interpolated item.¹⁵ Instead, and without reference to New Testament information about James, he bases his homily on the Latin *passio*, focussing on James's success in winning over the disciple of the sorcerer Hermogenes and then Hermogenes himself, and his execution at the command of Herod. At the execution site, James converts and baptises the pharisee Josias, who is then decapitated alongside the saint. The underlying theme, of faith in Christ overcoming wrongful commitment to evil powers, and sorcery in particular, is one that is found throughout Ælfric's writings, as we have already noted. Alongside it, in the course of this narrative, there is some restatement of Christian belief, but there is no pastoral development beyond what is conveyed through the story itself. James was obviously a saint who needed to be included, and Ælfric duly made selective use of his source to provide an effective *passio* for lay consumption, which carried with it some integrated teaching alongside its edifying example, but he did not choose to develop it further.

8. The Seven Sleepers (CH II, ed. Godden, hom. xxvii B, pp. 247–48)

The story of James ends with a brief doxology and an “amen.” But in Godden's edition of the Second Series of *Catholic Homilies* the story of the Seven Sleepers is presented as part of the same homily, albeit with a new heading, following the manuscript. Thorpe had treated the Seven Sleepers as a separate item (2: 424–26). But Godden was rightly swayed by the fact that Ælfric begins this narrative with the comment that he will deal with it briefly (which indeed he does, in the space of 48 lines in Godden's edition, by comparison with 180 lines for James), and that this will be in anticipation of the commemoration of the Seven Sleepers in two days' time. The clear implication is that it is in effect a

15. On Paul the Deacon's homiliary, see note 6 above. The Haymo homily to which Godden refers, on the basis of the edition in *PL* 118, is not original to the homiliary: see Barré 147–60 for the authentic contexts of Haymo's homiliary, and 50–51 for a list of the interpolated items, using the homily numbering in *Patrologia Latina*.

coda to the main material for the day; that while the people are likely to be present for the major feast-day of St James the Great, they are not likely to be present to celebrate the Seven Sleepers; and that the Seven Sleepers is therefore a feast that is not generally observed in the church at large. This is borne out by the fact that, although it is in most of the Anglo-Saxon liturgical calendars, it is not in Zettel's top-thirty feast-days, and it is not in the vernacular calendars discussed earlier. Unlike Alexander, Eventius and Theodolus, it cannot be explained by assuming that Ælfric was "thinking in days," since two dates are in play here, as Ælfric acknowledges; and there is no connection between the Seven Sleepers and James which yokes them within the tradition of the church. So why did he take the trouble to summarise this narrative, which must have been a feature of monastic observance only?

Godden points out that, even within the brief space that he allows himself, Ælfric characteristically turns the narrative into "a conflict of heroic saints and cruel tyrants, in contrast to the Latin narrative which represents Decius as curiously sympathetic to the young men" (*Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: Introduction* 576–77). But Magennis argues that the selective shaping of the narrative is more pronounced than this, being "an unusually extreme example of Ælfric's approach to hagiographical writing and one in which doctrine receives more explicit attention than usual" (326). In the much fuller Latin text, the reawakening of the Seven Sleepers is set in the context of profound theological dispute about the resurrection of the body. It is this, Magennis argues, that accounts for Ælfric's interest in the text and his wish to seize the opportunity to give to the people a brief account of this concrete example. In fact, he returned to their story later, when he inserted the example of the Seven Sleepers into the doctrinal context of his First Series homily for the First Sunday after Easter as a demonstration:

þæt we ealle sceolon of deaðe arisan
on þam endenextan dæge urum drihtne togeanes.
7 underfon edlean eallra ure dæda
be þam ðe we ær gewrohton on þissere worulde;
Wylle we, nelle we we wuniað æfre cuce
æfter urum æriste be urum gewyrhtum
oððe wel. oððe yfele. be þam ðe we geworhton ær.¹⁶

16. Ælfric's addition is fourteen lines long in total in this lineated form. It is printed for the first time in Magennis 322, from which the present extract is taken, together with Magennis's translation.

that we shall all arise from death on the last day to meet our Lord and to receive the reward for all our deeds, according as we have acted beforehand in this world. Willingly or unwillingly, we shall remain forever alive after our resurrection according to our deserts, for good or for ill, according as we have acted beforehand.

This later passage is far clearer in its doctrinal and didactic intent than anything directly expressed in Ælfric's initial short Second Series narrative, but it allows us to see how he read the story of the Seven Sleepers, and thus why he felt that it was worth making it known in the wider church.

9. Simon and Jude (CH II, ed. Godden, hom. xxxiii, pp. 280–87)

Godden remarks that the feast of Simon and Jude “does not seem to have figured prominently in Anglo-Saxon church practice” (*Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: Introduction* 614), but in fact their observance ranks high in Zettel's list and is included also in the selective vernacular calendars, which suggests that the feast-day was kept in the wider church, not simply in monastic circles. It is consequently not surprising that Ælfric decided to provide for the feast-day in his *Catholic Homilies*, although in common with his treatment of the other apostolic additions, Bartholomew and James the Great, he did not use the lection for the day (John 15.17–25) (Lenker 370), but worked with a Latin account of their acts and martyrdom, adapting it in such a way to make it more accessible for his audience. Yet even while abbreviating and simplifying some of the material, Ælfric carefully retained what Godden has described as “the strong vein of Christian ethics which pervades the story” (*Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: Introduction* 614).

The first episode in their narrative concerns their engagement with a heathen general who offers gifts to his gods in order to find who will be successful in battle. However, no appeals to the idols are successful because, as the devil explains, the gods are prevented from answering by the presence of the two apostles, who have great power from God. In the ensuing discussion with the general, Simon and Jude predict peace and win the support of the general, who gives orders that the idolators who had gainsaid the apostles should be burned. But the apostles successfully plead for mercy on the grounds that Christ taught that one should love one's enemies. The general then attempts to give them the idolators' possessions, but the apostles refuse on the

grounds that they are not allowed to have possessions on earth because they have eternal possessions in heaven. When the general insists, pointing out that they are strangers and poor, they refuse again and say they are not poor but have heavenly riches. They advise that the proper use of these riches is to distribute them to the poor and the sick, widows, step-children and the indigent tax-payers.

In order to assert their power, the sorcerers then demonstrate that they can give and remove physical affliction. But the apostles successfully preach the story of the Redemption, and teach the people to overcome the power of idols and devil-inspired sorcerers by worshipping the true God. Recognising the threat that this poses, the sorcerers summon up snakes, but the apostles command the serpents to bite them, although they refuse to follow the king's direction that they allow the snakes to kill them on the grounds that "We sind asende to gecigenne mancynn fram deaðe to life. na to scufenne fram life to deaðe" (lines 128–29), 'We are sent to call mankind from death to life, not to drive from life to death.' Instead, the apostles allow them to suffer from their wounds for three days of torment after which, if they repent, they will be healed. But before the three days have quite ended, the apostles heal them and give them the opportunity to turn from evil to good of their own free will, since it is not God's way to exact service through compulsion. The sorcerers persist in their wickedness, however, and flee. But the apostles remain at the invitation of the king and his general, working miracles of healing and exorcism. They save one of the deacons from wrongful accusation; they heal the king's kinsman, who was wounded with an arrow; and they save the people from the attack of tigers, which become as tame as sheep – an incident that allows the apostles to preach on the natural bounties that come from the Creator.

Finally, after fourteen years of successful preaching and conversion by Simon and Jude, the two leading sorcerers rouse up the remaining idolators, who seize the apostles and attempt to force them to worship the sun and the moon. But the apostles are strengthened by God to face martyrdom, upon which the heathen temple is destroyed by God and the two sorcerers are consumed by fire. The story ends with a description of how, a few months later, the king deprives the idolators of their possessions and raises a mighty church in honour of the apostles.

Ælfric explains in conclusion that what underlies this homily is a long narrative in ten books, but that his own short account is sufficient "to getrymminge urum geleafan" (lines 279–80), 'for the confirmation of our belief.' This is the fundamental purpose of hagiographical

accounts, although, as we have seen, Ælfric sometimes chooses to draw out relevant pastoral themes. In this case the themes are strongly present in the narrative: the hopelessness of worshipping idols or following sorcerers, the need to love one's enemies, not to rely on earthly wealth but to give to the poor and needy, the requirement to turn to God through free-will, the obligation of mercy in justice, and the ultimate reward of a faithful life, all underpinned by the apostles' teaching about the Redemption and God's role in the natural world. The pastorally relevant exempla and passages of direct teaching intrinsic to the narrative stand out all the more clearly because of Ælfric's simplification of his source-text.

10. St Martin (CH II, ed. Godden, hom. xxxiv, pp. 288–97)

The popularity of St Martin is shown not only by his position in Zettel's rank-ordered list and his inclusion in the vernacular calendars, but also by the fact that even the anonymous Blickling and Vercelli homily collections include St Martin. A further testimony to his importance is the fact that Ælfric wrote on him again, and at much greater length, for his *Lives of Saints* collection, the only saint to receive this treatment. Not surprisingly, therefore, Godden comments that "A life of him was probably an obligatory feature of the Catholic Homilies" (*Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: Introduction* 622).

Ælfric's careful abridgement of the substantial Latin source-material leaves us with a saint who, through a steady succession of episodes, exemplifies many of the qualities of the Christian life: generosity to others (famously in the story of how he divided his cloak with the beggar), humility and compassion in his various miracles, even to the extent of being charitable to heathens and bringing a suicide back to life, and boldly defining himself as a soldier of Christ. On several occasions he asserts the power of God over the power of idols and their sites of worship, and he proves himself to be an exemplary bishop, learned in the faith, and skilled in prophecy. Ælfric draws the account of Martin's life to a close with a summary of some of the virtues that are not directly exemplified in the preceding vignettes, and then goes on to describe the manner of his holy death in detail, drawing out his humility and sanctity and the great affection in which he was held. As with the homily for Simon and Jude, Ælfric does not provide explicit pastoral teaching, but leaves the narrative to make its own exemplary impact. The only exhortation comes before the concluding doxology,

“Uton hine biddan þæt he us ðingige to þam lifigendan gode. ðe he on life gecwemde” (lines 229–330), ‘Let us pray to him that he intercede for us to the living God, whom he served in his life.’

11. Conclusion

The *sanctorale* provision made by Ælfric in the *Catholic Homilies*, over and above the provisions which were familiar to him from the Carolingian homiliaries, meant that his selection was brought into close alignment with the order of importance of saints in the Anglo-Saxon liturgical calendars and with the selection that we find in the vernacular calendrical texts, which we presume were for lay audiences and so reflected the practice of the wider church, as opposed to the far more intense cycle of observance found in the monastic community. The narratives of Alexander, Eventius and Theodolus and of the Seven Sleepers, distinctive in being the only two instances among the additions to stand as secondary items, appear to be anomalous within this frame of reference, but the examination above allows us to identify the conditions which may account for them.

Ælfric’s additions mean that the number of biblical saints is increased: principally the apostles, but also, from his perspective, Clement, together with Dionysius within Clement’s narrative, given their standard medieval identification with figures in Philippians and Acts. We also see him responding to the contemporary status of All Saints as a major feast-day, which had been a significant change in the liturgy of the Western Church since the Carolingian period, and perhaps also, in providing for it, recognising its importance within the lay consciousness, for whom it was a marker-day for the payment of tithes and taxes. Other cultural demands of England in the Benedictine Reform period are addressed through the inclusion of Cuthbert, Gregory and Benedict, as Gretsich has shown. The addition of provision for the Invention of the Holy Cross gave Ælfric the opportunity to correct a popular misconception about the historical circumstances which led to the cross becoming the pre-eminent symbol of the Christian faith; and the presence of the evidently popular Martin was effectively “obligatory” by the end of the tenth century. But, above all, these additional homilies allow us to identify various ways in which Ælfric used the more developed *sanctorale* dimension of his mixed homily collection to contribute to the promotion of some of his recurrent pastoral and didactic aims.

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Lilla Kopár

The Catholic University of America

Heroes on the Fringes of the Anglo-Saxon Poetic Corpus

Vernacular Memorial Inscriptions on Stone Sculpture¹

One of the many functions of Old English poetry was commemoration and the creation of social memory. The heroes and heroines of the core poetic corpus represent a wide range of outstanding individuals of the recent, distant, or mythical past: from military leaders (Byrhtnoth) to biblical heroines (Judith), from local saints (Guthlac) to Christ himself, from the creators of objects and texts (Weland, Deor) to personified objects with their own voices and stories (*The Dream of the Rood*). These heroes, celebrated through poetic texts, loom large in our remembrance of the Anglo-Saxon past. The commemorative function of vernacular poetry, however, extended beyond the celebrated masterpieces of the modern literary canon. A small body of formulaic commemorative texts, some in alliterating half-lines, survives as inscriptions on Anglo-Saxon stone sculpture from northern England. These monuments were carved in honor of local individuals whose names have escaped from oblivion but whose stories have long been forgotten.

In spite of their poetic form, these commemorative texts have been exiled to the fringes of the poetic corpus by modern editors and scholars of Old English literature: they are omitted from anthologies and neglected in literary histories. From the corpus of vernacular inscriptions on stone, it is only the unique runic inscription of the Ruthwell cross that has been widely recognized as “literature,” primarily because of its obvious parallels with the celebrated poem *The Dream of*

1. For our class meetings of the first doctoral seminar on Anglo-Saxon literature ever offered in Hungary, we often gathered at Kati Halácsy’s home in Buda. With great enthusiasm (and with tea and cakes in hand), we discussed poetry and prose, language and culture, and sundry heroes of literary records. Subsequently, my own research interests moved towards visual culture and stone sculpture, but finding traces of poetry on stone monuments has always filled me with delight. Therefore, I am honored to offer this study of the intersection of our fields, poetry and sculpture, as a tribute to an insightful scholar, caring mentor, and ever supportive friend, who contributed significantly to the study of medieval English literature in Hungary as much as to the lives of young scholars.

the Rood, recorded in a later, extended version in the Vercelli Book (Swanton 94–97). Memorial inscriptions on sculpture (Falstone, Great Urswick, Thornhill 2, and Overchurch only) were first introduced into the poetic corpus in 1991 by F. C. Robinson and E. G. Stanley in their *Old English Verse Texts from Many Sources: A Comprehensive Collection* in the *Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile* series (Robinson and Stanley; cf. Page, *Introduction* 149). These inscriptions, which had never been included in the *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* (cf. Dobbie), were recognized by Stanley and Robinson primarily for their significance as epigraphic comparanda to poetic manuscripts. It is not entirely surprising since, as Ray Page noted, these memorial inscriptions are “a loose form, not always easy to distinguish from rhythmic prose, and some inscriptions fall on the borderline between [poetry and prose]” (*Introduction* 149).

Outside of the realm of literary studies, the evidence value of memorial inscriptions has been recognized by runologists and linguists as records of vernacular language and literacy, and by archaeologists, historians, and scholars of stone sculpture as means of commemoration through inscribed monuments. In the following, I propose to look at these inscriptions again from a literary perspective, as these texts contribute to our understanding of the function of vernacular poetry, its social context and patronage in Anglo-Saxon England.

1. The Corpus

Memorial inscriptions are the most common type of inscription on Anglo-Saxon sculpture, and the majority of them are in the vernacular (Higgitt, “Words and Crosses” 133; “Inscriptions” 53). They are formulaic in nature, and their main function is to record the names of the commemorated and the sponsor, and to request prayers for their souls. The exact number of surviving memorial inscriptions is not easy to determine due to the weathered and fragmentary nature of most of the inscriptions. According to my count, there are twenty monuments with vernacular memorial inscriptions (or convincing traces thereof). Eleven of them are in the runic script, eight in roman lettering, and one monument (Falstone 2) is biscriptal (runic and roman). The majority of the monuments (eighteen out of twenty) come from the north of England, with a particular concentration in Western Yorkshire. One example (Whithorn in Dumfries and Galloway) comes from southwest

Scotland, an area that was under Northumbrian control for most of the Anglo-Saxon period. In form and content these northern examples constitute a largely coherent textual group. They are generally dated to the 8th to 9th centuries, with a few examples of possible early Viking Age date (10th century). Bewcastle and Carlisle in the northwest may stand at the beginning of this tradition, and Whithorn may constitute one of the latest examples, but there are no precise dating methods to rely on. From the south of England we only have two examples of Old English memorial inscriptions, both written in Anglo-Saxon capitals: Winchester Old Minster 6 and London All Hallows 2. They are both dated to the 11th century, show Scandinavian influence, and seem to represent a tradition distinct from that of the north.

In addition to the twenty monuments with vernacular inscriptions discussed here (including the two southern examples), there are a number of other inscribed stones whose function is considered commemorative. However, they either record only names without any reference to an extended memorial text, or if they use a memorial formula, they use Latin (*ora pro X*). The inscriptions included in the present study are indicative of a commemorative epigraphic tradition in the vernacular language that emerged as a new development in commemorative practice, as opposed to simple translations of Latin memorial formulas (Fell 129). The analysis below will provide an overall assessment of the corpus; for a detailed description and analysis of each individual monument and its inscription(s), please consult the “Handlist of Vernacular (Old English) Memorial Inscriptions on Stone Monuments” in the appendix.

2. Formal Characteristics of Memorial Inscriptions

The formulaic nature of vernacular memorial inscriptions has been described and discussed in some detail (primarily from a linguistic and epigraphic perspective) by R. I. Page (“Inscriptions”; *Introduction*), David N. Parsons (“Inscriptions”), and Gaby Waxenberger (“Runic Stone Monuments”) (see also Kopár, forthcoming). The following formulaic components have been identified:

- (a) sponsor formula: *X sette æfter Y* ‘X set up (this monument) in memory of Y’;
- (b) so-called *becun* formula, or monument formula, where OE *becun*

'sign, beacon, monument' is combined with a description of the dedicatee or the location (*becun æfter/in*, 'a monument in memory of someone/set up somewhere'); and
 (c) prayer formula: *Gebiddaþ þær saule* 'Pray for the soul (or for X)'.

In the two most complex examples of vernacular commemorative texts (Thornhill 2 and Great Urswick), both in the runic script, these three formulas are combined to form alliterating long-lines:

Thornhill 2, Western Yorkshire [Fig. 1]:²

+ *Gilswiþ arærde* *æft[e] Berhtswiþe*
þekun on þergi. *Gebiddaþ þær saule.*

+ Gilswith raised up in memory of Berhtswith (this) monument on a hill/mound. Pray for the soul.



Fig. 1. Thornhill 2. Photo: Gaby Waxenberger

2. For transcriptions of the inscriptions and for descriptions of the monuments please see the Handlist in the appendix. Transcriptions are based on entries in *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture* (Cramp); the reconstructions and translations of the texts are mine.

Great Urswick 1, Lancashire [Fig. 2]:

+ *Tunwini setæ* *æfter Torohtredæ*
þekun æfter his þæurnæ. *Gehidæs þer saulæ.*

Lyl þis w[orhtæ].

+ Tunwini set up in memory of Torohtred (this) monument in memory of his child/lord. Pray for the soul. | Lyl m[ade] this.



Fig. 2. Great Urswick 1. Photo: Lilla Kopár

Both inscriptions show alliteration and poetic meter. At Thornhill 2 an additional link is provided between the two lines by the alliteration of the name of the commemorated (*Berhtswiþ*) with the *becun* formula (*bekun on bergi*), which again is linked to the prayer formula by the same sound (*gehiddap*). At Great Urswick the craftsman added an additional inscription, a maker's "signature." This does not belong directly to the memorial inscription, which is evident from the lack of poetic unity as well as the clumsy (and invasive) layout of the inscription across a figural scene below the panel with the memorial inscription.

Nonetheless, it allowed for the carver to participate in the commemorative practice and to add his name to those to be remembered.

A damaged and fragmentary inscription in Anglo-Saxon capitals at Wycliffe may have provided a third example of the full poetic memorial formula, but the end of the inscription is now broken away:

Wycliffe 1, Northern Yorkshire:

Bada (sette?) æfter Berehtvini
becun æfter [...]

Bada (set up) in memory of Berehtvini (this) monument after [...]

The alliteration of the names with the *becun* formula may have been further enhanced by a matching apposition to the name of the deceased, and the text is likely to have ended with the usual prayer formula, which also contained an alliterating /b/ sound.

The same formulaic elements (sponsor, monument, and prayer formula) with traces of alliteration can also be found at Dewsbury and Falstone, but the long-lines are no longer complete:

Dewsbury 10, Western Yorkshire:

[...]rhtae becun æfter beornæ.
*G**ib**iddaþ þær saule.*

[...]rhtae (set up) (or: X made) this monument in memory of (his) child/lord. Pray for the soul.

Falstone 2, Northumberland [Fig. 3]:

(Reconstruction based on two largely identical inscriptions, one in runes, one in roman letters:)

+ Eo[.]ta æftær Hrœthberhtæ becun æftær eomæ.
*G**ib**iddæd þer saule.*

+Eo[.] (set up) after Hroethberht a monument in memory of his uncle. Pray for the soul.



Fig. 3. Falstone 2. Photo: Gaby Waxenberger

The Overchurch inscription, included among the few epigraphic texts in Robinson and Stanley's collection of poetic facsimiles (1991), has also preserved the standard formulaic components but with some unusual modifications (see Handlist regarding the use of *folc* and *arærdon*):

Overchurch 1, Cheshire [Fig. 4]:

Folc arærdon bec[un ...].
[Ge]biddaþ fo[r]e Æþelmund. [...]

The people set up (this) monument. Pray for Æþelmund.



Fig. 4. Overchurch 1. Photo: Laura Pooley, Cheshire West Museums

The weathered memorial inscription (b) of the famous Bewcastle cross contains essentially the same formulaic components but with a different word order and without clearly recognizable poetic features:

Bewcastle 1, Cumberland [Fig. 5]:

(Reconstruction:)

*bis sigbecn [...] setton Hwætred, [..]þgær, ... æft [.]lcfri[.] [..].
Gebid(ap)[...].*

This victory-memorial/cross Hwætred, [.]gær and [...] set up in memory of [.]lcfri[.]. Pray [...].



Fig. 5. The Bewcastle cross. Photo: Gaby Waxenberger

The inscription at Yarm is even more deviant in its word order and in its combination of Old English and Latin:

Yarm 1, Northern Yorkshire:

—[pr]— [m]berekct + sac(erd[os]) +
Alla + signum æfter his breoder a[s]setæ +

— [m]berekct + the priest +. Alla set up + (this) monument/sign
in memory of his brother. +

The Carlisle cross-head fragment preserves a surprisingly natural word order, which upsets the meter, but alliteration is provided by the common initial sound of the names of the sponsor and the deceased. Similarly, on two other carvings from Thornhill (3 and 4), the identical first elements of the names (*Eþel-* and *Ead-* respectively) add a poetic touch to the sole sponsor formula preserved.

The names of the commemorated and of the patron had an unavoidable impact on the perfection of the lines. Thanks to the common Anglo-Saxon practice of giving names to descendants with the same initial sound or even prototheme (first element), the commemoration of relatives came with the added bonus of alliterating memorial inscriptions. If it was not the case, the author of the lines sometimes made an effort to remedy the imperfection, as on Thornhill 2, where the use of *aræran* 'to raise (a monument)' instead of the more common *settan* 'to set up' provided alliteration with *æfte* (alternative of *æfter*) in *Gilswiþ arærde æfte Berhtswiþe*. The shared deutertheme (second element) *-swiþ* may have also indicated a family relationship (Parsons in Coatsworth, *Western Yorkshire* 259) and incidentally added a further aesthetic touch (an imperfect internal feminine rhyme) to the line.

The relationship between the commemorated and the patron is often specified by an apposition in the *becun* formula: *becun æfter his beornæ/bæurnæ* (Dewsbury 10; Great Urswick 1) 'monument in memory of his child/lord'; *becun æftær eomæ* 'monument in memory of his uncle' (Falstone 2); and (with an unusual Latin substitute for *becun*) *signum æfter his breoder* (Yarm 1). The *bekun on bergi* 'monument on the hill/mound' phrase at Thornhill 1 and 2 may have been employed to save the alliteration despite the lack of a fitting relationship term (note that Thornhill 2, unusually, commemorates a woman). Alternatively, it may emphasize the significance of the location of the monument on a hill, as suggested by the place-name Thornhill itself and the location of the current church on a hill. As public monuments were created to mark the landscape with signs of ownership and social memory, the indication of location in the text may have had special importance for the patron and the community.

The use of the word *becun* in reference to monument types deserves a brief mention here. The word *bēcun* is the Anglian form of West Saxon *bēacen*, and in this form it is only attested in inscriptions (DOE, s.v. *bēacen*). Its meaning ranges from 'sign, signal, beacon' to the Christian cross (*signum crucis*), and by extension to 'monument,' usually in the shape of a cross (free standing or cross slab). Accordingly,

in most memorial inscriptions it appears on a cross or cross-shaft (Bewcastle, Crowle, Dewsbury, Great Urswick, Thornhill, Wycliffe). The association with the cross is further supported by the inscription at Yarm, where the word is substituted with Latin *signum* in the vernacular memorial text and is preceded by an incised cross in the inscription: *Alla + signum æfter his breoder a[s]setæ*. However, not all *becun* formulas refer to crosses. On Falstone 2 the word appears on a skeuomorphic recumbent monument (stone version of a leather or textile bag or reliquary; cf. Coatsworth, “Design” 161) (Fig. 3), while at Overchurch 1 it references a slab or shrine cover (Fig. 4). Both are unique recumbent monuments, and in its present condition, neither one bears a sign of the cross. In keeping with the established textual tradition, the makers of these monuments may have adopted a standard memorial formula and applied it to a variant monument type. Alternatively, these two stones may have been part of composite monuments as is the case with some other recumbent slabs (cf. Winchester Old Minster 6 or Penrith 4–9, all of later date).

3. People and Patronage

Although the names of both the commemorated and the sponsors are displayed in the inscriptions, the monuments reveal little information about these individuals beyond their roles in the commemoration process. As noted above, alliterating names suggest family ties, and the relationship between the commemorated and the patron is often further specified by an apposition in the *becun* formula. This is informative about the social aspect of commemoration within the context of the family and it also provides evidence for the sponsorship of sculpture in a commemorative context. Relatives had a double motivation to commemorate their family members: on the one hand, it was a late form of ancestor cult combined with an act of Christian piety for the salvation of the deceased’s soul, and on the other, a social and political statement of legitimacy and claim of ancestral rights. After all, stone sculptures were public monuments, directed to the eyes of the living. They were costly memorials that adequately publicized the social status of those involved in the commemorative process and their claim to a social status through a relationship to the deceased (kinship or lord-retainer relationship).

The evidence of memorial inscriptions suggests that it was mostly men who were involved in commemoration as commissioners of monuments. Thornhill 2 provides the only surviving example of a female sponsor of an inscribed sculpture (Gilswith), erected in memory of another woman (Berhtswith). Collingham 2 bears witness to another woman among the commemorated but only the second element of her name survives (-*swith*). Looking at all surviving inscriptions from Anglo-Saxon England, Elizabeth Okasha (“Anglo-Saxon Women” 88) was able to identify another five women among those commemorated or for whom prayers were requested: four named in Latin prayer or funerary inscriptions and one in a vernacular church dedication inscription (at Aldbrough). This is about one fourth of all the men remembered. The ratio is the same in single-name inscriptions with a commemorative function (Okasha, “Anglo-Saxon Women” 88). Although the numbers are low, the fact that women are indeed represented in the memorial inscriptions indicates that they did play a role in public commemorative practices, both as sponsors and as dedicatees.

While public commemoration certainly involved a group of individuals, usually only a single sponsor is given credit in the memorial inscriptions. The Bewcastle cross is an exception with its plural verb, together with the Overchurch stone. The latter suggests collective sponsorship by the ‘people’ (*folc*). As for Æthelmund, the individual commemorated by the community at Overchurch, he may have been a local political or military leader, or as Parsons (in Bailey, *Cheshire* 94) suggested, “a priest whose memorial was sponsored by his lay congregation.”

4. Functions and Rituals

Stone monuments with memorial inscriptions are generally assumed to be funerary monuments, but only one sculpture in our corpus has been found in a funerary context (the southern example of Winchester Old Minster 6). A number of them were reused in the post-Conquest and modern periods, obliterating the original context that may not have been funerary in the first place. Besides the Winchester stone, only the Bewcastle cross has survived *in situ* in the churchyard near the southwest end of the church [Fig. 5]. It is likely that most, if not all, monuments were associated with ecclesiastical sites.

Memorial monuments were erected to facilitate long-term public commemoration of individuals. But instead of remembering their feats, as in heroic poetry, the emphasis here is on the religious and social significance of the act of passing, the transformation from life to death, and on the integration of the commemorated into a community of Christians and into a local social group. How did the inscriptions contribute to these functions? What reactions did they evoke from their audience, and what 'genre' do these texts represent? The formulaic nature of the inscriptions indicates a combination of standard devotional texts (request for prayer) and mnemonic formulas to remember the names of individuals. In the latter they resemble genealogies, an important subgenre of mnemonic texts produced for public performance and social remembrance (Williams 14). As Okasha ("Memorial Stones" 99–100) had suggested in the context of Northumbrian name-stones (simple monuments with one or two names only), they also emulate the function of a *liber vitae*, a list of deceased members and benefactors of an ecclesiastical community for whom regular prayers were offered. No doubt, memorial inscriptions also provided a chance for quiet contemplation on one's own salvation, a theme often addressed indirectly in the iconography of the sculptures (cruciform shape; vine-scrolls; crosses hidden in interlace patterns, etc.) as well as by the location of monuments in or near churches. The "multimedia" aspect of the monuments is therefore not to be underestimated: they consciously combined texts, images, form, and location, and the inscriptions must be interpreted in the context of all these components. In the case of abbreviated memorial inscriptions or single names especially, the context of the monument provided information not spelled out in the text.

It is not unlikely that at least some of the monuments served as places of public or private rituals. The poetic nature of the longer memorial texts certainly lent themselves to recitation, and incised crosses in many of the inscriptions may have prompted the sign of the cross as a liturgical gesture at certain parts of the text as in liturgical manuscripts (see Higgitt in Lang 276). The Yarm inscription is a particularly interesting example with its four incised crosses: two separating the names or marking the word *sacerd(os)*, one placed directly before the word *signum*, and one at the end of the text. Several other inscriptions start with the sign of the cross (Bewcastle, Carlisle, Falstone, Great Urswick, Thornhill 2, 3, and 4, as well as Winchester Old Minster 6), which may have been gestured when the text was read as part of a commemorative prayer or ritual.

5. Conclusion

The group of texts discussed above provides evidence for a commemorative tradition in the form of vernacular inscriptions on stone monuments in Anglo-Saxon England. This was a local development in the north of England that flourished in the 8th and 9th centuries. It was influenced by Christian commemorative practices but fueled by a need for public commemoration and social remembrance. The initially monastic practices of stone sculpture and of commemoration by inscriptions were adapted to a wider social milieu of secular Christianity, often with evidence of lay patronage. This may explain the preference of Old English over Latin, the use of runic as well as roman script, and the vernacular poetic features of these memorial inscriptions.

As we have seen above, some of the inscriptions skillfully combine standard formulas into poetic lines, and alliteration seems to have been a desired feature of these memorial texts. Yet these texts do not belong to the core of Anglo-Saxon literature. They occupy a liminal status in a variety of ways. They are on the border between poetry and prose; it is not always easy to distinguish their alliterating lines from rhythmical prose (Page, *Introduction* 149). Furthermore, they represent a transition between oral and written texts. Their form echoes the tradition of oral vernacular poetry and they may indeed have been recited as part of commemorative rituals. However, their significance as inscriptions lies in their ability to preserve memory in the most enduring artistic medium of stone (in which they have clearly succeeded). In their use of script, they bridge the divide between runic and roman literacy. Although statistically there are more vernacular memorial inscriptions written in runes than in roman characters, there is no strong argument for a preference of one script over the other. The biscriptal example of Falstone with a balanced representation of the two scripts in the design of the monument is a case in point. However, considering that the majority of runic texts from the 8th century onwards come from the north of England and are recorded in stone sculpture, it is worth entertaining the idea that the runic script may have had a certain social prestige especially in a commemorative context, and a particular association with memory and the ancestral past (see Okasha, *Hand-List* 72; Karkov 92–93). As for their form, vernacular inscriptions are not mere translations of Latin funerary inscriptions, although the prayer formula mirrors Latin *ora(te) pro X*. There is evidence by Bede for a tradition of Latin poetic funerary inscriptions in Northumbria (Wilfrid's epitaph in

Historia ecclesiastica V. 19; McClure and Collins 274), which may have strengthened the link between vernacular poetry and Christian epigraphy. The evidence for secular commemorative use and patronage of the originally monastic art form of stone sculpture (see Crowle, Great Urswick, Bewcastle, Winchester) further supports the link between ecclesiastical commemorative practices and secular commemoration.

With its formulaic composition, alliteration, and meter, the art of poetry provided a set of mnemonic devices that was particularly fitting for commemorative inscriptions. Though the sponsors and authors of these texts were no skilled poets, their well-crafted lines were a tribute to those commemorated, and shed light on the use of poetry outside the boundaries of the well-established canon. With the passing of their communities, the stories of these individuals were slowly forgotten, but their names and requests for prayers have endured over a millennium in the medium of stone.

Appendix:

Handlist of Vernacular (Old English) Memorial Inscriptions on Stone Monuments

The numbering of the individual monuments from England follows the standard catalogue of the *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture* (Cramp); the sole example from present-day Scotland has a Canmore (RCAHMS) ID number. Alternative conventional numbering for roman inscriptions is provided after Okasha (*Hand-List*), for runic inscriptions after Page (*Introduction*) (only if the site has multiple rune-inscribed stones, otherwise unnumbered). Wherever possible, the descriptions are based on entries in the *Corpus* volumes.

1.

Name/location: **Bewcastle 1** (Cumberland) [Fig. 5] (CASSS 2: Bailey and Cramp 61–72)

Date: First half of 8th century (Cramp) or 750–850 (Page)

Script: Runic

Texts: (Side A)

(a) **[+g[e]ssus | kristtus**

Jesus Christus

(b) **+þissigb[e]c[n] | *[,]setto/nh |**

wætre[d..]þ | gæra[.]w[.]wo[.] | *[æ]

ft[.]lcfri | *m[.]n[ǰ]u[.]ŋ | [.]cb[...]

u/ŋ | [.]gebid[.] | [..]so[.]o

Reconstruction (after Page in Bailey and Cramp 65):

*Pis sigbecn [...] setton Hwætred, [..]bgær, ... æft [.]lcfri[.] [...].
Gebid(ab)[...].*

Translation: This victory-memorial/cross Hwætred, [.]gær and [...] set
up in memory of [.]lcfri[.]. Pray [...].

(Side B) (c)/(d) Illegible, only traces of rune-like charac-
ters.

(Side D) (e) [..]ssu/s
Jesus

(f) **kynibur*ġ**
Cyneburh

Monument type: Cross-shaft and base

Decoration/imagery: The cross-head is broken off but the impressive monument is still standing *in situ* in the churchyard. The shaft bears traces of six runic inscriptions on three sides, but there may have been more placed as captions on mouldings. The longest (commemorative) inscription in nine lines (b) is on side A (front, west), placed above a standing figure with a bird of prey (falcon?) on a perch in an arched panel. He is depicted in three-quarters profile, in secular clothing, holding a stick. The classicized figure is likely to represent the deceased commemorated by inscription (b); the paneling confirms that text and image belong together. Above the memorial inscription there is another arched panel with Christ in Majesty treading on two beasts; above it in the flat top border a runic caption in two lines (a). The rectangular panel at the top shows John the Baptist with the Lamb of God. Interestingly, each figural scene depicts a relationship between a human/divine figure and the animal world (Cramp in Bailey and Cramp 69). The narrow faces (B, D) are decorated with alternating panels of plant scroll and interlace. Side D (north) also has a long panel of chequers, side D (south) a small sundial. Side C (east) bears a single vine scroll inhabited with birds and quadrupeds.

Notes: The inscriptions are badly weathered and may have been tampered with in modern times (Page, "Bewcastle Cross" 62–63). Earlier drawings and recordings aid the decipherment, but interpretations vary greatly. The monument features three uncommon runic characters: *gar* (ġ) and *calc* (k) (also present on the Ruthwell cross), and an uncertain rune indicated above by an asterisk. Inscriptions (a) and (e) are captions, and there

may have been more of those on the shaft. Text (f) records the feminine name Cyneburh, placed above an elegant plant scroll; (c) and (d) are too weathered to interpret. The lengthy commemorative inscription (b) contains a variant of the *becun* formula combined with a sponsor formula and a prayer formula. The designation of the monument as *sig-becn* ‘victory-monument’ is unique but may be paralleled on Crowle 1, where *becun* is further qualified as *lic-becn* ‘body-monument or gravestone.’ It had long been assumed that the monument commemorated Alcfrith, son of Oswiu of Northumbria, and his wife Cyneburh, daughter of Penda of Mercia, which had an impact on the dating of the cross. However, due to damage to the text, the patrons and the commemorated can no longer be identified with certainty (see Page, “Bewcastle Cross” 47–48, 68–69).

2.

Name/location: **Carlisle 1** (Cumberland) (CASSS 2: Bailey and Cramp 84–85; Okasha, *Hand-List* no. 23)

Date: 8th century

Script: Roman (Anglo-Saxon capitals)

Text: (Side A) +SIG || TTEDI | S
(Side C) [SU] | AEF || ITBE | [RH]

Reconstruction: *Sig[-] [se]tte dis [becun] æfter S.itberh[t]*

Translation: Sig[.] set up this monument in memory of [Su]itberh[t].

Monument type: Cross-head (fragment)

Decoration/imagery: The continuous inscription in two parts is located on the front and back (A and C) of the lateral arms of the cross-head. The text flanks a small six-petalled rosette in the middle of side A and a flattened boss on side C. The top and bottom cross-arms are broken away, but they bear traces of inscription on side C. The sides of the lateral arms (B and D) are decorated with single knots.

Notes: The inscription begins with + and must have read clockwise through all cross arms. The text combines the sponsor and monument formulas in a prosaic word order (Parsons, “Inscriptions” 81). By comparison to other memorial inscriptions, it may have contained a variant of the *becun* formula with *sige-becn* (cf. Bewcastle) or Latin *signum* (cf. Yarm), which would have supported the alliteration.

3.

Name/location: **Collingham 2a-b** (Western Yorkshire) (CASSS 8: Coatsworth 119–22)

Date: Probably late 9th century (or into the early Anglo-Scandinavian period)

Script: Runic

Text: **æft[-] | [..]swiþi**

Reconstruction: *Æfter [..]swiþi*

Translation: In memory of [..]swith

Monument type: Cross-shaft (in two joining pieces)

Decoration/imagery: The weathered inscription is located on the adjacent sides of A (broad) and D (narrow) at the base of the shaft in the broad borders below the paneling. Side A is decorated by a curving, long-bodied animal with a long neck, divided by a horizontal twist from a lower panel with a pair of facing beasts. Side C has two panels with large quadrupeds, divided by a third panel with interlace pattern. Side B is decorated with interlace only, side D with spiral plant scroll. The decoration has Anglian connections but points towards the Anglo-Scandinavian period.

Notes: Early drawings (Haigh, “Fragments” pl. 2) show two lines of inscription, and Haigh (“Fragments” 512–13; “Runic Monuments” 202) had read a complex memorial text on the stone, for which there is no evidence today (cf. Page, *Introduction* 134–36). The placement of the inscription suggests that it could be a later addition. The text is an abbreviated memorial formula with a feminine name for the commemorated, although both the form of *æfter* and the ending of the personal name are problematic (cf. Parsons in Coatsworth, *Western Yorkshire* 121).

4.

Name/location: **Crowle 1** (Lincolnshire) (CASSS 5: Everson and Stocker 148–52)

Date: Early to mid-10th century

Script: Runic

Text: **-[.]ælicbæcunæ-**

Reconstruction: *[?set]æ licbæcun æ[fter ...]*

Translation: ... [set up?] (this) monument/grave-marker in memory of...

Monument type: Cross-shaft (later reused as a lintel above doorway)
Decoration/imagery: The inscription runs vertically in a curved rune-band towards the bottom of side A (broad). Above the rune-band (from bottom to top) are figural scenes: a bearded warrior on a lively horse; a pair of facing bearded men in profile with raised feet as if stepping, the right one with a sword; above it a round close-circuit twist; and a pair of confronted birds flanking a small disc. Side C shows two panels of interlace, the upper one terminating in a beast head. The narrow sides B and D have largely identical twist pattern and interlace decoration.

Notes: The surviving inscription is damaged and fragmentary due to the reuse of the monument as a lintel above a 12th-century doorway. The layout of the text in a rune-band is unusual for Anglo-Saxon England but common for Norse (Danish) runic inscriptions. The text is, however, definitely Anglo-Saxon, as indicated by the form of the *c* rune and the OE word *bæcun*. The *becun* formula is attested, among others, at nearby Thornhill and Dewsbury (ca. 40 miles west), but the compound *lic-bæcun* ‘body/corpse-monument’ for ‘gravestone’ (Parsons, “Inscriptions” 81 and in Everson and Stocker 149–50) is unique. A similar compounded monument description may be found on the Bewcastle cross (*sig-becn* ‘victory-monument’). Crowle 1 presents a puzzle in terms of dating. The archaic form of *bæcun* and the use of the typically 8th- to 9th-century *becun* formula point to an earlier date, while the secular figural iconography of the monument, together with the rune-band, suggests Scandinavian influence, setting the *terminus post quem* at the end of the 9th century, the beginning of the Scandinavian settlement in the area. The monument seems to fit most comfortably in the early 10th century and indicates the cross-fertilization of Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian commemorative traditions. The iconography suggests secular sponsorship most likely to commemorate a local leader.

5.

Name/location: **Dewsbury 10** (Western Yorkshire) (CASSS 8: Coatsworth 142–45; Okasha, *Hand-List* no. 30)

Date: Late 8th to 9th century

Script: Roman (in insular half-uncials)

Text: [...] | [R]HTAEBE | CUNA[E]FT | ERBE[O]R | NAE GIB[I] | DDADD | [AE]R [:] SA |V[LE]

Reconstruction:

[...]rhtae becuŋ æfter beornæ.
Gibiddaþ þær saule.

Translation: -rhtae (set up) [or: X made] this monument in memory of
(his) child/son/lord. Pray for the soul.

Monument type: Part of cross-arm

Decoration/imagery: The inscription is laid out in seven horizontal
lines without framing lines. It occupies the principal side
(A) of a broken upper or lower cross-arm. Side C (back) is
decorated with a single spiral plant scroll, sides B and D with
step patterns.

Notes: The inscription of this very small monument is incomplete,
with at least one line missing at the top. The word fragment
-rhtae comes either from the common masculine name element
-berht (in the dative form), or from the verb *worhtae/worhtæ*
'made,' referring to the erection of the monument. The word
following *æfter* is usually the name of the commemorated, and
Beorn could indeed be a masculine personal name. However,
based on parallels, it is more likely to indicate the relationship
of the patron to the commemorated (cf. Great Urswick, Falstone,
Yarm). The word may either be OE *beorn* 'warrior, man, noble'
or, more likely, a northern form of *bearn* 'child' (cf. Parsons in
Coatsworth, *Western Yorkshire* 143; also see Great Urswick 1).
Although word division is disregarded, the *becuŋ* formula and
the prayer formula are divided by a small intentional gap.
Although the text is incomplete, its surviving three half-lines
are linked through the alliteration of /b/, emphasizing the
word 'monument,' 'child/lord' and 'pray.'

6.

Name/location: **Falstone 2** (Northumberland) [Fig. 3] (CASSS 1:
Cramp 172–73; Okasha, *Hand-List* no. 39)

Date: Mid-8th to mid-9th century

Script: Runic and roman (in insular majuscules)

Texts: Left panel (roman) in four lines and across the border at the
bottom:

+ EO[-] | TAAE[FT]AER | HROETHBERHT[E] |
BECUNAEFTAER | EOMÆGEBIDÆDDERSAUL[E]

Right panel (runic) in four lines:

+ [-] | aeftaerroe[-] | tae[be]cunae[ʃ]taere[o-] | geb[i]
daedþe[r]saule

Reconstruction (of both, virtually identical inscriptions):

*Eo[.]ta æftær Hrœthberhtæ becun æftær eomæ.
Gebiddæd þer saule.*

Translation: Eo- [set up] after Hroethberht a monument in memory of his uncle. Pray for his soul.

Monument type: Recumbent memorial stone

Decoration/imagery: The fragmentary monument is surprisingly small (32.4 cm in length). Cramp (*County Durham*, 172–73) identified it as a house-shaped memorial with a roof, a skeuomorph of a metal or bone reliquary or shrine, while Coatsworth (“Design” 161) convincingly argued for a sculptured representation of a textile or leather bag (also for relics or precious objects). Only one of the long sides (A) and part of one of the ends (D) survives. The OE inscriptions are located on the slightly curved long side in two adjacent panels with framing lines, in roman lettering on the left and in runes on the right, divided by a central flat moulding that terminates in a ‘handle’ on the ‘roof.’ The roman lettering invades the lower border. It is better preserved than the runic text although the top lines are very worn. Side D shows a plain plait below a pointed gable.

Notes: The two inscriptions, virtually identical in content but different in script, are presented as equals in a visually balanced layout. The memorial text has all of the usual formulaic components: a sponsor formula with the names of the patron and of the commemorated, the *becun* formula with indication of the relationship between the two individuals, and a prayer formula. Alliteration is disregarded.

7.

Name/location: **Gainford 21** (Co. Durham) (CASSS 1: Cramp 87; Okasha, *Hand-List* no. 40)

Date: Mid-9th to mid-11th century

Script: Roman (in Anglo-Saxon capitals)

Text: [A]L[RI]H[CSE]T[AE—]

Reconstruction: *Alrihc setae*

Translation: Alrihc set up (this monument)

Monument type: Part of recumbent grave-cover

Decoration/imagery: The inscription is located along the long side (B) of the slab below a roll and cable moulding. Only a fragment of the first line survives, the rest of the face is broken away. The

top (A) of the monument is worked but undecorated except for a roll and cable moulding. Sides D and F only have moulding remaining, C and E are broken.

Notes: The layout of the text along the long, vertical side of what appears to be a recumbent monument is unique in the north. The surviving text is the beginning of a vernacular sponsor formula with a masculine name as the patron. The inscription could have had several more lines to include a longer memorial formula (Parsons, "Inscriptions" 80).

8.

Name/location: **(Great) Urswick 1** (Lancashire North-of-the-Sands)
[Fig. 2] (CASSS 2: Bailey and Cramp 148–50)

Date: Late 9th century

Script: Runic

Texts: (a) **+tunwinisetæ | æftertoroꝛ | tredæbeku | næfterhisb
| æurnægebidæsþe |
rs || au | læ**

Reconstruction:

+ *Tunwini setæ* *æfter Toroh tredæ*
bekun æfter his bæurnæ. *Gebidæs þer saulæ.*

Translation: Tunwini set up in memory of Toroh tred (this) monument
in memory of his child/lord. Pray for his soul.

(b) **lylþi || sw[o-]**

Reconstruction: *Lyl þis w[orhtæ].*

Translation: Lyl m[ade] this.

Monument type: Cross-shaft (fragment)

Decoration/imagery: The memorial inscription (a), written in five lines, occupies a large text panel in the middle of side A (broad), and spills over into a figural scene below that also displays the second inscription (b) carved across the two figures. The figural scene shows a pair of facing men with secular dress and hairdo. Between them is a thin, tall cross, and the figure on the left is reaching across with his large hand towards the shoulder of the other figure. This unusual scene has been variously interpreted as Christ welcoming the deceased in the otherworld; a narrative from a saint's life; or a scene from the life of the commemorated (conversion, benefaction). The lower right corner of the carving is broken away, together with the end of inscription (b), due to the later reuse of the slab

as a lintel above a window. The top panel of side A shows a poorly executed interlace; side B has a simple twist pattern. Side C is decorated with an unusual inhabited vine-scroll with two human figures (man and woman) in the middle, a pair of birds above, and two reptilian beasts below. Side D had been chiseled away.

Notes: These are the most carefully constructed poetic lines in the surviving corpus of memorial inscriptions, with alliteration and almost perfect meter in both long-lines. In line 1 the alliteration is aided by the shared initial sound of the names, a common naming custom among direct relatives. The second element of the *becun* formula (*bæurn*) further supports the alliteration; for a discussion of its meaning see Dewsbury 10 above. While the text is fairly carefully composed, the carver was much less skilled in designing the layout of the inscription. Even with gradually diminishing character sizes, he ran out of space in the text panel: the last word of the prayer formula plus one character (*rsaulæ*) are carved in three of the quadrants of the cross between the two figures below. The maker inscription further invades the figural scene: the characters are carved across the chests of the figures. This layout is indicative of the process of production: the inscriptions were inserted after the figural carvings had been completed. Whether the same carver executed both image and text is impossible to say, and so is the role of Lyl (stone carver and/or rune master?). Tunwine and Torhtred are both masculine names (as the grammar of the text also suggests); one or both of them may be referenced in the figural image of side A (cf. Bewcastle).

9.

Name/location: **Lancaster St Mary 1** (Lancashire) (CASSS 9: Bailey; Page, *Introduction* 142–43, fig. 46)

Date: Late 8th century

Script: Runic

Text: **gibidæþfo | ræcynibal | þcupbere[.]-**

Reconstruction: *Gibidæþ foræ Cynibalþ Cupbere-*

Translation: Pray for Cynibalþ Cupbere-.

Monument type: Cross (left horizontal arm missing)

Decoration/imagery: The inscription, in three lines, is in a rectangular sunken panel in the upper part of the cross shaft on side A, with a multi-framed horizontal moulding above and

interlinking knots in a separate panel below. The cross-head is decorated with three remaining bosses and interlace knotwork terminating in a beast head in the lower arm. The decoration of the cross-head reveals influence of metalwork. Side C is largely blank except for a line border and incised circled cross pattern in the cross-head. Sides B and D are undecorated.

Notes: At least one character is missing at the end of the third line that would complete the name Cuðberht in some form. The text is a prayer formula, the only one in the vernacular corpus that is not part of a longer memorial inscription. The role of the second name is unclear. There is not enough room in the line to make it a patronymic (which would be unique in an inscription anyway). Thus the name is either that of the patron as in longer commemorative formulas (i.e. 'Cuthbert set up this memorial'), or of a second commemorated person (cf. similar question in the case of Northumbrian name stones [Lindisfarne, Hartlepool], Maddern 10). The use of the preposition *fore* (as opposed to the more common *gebiddan* + dative) may be explained by Latin influence: the Latin version of the prayer formula (*orate pro anima*) appears at Lancaster St Mary 2 and Lancaster Vicarage Field 1 (Parsons in Bailey, *Cheshire* 93–94). The latter also commemorates a certain *Cyniba-* (Cynibalþ?), who may have been the patron or maker of the monument. The Lancaster St Mary 1 inscription shows a number of early linguistic features, which either suggests an early date for the monument or archaisms in a commemorative context. According to Bailey (*Cheshire* 217–18), the decoration of the cross supports an earlier date although some of its features point towards the late Anglian/early Viking period.

10.

Name/location: **Leeds 9** (Western Yorkshire) (CASSS 8: Coatsworth 209)

Date: 9th to 10th century

Script: Runic

Text: **cuni[-] | onlaf [-]**

Reconstruction: *[be]cun [i—] Onlaf*

Monument type: (fragment, lost)

Decoration/imagery: The fragment is now lost; only known from 19th-century drawings. The only recorded side showed two

damaged lines of text divided by a horizontal line, with a section of the frame moulding surviving on the left.

Notes: The fragmentary text suggests but does not prove that it is a memorial inscription with the *becun* formula (Parsons, “Inscriptions” 79 and in Coatsworth, *Western Yorkshire* 207). The masculine name Onlaf indicates a possible Scandinavian connection either in the person of the commemorated or in naming customs (cf. ON Óláfr), but the art of commemoration with the possible *becun* formula is characteristically Anglo-Saxon.

11.

Name/location: **Overchurch 1** (Cheshire) [Fig. 4] (CASSS 9: Bailey 91–95)

Date: Early 9th century

Script: Runic

Text: **folcæarærdonbec[-] | [..]biddapfoteæþelmun[-]**

Reconstruction:

Folc arærdon bec[un ...].

[Ge]biddap fo[r]e Æþelmun[d].

Translation: The people set up (this) monument. Pray for Æþelmund.

Monument type: Slab or shrine cover (fragment)

Decoration/imagery: The inscription, in two lines divided by horizontal framing lines, occupies the broad side (A) of the recumbent stone. The top (E) shows an open-jawed and winged serpentine beast with interlace body; the end panel (D) a winged(?) animal with a long tongue. Interestingly, the former is upside-down from the perspective of the reader of the inscription. Sides B and C are lost.

Notes: The characters of the first line are taller and the staves of the first few runes are vertically aligned with the second line. The ends of both lines are damaged, missing possibly as much text as the surviving portion. The inscription could have included a complete second half-line in line one and a maker formula in line two; or, it may have repeated the same inscription in roman lettering as on Falstone 2. The text represents the most southern example of the characteristically northern vernacular memorial formula, with some peculiarities. The term *folc* for collective sponsorship is unusual. Its grammatical role is unclear as the *æ* rune following *folc* is problematic.

It either (strangely) belongs to the following verb, or it is a miscarved character that should be disregarded (Dickins 19 qtd. in Parsons in Bailey, *Cheshire* 93). In either of these cases *folc* is the subject of the sentence accompanied by a plural verb form. Alternatively, *folcæ* can be a dative, as suggested by Bammesberger (130–31). If so, we are presented with an unusual word order for a memorial formula and our sentence lacks a subject (although it can be deduced from the plural verb form). The inscription would then read: '[We/they] set up [this] monument for the people.' The use of the verb *aræran* (instead of *settan*) is paralleled on Thornhill 2, but it is an odd choice for a recumbent monument. The spelling *fote* for *fore* is a mistake, indicative of the skills of the carver. As it stands, the alliteration of the commemorative lines is disregarded.

12.

Name/location: **Thornhill 1a-b** (Western Yorkshire) (CASSS 8: Coatsworth 256–57; Okasha, *Hand-List* no. 116)

Date: Late 8th to 9th century

Script: Roman (in insular decorative capitals)

Text: [.]AEF[T] | [.]OSBER | [...]BEC | [...]BER]

Reconstruction:

[...] æft[er] Osber[htæ]

Bec[un on] ber[gi].

Translation: (X set up this) monument on the hill in memory of Osberht.

Monument type: Cross-shaft? (two joining fragments)

Decoration/imagery: The inscription is on side A, badly damaged on the left. On the right there is evidence of a frame, otherwise no decoration surviving. The other sides are broken away except for some moulding on side D.

Notes: The text is damaged but can be partially reconstructed by comparison to other memorial formulas (cf. Thornhill 2, 3, 4). The masculine name Osberht is well attested. The remaining broken characters of the fourth line may suggest the phrase *becun on bergi*, parallel to Thornhill 2, referencing the location of the monument on a hill (cf. modern placename *Thorn-hill*). There are losses both at the beginning and the end of the surviving text. An initial vowel in the patron's name may have completed the first alliterative line (with *Xsetæ* as first half-line).

13.

Name/location: **Thornhill 2** (Western Yorkshire) [Fig. 1] (CASSS 8: Coatsworth 258–59; Thornhill III in Page, *Introduction*)

Date: 9th century

Script: Runic

Text: **+ jilsuiþ:arærde:æft. | berhtsuiþe · bekun | onbergigebid/
dab | þær:saule**

Reconstruction:

Gilswiþ arærde æfte Berhtsuiþe
Bekun on bergi. Gebiddab þær saule.

Translation: Gilswith raised up in memory of Berhtswith (this) monument on the hill/mound. Pray for her soul.

Monument type: Cross-shaft (fragment), with Thornhill 9 as its possible cross-head.

Decoration/imagery: The inscription, laid out in four lines divided by horizontal framing lines, is located in a rectangular panel at the bottom of side A (broad). Above the text panel is a busy interlace. The other three sides all have symmetrical interlace patterns created with templates.

Notes: The bottom of the last line is damaged but the inscription seems nearly complete by comparison to other commemorative inscriptions. Both the commemorated and the patron are female, indicating the role of women in commemoration and in the patronage of sculpture. The use of *aræran* instead of *settan* (cf. Thornhill 3 and 4) is uncommon, only paralleled at Overchurch, Cheshire. It may have been chosen to mend the alliteration given the non-alliterating names of the commemorated and the patron. The *bekun on bergi* phrase is likely paralleled on Thornhill 1 and indicates the location of the monument. The interlace patterns suggest connections with Deira and Cumbria.

14.

Name/location: **Thornhill 3** (Western Yorkshire) (CASSS 8: Coatsworth 259–61); Thornhill I in Page, *Introduction*)

Date: Mid-9th century

Script: Runic

Text: **+ .þelbe | ...t:settæfter | reþelwini:or | . [-]**

Reconstruction:

+ Eþelbercht settæ æfter Eþelwini.
Or[a ...]

Translation: [E]þelber[cht] set up (this monument) in memory of Eþelwini. Pray(?)

Monument type: Lower part of cross-shaft (possibly of Thornhill 8)

Decoration/imagery: The inscription is in the lower rectangular panel of side A, in three lines divided by horizontal framing lines. There is evidence of at least one character in the border next to the third line. The panel above the text bears a simple plant scroll. Sides B, C, D are plain except for incised borders.

Notes: Both names in the sponsor formula are masculine, and the common first element (prototheme) suggests that they may have been related. The *becun* formula is missing, but the last two surviving runes may suggest the beginning of a Latin version of the prayer formula (*ora/orate*).

15.

Name/location: **Thornhill 4** (Western Yorkshire) (CASSS 8: Coatsworth 261–62; Thornhill II in Page, *Introduction*)

Date: 9th century

Script: Runic

Text: + **eadred | *seteæfte | eateinne**

Reconstruction: + *Eadred sette æfte Eateinne (?Eadþegn)*.

Translation: Eadred set up (this monument) in memory of Eateinne (?Eadþegn).

Monument type: Part of cross shaft

Decoration/imagery: The inscription, in three lines divided by horizontal framing lines, is located in the lower rectangular panel of side A. The bottom of the frame is missing but the text appears to be complete. Above the inscription there is a symmetrical plantlike interlace with a central stem and outward-facing animals with open jaws, whose bodies form the interlace patterns. Sides B, C, and D are undecorated except for incised borders. Sides C and D are each divided into two panels.

Notes: The asterisk represents a mistake by the carver at the beginning of line 2, or less likely an intentional *i* (*isete* for *gisette*) squeezed in as a correction (Parsons in Coatsworth, *Western Yorkshire* 261; Page, *Introduction* 48). Both recorded names are masculine, with Eadþegn being a possible normalized form for the runic form of the name of the commemorated. It is notable that the inscription contains two rare runic characters, **ea** and **ī** (cf. Parsons, *Recasting* 83–84). The names with the

shared prototheme (albeit modified in the runic form of the second name) conveniently provide alliteration for the line. Other standard elements of the commemorative formula are missing.

16.

Name/location: **Whithorn** (Dumfries and Galloway, formerly Wigtonshire, Scotland) [The monument has multiple numbers: Canmore ID 121890; ECMS Whithorn no. 4 in Allen and Anderson 488–90; Whithorn I in Page, *Introduction*; Whithorn 5 in Craig.]

Date: 10th to 11th century

Script: Runic

Text: **[.]ferþs**

Reconstruction/Translation:

[.]ferþ s[ette] [.]ferth set up (this monument)'; or

[.]ferþs (personal name in genitive for '-ferth's monument' [Page, *Introduction* 144])

Monument type: Cross-slab or headstone

Decoration/imagery: On one broad side there is a plain cross-head with a small central boss; below it a poorly designed interlace with pellets. The back side has a similar cross-head with a smaller central boss and on the shaft a double-strand interlace. The top of the slab and one edge are decorated with key patterns. The now damaged runic inscription is cut in a vertical line along the other edge.

Notes: This almost rectangular cross-slab of the Whithorn School was found built into the wall of a court behind a house. The runic text documents a common second element of a masculine name (-ferþ) but the rest of the damaged inscription is uncertain. The following **s** rune may either indicate the genitive of the name, or it may be the beginning of the next word. If so, it may be a further example of the common sponsor formula *X sette* (Page, *Introduction* 144). Radford and Donaldson (41) take the form as a genitive and boldly suggest the reconstruction *becun Donferþs* 'the monument of Donferth.' If the art-historical dating is correct, this is one of the latest surviving Anglo-Saxon runic monuments (Page, *Introduction* 21).

17.

Name/location: **Wycliffe 1** (Northern Yorkshire) (CASSS 6: Lang 266–69; Okasha, *Hand-List* no. 144)

Date: 8th to early 9th century

Script: Roman (in Anglo-Saxon capitals influenced by insular half-uncial script)

Text: [BADA] | — [T.] | — [EF]TE | [R:BER]E | HT[VINI]: | B[ECUN] | [AFTER..]

Reconstruction:

Bada [sette?] æfter Berehtvini

becun æfter [...].

Translation: Bada (set up) in memory of Berehtvini (this) monument after ...

Monument type: Upper part of cross-shaft with lower cross-arm (fragment)

Decoration/imagery: The inscription in seven lines is located in a framed panel on the only surviving face (A) of the shaft. The bottom of the shaft with the rest of the inscription is broken away. Above the panel, in the remaining cross-arm, is an interlaced knot. The other three faces are plain and chipped.

Notes: The inscription is rather weathered and several parts of the text are damaged. However, the formulaic nature of the memorial inscription can aid us in the reconstruction. The text follows the common pattern of a sponsor plus *becun* formula, with the alliterating names contributing to the poetic feel of the lines. This may have been further enhanced by an alliterating word (with b) in the *becun* formula (as at Dewsbury and Great Urswick). Both Bada and Beorhtwine are attested masculine names in OE. The memorial formula may have been followed by a prayer formula completing the second long-line, but there is no way to tell how much of the shaft is broken away. In its layout the inscription is similar to Lancaster St Mary 1. (Cf. also Whitby 34 that according to Higgitt [“Inscriptions” 53 and in Lang 252] may have been a similar funerary monument with a memorial inscription in roman and runic characters.) It is interesting to note that while the size of the lettering is irregular, the tallest letters are those of the names and of the word *becun*, as if providing visual emphasis to key words (Higgitt in Lang 268).

18.

Name/location: **Yarm 1** (Northern Yorkshire) (CASSS 6: Lang 274–76; Okasha, *Hand-List* no. 145)

Date: First half of 9th century

Script: Roman (in insular half-uncial)

Text: —[PR]— | [M]BE[RE]HC | T+ SĀC+ | ALLA + SI[G]N | VM[A] EFTER | HISBREODERA | [S]S[ETAE]+[:]

Reconstruction:

—[pr]— [m]berekct +sac(erdos)+
Alla + signum æfter his breoder a[s]setæ +

Translation: — [m]berekct + the priest +. Alla set up + (this) monument/
sign in memory of his brother. +

Monument type: Part of cross-shaft

Decoration/imagery: The inscription, in six legible and one damaged lines, inhabits the upper panel of the principal side (A, broad). The top of the panel with an uncertain amount of text is broken away; the stone was reused in the 19th century as a mangle weight. The panel below the inscription shows a four-partite simple pattern loop. Side C is also divided into two panels with a four-partite interlace knot at the top and a cross-shaped, looped design at the bottom. Sides B and D (narrow) are decorated with almost identical scroll-fret patterns with now broken plaits above.

Notes: The bilingual inscription consists of two parts: an OE masculine name and a vernacular memorial text combining a sponsor and a monument formula. By comparison to other vernacular memorial inscriptions, it is unusual in its word order (verb at the end) and in its use of Latin *signum* for OE *becun*. The first name, [-m]berekct, is likely that of the commemorated, and the initial section of the text may have contained a request for prayer ([*ora(te)*] PR[o—]?). The abbreviation SĀC could stand either for Latin *sacerdos* or the equivalent OE loanword *sācerd* ‘priest.’ It is not clear whether it identifies the deceased or Alla, the sponsor of the monument. Its alliteration with *signum* seems to suggest the latter, especially since using the more conventional OE *becun* would have alliterated with *breoder*. The double meaning of the word *signum*, ‘sign, (here) monument’ as well as ‘cross’ (cf. Constantine’s vision; see inscription of Jarrow 16a-b in Cramp, *County Durham* 112–13) is indicated by the preceding + in the inscription. The incised crosses in

the text may have fulfilled a ritual purpose. The last phrase had also been interpreted as *aefter his breodera[s] setae*, with ‘brothers’ in plural, but that would be ungrammatical.

Southern Examples

19.

Name/location: **Winchester Old Minster 6** (Hampshire) (CASSS 4: Tweddle, Biddle, and Kjølbye-Biddle 278–80; Okasha, *Hand-List* no. 138]

Date: Early 11th century

Script: Roman (in Anglo-Saxon capitals)

Text: +HERLI[Ð]G[VNNI:EO]R[LE]SF/E[O]L/AGA

Reconstruction: + *Her lið Gunni : eorles feolaga.*

Translation: Here lies Gunni, the earl’s companion (or: Earl’s companion, cf. Okasha, *Hand-List* 127).

Monument type: Coped grave-cover

Decoration/imagery: Coped recumbent stone of complex geometry; part of a composite monument. Found *in situ* over a male burial (grave 119) together with a small decorated footstone (Winchester Old Minster 2; head-stone missing). It has no decoration but the inscription that runs in a single line lengthwise along the middle of the stone. In its original position the text was to be read from west to east, from head to feet.

Notes: The ‘here lies’ formula is unique for pre-Conquest England but common in the post-Conquest period. (Latin *hic requiescit* appears on Monkwearmouth 5 and Whitchurch 1.) It represents a tradition different from the vernacular memorial inscriptions of the north. The monument type and the layout of the inscription further support this claim. The text shows Scandinavian influence: Gunni is an attested Scandinavian masculine name, the title *eorl* derives from Scandinavian social practice, and OE *feolaga* is the Anglicized version of ON *fēlagi* ‘comrade, companion, partner,’ a word known from commemorative inscriptions on Swedish rune-stones (Page, “How Long” 194; Jesch 234–35; *English Dictionary of Runic Inscriptions*, s.v. ‘fēlagi’). The evidence, archaeological, linguistic and sculptural, points to an early 11th-century date, during the Danish control of the south. The use of OE in this

context is notable, especially in contrast with Winchester St Maurice 1, a contemporary grave-cover with a Norse runic inscription (Tweddle, Biddle, and Kjølbye-Biddle 327–28).

20.

Name/location: **London (Barking) All Hallows 2** (CASSS 4: Tweddle, Biddle, and Kjølbye-Biddle 221–23; Okasha, *Hand-List* no. 87)

Date: 11th century

Script: Roman (in Anglo-Saxon capitals)

Text: —[S]TAN[ǷE]L[V.]RLE[TSE...—F]ER[H/E]R[E]—

Reconstruction: [...] *stan Welvir* (or *Welvar*) *let settan [y/o]fer Here[.]*.

Translation: [...] Welvir had (this) stone set up/raised over Here[.]

Monument type: Cross-head fragment

Decoration/imagery: The badly damaged inscription runs in a circle around the otherwise undecorated cross-head. There are traces of original paint on the lettering and the stone.

Notes: The inscription is incomplete on both ends. Higgitt (in Tweddle, Biddle, and Kjølbye-Biddle 222) relates it to the northern group of memorial inscriptions but Page points to Scandinavian parallels (“How Long” 192; cf. Parsons, “Inscriptions” 79). The text is a sponsor formula naming the deceased and the patron. The reference to the monument as ‘stone’ is unique in Old English but paralleled in Norse runic inscriptions in the British Isles (SC 14 Iona; E 2 London St Paul’s; SH 4 Pabil, SH 6 Eshaness II, OR 18 Skaill; Barnes and Page 342–49) as well as in Scandinavia, where it is normally accompanied by the verb *lagði* ‘laid’ or *reisti* ‘raised’ (as opposed to *settan* ‘set up’). The preposition *yfer/ofer* (instead of *æfter*) appears on Iona (SC 14). As for the monument type, ringed and circle-headed crosses are considered Viking Age influence on Anglo-Saxon sculpture (Bailey, *Viking Age Sculpture* 177–82; *Earliest Sculptors* 83), which further supports the Scandinavian connections and an 11th-century date.

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Monika Kirner-Ludwig

University of Augsburg

No Heroes and Saints without Villains and Misbelievers

Onomasiological and Lexico-Semantic Considerations Regarding Old English Compounds that Put the VIKING into Words

While the title of this volume suggests a major focus on representatives of the generally good, heroic and saintly side as opposed to referents categorized as evil, villainous and infidel, the latter shall actually make the object of this brief study.

From a cognitive-semantic point of view, it is a matter of fact that semantic dichotomies or oppositions such as the lexical set *good* versus *evil* are expressive reflections of an immeasurably complex cognitive conglomeration of what a cultural community classifies as GOOD or EVIL respectively.¹ Conceptual categories as well as the lexemes they can be represented by only acquire their meaning(s) by their standing in relation to and being dependent on other categories and terms that delimit their semantic range. This principle is also the foundation block of lexical field theory (see e.g. Trier), and can thus be promisingly investigated when looking into specific sections of lexico-semantic networks within a vocabulary inventory of a language or any of its varieties.

This paper shall focus on a lexico-semantic field born and expanded during the Anglo-Saxon period exclusively: in the course of the Viking Age in England (787 to ca. 1000 AD),² the given socio-historical factors brought forward a rich number of both morphologically as well as semantically multifaceted terms used in reference to the VIKING, who was perceived as the epitome representative of EVIL throughout

1. Note that capitalized spelling (see also the title of this paper) is used in order to distinguish conceptual categories from lexemes. The latter will be printed in italics, whereas the former shall consistently appear in capital letters. This method follows e.g. Mihatsch and Dvořák, and Kirner.

2. For the detailed presentation of historical events and the individual description of Viking attacks, see Baugh and Cable; Blair, ch. 3; Crystal; Hogg CHEL 1; Hadley 7ff.; and Loyn, ch. 5.

most of the Old English period. By speaking about, labelling and stereotyping this OTHER, the Anglo-Saxon society strengthened its own Christian in-group identity, and was able to create their own heroes and saints rising from the encounters with the exterior enemy. While the Viking Period and its impacts upon both literary motifs as well as English society and language have been the object of numerous studies and monographs (e.g. Ashdown; Loyn; Kershaw; Trafford; Townend, “Viking Age” and *Language and History*; Nelson), the only extensive compilation of both Old English and Anglo-Latin lexical material denoting the VIKING or explicit members of this conceptual category has been assorted by Kirner so far, primarily based on data from the *Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus* (DiPaolo Healey; henceforth DOEC).³

I shall reintroduce all relevant terms and further discuss and sustain this material, whilst exclusively focusing on compounds that display a semantically neutral morpho-semantic makeup within their bases, but have adopted a principally negative connotation as being applied in reference to (members of) the conceptual category VIKING. As shall be shown, all of the terms selected for this study reflect on those conceptual components perceived as being most inherent to what emerged as the stereotypical VIKING in the eyes of the English contemporaries. I am going to argue that the creation of these compounds even has the pragmatic angle of explicitly highlighting and emphasizing the distinct OTHERNESS in the VIKING as irreconcilably opposed to the collective Christian identity of the English, who had to brace themselves against this primary enemy of both life and faith. In other words, the creative addressing of the VIKING ENEMY must be understood as a strategic means of setting off the EVIL OTHER against the GOOD SELF, i.e. distancing the misbeliever from the Christian and the villain from the righteous.

3. The format of all DOEC citations will be retained, e.g. Mald A9 [0012(29)]. In this particular case, the stencil refers to *The Battle of Maldon*, with A9 referring to the Cameron number of this text (A = Poetry, 9 = 9th text catalogued in the DOE Corpus in the category POETRY). Each text contained in the DOEC is divided into passages which can serve as separate citations to be printed as slips and used as illustrative examples in dictionary entries. The number “0012” in our example indicates that this is the twelfth citation excerpted in sequence for the text *The Battle of Maldon*. The number “29” is the relevant line number at the beginning of the citation.

1. Means of Stock-Taking

The lexical material serving for this paper's investigation has been filtered and compiled from various sources to provide a both quantitatively and qualitatively expressive foundation: The *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary* (Kay et al.; henceforth HTOED) was used to evaluate the number and morpho-semantic quality of terms diachronically used to refer to the VIKING (02.07.13.05.05.02.01). All relevant compounds listed by the HTOED for the Old English period, i.e. *æscmann*, *flotmann*, *liþsmann*, *sælida*, *sæmann*, *sæsceaþa*, *sæþēof*, *scegðmann* and *ūtwicing*, as well as further terms partly discussed in Kirner are shown in Table 1. It is noteworthy that the HTOED lists these diachronic terms for 'pirate' in its section 02 *The Mind* and under the subsection 02.07 *Having/possession*, which implies that the composers of this word field regarded the seme [+taking away someone's belongings] as the primary one to the concept of PIRATE and VIKING.⁴ As we shall see, though, the conceptual category VIKING appears to have been much more complex in Anglo-Saxon minds than the modern perspective alone could grasp.

The DOEC was adhered to in order to identify frequencies of use as well as genre- and text-specific tendencies of occurrence for each lexeme and their forms. Both the etymologies and the first occurrences of each item were then additionally sustained by cross-checks in both the print and online versions of the second edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (Simpson and Weiner; henceforth OED, OEDo[nline]) and the *Middle English Dictionary* (McSparran et al., MEDo),⁵ while the latter was particularly consulted to reconfirm the obsolescence of these terms in records dating between the 11th and the 16th centuries. Table 1 has been drawn up to present the relevant Old English compounds to be investigated and their frequencies of occurrence according to the DOEC.

4. Both the lemmata *pirate* and *viking* refer to this one section in the HTOED.

5. Note, of course, that a "primum" or "raw datum" can never be regarded as the first occurrence of a lexeme or its word-form, "no matter how 'primary' a datum may appear" (Koch 82).

OE compound lexemes	Occurrences recorded by the DOEC
æscmann	3
flotmann	14
hæþenmann	0 ⁶
liþsmann, lidmann	1 + 3 = 4
Norð/þmann	3 + 26 = 29 ⁷
norðhere	3
norðsciphere	1
sælida	3
sæmann	10
særinc	2
sæsceaþa	1
sæðeof	0 ⁸
scæ/e(i)gðmann	2
ūtwicing	1
wælwulfas	2
wicingsceaþa	2

Table 1. Census of relevant OE compounds referring to the VIKING

6. Noun phrases consisting of a combination of forms in {hæþen} + {man} can be identified 37 times in the DOEC. The compound *hæðenmann* n., which is listed in Bosworth and Toller (BT), does, however, not occur even once when browsing the DOEC for it. BT only give one single citation, see Lk, Skt. Lind 10, 33.

7. Three relevant forms spelled with a <þ> and 26 forms spelled with an <ð> were identified.

8. The second OED print edition refers to Wright ("Old English Vocabularies" 347, line 26), "Archipiratta, heah sæðeof," c1050.

As can already be seen from the figures displayed in Table 1, most of the compounds identified were rarely used, some even are attested once only. Still, the considerable number of creative compound formations renders it legitimate to take a closer look.

2. What Old English Texts Reveal about the Conceptual Makeup of the VIKING from an Anglo-Saxon Perspective

As the following subchapters shall illustrate, the Old English terms once used extensionally synonymously with reference to the VIKING can quite clearly be allocated to four superordinate and dominant components making up the conceptual category VIKING in terms of 'a Scandinavian sea pirate' in Anglo-Saxon times. That is, firstly, the VIKING's geographical origin from the unspecific but negatively connoted North (see 2.2); secondly, their connection to the sea (see 2.3); thirdly, the violent attitude the Anglo-Saxon population experienced in them (see 2.4) and; lastly, the fact that the VIKING was heathen and ultimately led astray and sent upon the English by the Devil himself.⁹ Unlike the first three aspects mentioned, the latter will not be dealt with in detail on grounds of this paper's necessary limits, but must be thought of as being the actual root of all other negative conceptual components making up the medieval VIKING from an Anglo-Saxon point of view.¹⁰ The lexico-semantic creations we shall concentrate on strategically reflect on all of these attributes.

Before these will be presented and discussed in detail, however, the central term *wicing/viking* must be briefly investigated with regard to its underlying semantic layers, as it shall serve as a springboard for all upcoming considerations.

9. From a NORSE perspective, of course, VIKINGS were not regarded as evil at all, but as brave men who in fact exercised in self-sought expeditions and combats and conducted raids both for their own wealth and for the renown of their kinsmen, which renders this semantic option possible after all. See e.g. the accounts in the *Pórsdrápa* by Eilífr Goðrúnarson and the *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar*, as well as Saxo Grammaticus' descriptions of the VIKING as a traveller and adventurer in his *Gesta Danorum*.

10. This is also apparent in the occurrence of collocative phrases such as *hæþen mann* (cf. Table 1), *hæþen here* or *hæþen leode*. See Kirner for an extensive presentation and discussion of the correlations between the VIKING and heathenism.

2.1. A Few Glimpses into *Wicing/Viking's* Etymological, Semantic and Conceptual Potentials

It should be put ahead of all upcoming deliberations that ModE *viking* is not the direct descendant of OE *wicing*, but a lexeme reborrowed from the Scandinavian inventory in the late 18th, or early 19th century (see Onions 980; OED; Kirner 380). Durkin calls this a “discontinuity in the historical record,” or “separate episodes of use” of OE *wicing* and ModE *viking* (68).

With respect to its possible etymological paths as well as its semantic potentials, OE *wicing* has been discussed by a number of scholars (Askeberg 182; Björkman; de Vries 662f.; Schade 1153). Its coexistence in all Germanic inventories puts etymologists before a puzzle not solved until today. OE *wicing* was long believed to have been borrowed from the ON noun *vikingr*. As Sauer has shown, however, the *Épinal-Erfurt Glossary* lists this lexeme already about one century before the first Viking raids (see de Vries 662; and below),¹¹ which renders “the explanation as a native English formation . . . more likely” (“Old English Words” 154).

It is thus highly probable that *wicing* is to be classified as a suffix derivation from *wic* ‘camp, town’ (Sauer, “Old English Words” 153).¹² The suffix has most probably derived from Gmc. **-inga/*-unga*,¹³ one of the meanings of which is ‘belonging to, coming from, descending from,’ which used to be fairly productive until the Modern English Period (“Old English Words” 153). When adding up these single meanings, *wicing* would denote ‘someone who lives in/comes from a (temporary) camp.’ On the other hand, this neutral meaning of the term as well as the fact that it – or rather its homonym – was even used as a personal name spelled *Wiking*,¹⁴ make it highly improbable that the use of OE *wicing* should have been semantically converted towards the Viking enemy. One should much rather assume a doublet borrowing

11. The OE poem *Widsith* (9th century; see North et al. 91) had long been said to have been the first recorded text to display OE *wicing* (ll. 47, 59, 80).

12. The ODEE lists the lemma as †*wick2*, *wik* ‘dwelling’ (1005). As a lexical free lexeme, *wic* is attested 121 times in the DOEC, which implies its high level of conventionality.

13. See Kluge (12 [par. 23]).

14. The DOEC reveals four instances (see Ch 1474 (Rob 105) B15.5.33 [0003 (9)]; Ch 1531 (Whitelock 31) B15.6.45 [0012 (30)]; Rec 10.2 (Hickes) B16.10.2 [0019 (13.1)]; Rec 10.2 (Hickes) B16.10.2 [0020 (14.1)]).

of the ON term *vikingr* n., which, of course, consisted of the same morpho-semantic building blocks as its West Germanic equivalent *wicing*.

Although the etymological aspects are a major issue when dealing with *wicing*, its actual semantic use as performed in OE texts is of particular importance to this paper, as all compounds to be discussed must be seen in close relation to it. It can verifiably be anticipated that this lexeme is exclusively found in reference to INTRUDERS and ROBBERS, with the most stable semantic features entailed being [+men], [+foreign, out-group] (cf. OE *ūtwicing* n. 'foreign Viking,' *ūt* 'out,' BT 1146; and see below),¹⁵ [+raids] and [+robbing], [+sea] (cf. OE *sæwicing* n. in Ex A1.2 [0098(332)]), [+ships], [+cruel], [+greedy] and [+evil].

A number of medieval glossaries present OE *wicing* as a semantic equivalent to Lat. *pirata*, and in fact, with regard to the semantic features just listed, *wicing* and *pirata* appear to be intensionally synonymous in a cross-language comparison. The only semantic deviation between them is established, for one thing, on grounds of the feature [+heathen], which seems to have been prominent in *wicing* only, and the specifying geo-ethnic seme [+from the North], which was also exclusively inherent to the Scandinavian pirate from a pan-European point of view.

Considering the over-extensive and tendentially undifferentiated use of ModE *viking* today, it may seem surprising that the OE term *wicing* apparently was not common at all. The DOEC does not reveal more than 33 occurrences of {wicing} (i.e. <wicing> and <uicing>), either standing independently or forming part of more complex formations.¹⁶ As shall be shown in the upcoming sections, the OE inventory seems to also have gone for unambiguously vernacular and rather creative formations, which reflect on the central conceptual facets defining the VIKING. It has to be noted at this point, though, that, much more than *Northman* or any other terms to be dealt with in the following, the OE ethnical term *Denisc* adj., n. 'Dane, Danish' was used when referring not only to actual DANES but seemingly also to SCANDINAVIANS in

15. Also see *ūthere*, for which the DOEC gives eight occurrences. All of these are cited from the *C*, *D*, *E* and *F* versions of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and thus from only three annal entries in whole, that is, from 1006, 1009 and, only in *E*, from entry 1048.

16. 31 matches are hereby given for all forms spelt <wicing> and two are provided for the graphemic variant <uicing>, which displays an earlier allo-graphic alternative to <w>. The search for <viking> or <vicing> did not reveal any results. The spelling <wiceng> is found in another three instances. The cluster *wik** occurs 13 times in forms contained in the texts compiled by the DOEC, but none is used in reference to VIKING.

general and, thus, also to VIKINGS. As we will be focusing on compounds, however, the lexical and contextual behavior of OE *Denisc* will not be of further relevance.¹⁷

2.2. Delimiting the MEN FROM THE NORTH from an Anglo-Saxon Point of View

As far as continental European medieval sources tell us, it is generally suggested that the North and all Northern regions were regarded as inherently heathen during the Middle Ages. This attribute was embedded in European people's concept of the NORTH from classical times onwards, based on the continental impression that the North covered geographical spheres one was not familiar with. Vice versa, people from the North were believed not to have access to the civilized, i.e. Christian world, which principally made them "barbarous" and "simple-minded" enough to supposedly fall for false beliefs and thus become a danger to the Christian in-group. A number of medieval texts, amongst them Bible passages, even situate the DEVIL himself into the far North (Fraesdorff 41).¹⁸

One must thus take into account that terms such as *Northmann*, despite their neutral looks, had a high potential of carrying negative connotations in certain contexts. Even when we find them being used in what seems to be a neutral sense, we cannot estimate with certainty to what extent negative connotations were involved.¹⁹ The following

17. See Kirner for an extensive discussion of *Denisc* and its occurrences in medieval texts from England.

18. See e.g. Isa. 14.13f. and Jer. 1.14f.; 6.1. Wulfstan Lupus and Ælfric also refer to this idea.

19. The OE account of the two travellers Wulfstan and Ohthere, for instance, uses the term "Norðmonna" (*Acct. Voy. Ohthere & Wulfstan* in tr. Orosius *Hist.* (BL Add.) I, i, 13, quoted from OEDo [see Bately ll. 29f.]): "Ohthere sæde his hlaforde, Ælfrède cyninge, þæt he ealra Norðmonna norþmest bude." Treharne translates this expression as 'Norwegians' (24f., l. 1), possibly aware of the fact that the corresponding ON term *Norðmaðr* 'Northman' (see e.g. Gunnlaug's saga) existed, too (see e.g. Foot and Quirk 34; de Vries 411), and most certainly was only used in reference to their geographical affiliation. Particularly since the account of the voyages of Ohthere and Wulfstan does not explicitly depict them as cruel, greedy or heathen, a neutral semantic use of this term, i.e. 'men from the North,' may be suggested, but cannot be assumed without any doubt. The same is true for a number of other uses, e.g. in the A-entry for 920 in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (see (1)), which gives a curious display of lexemes, implying a not entirely comprehensible ethnic distinction between the English, the Danish and 'Northmen': "7 to hlaforde

instances, however, are fairly frank with regard to their negative understanding (see (1)):

- (1) 7 on his dagum comon ærest .iii. scyfu Norðmanna of Hæreðalande, 7 þa sæ gerefa þærto rad, 7 hie wolde drifan to þæs cyninges tune þe he nyste hwæt hi wæron, 7 hine man ofsloh þa. Ðæt wæron þa ærestan scifu Dæniscra manna þe on Engelcynnes land gesohton. (BT, quoted from the *D*-version)

And in his (King Brihtric's) days there came for the first time three ships of Northmen and then the reeve rode to them and wished to force them to the king's residence, for he did not know what they were; and they slew him. Those were the first ships of Danish men which came to the land of the English. (Whitelock 35)

In entry 937, the Northmen are mentioned twice and there, too, the negative tone is conspicuous:

- (2) þær geflymed wearð Norðmanna brego, nede gebæded, to lides stefne lytle weorode; (Jebson, quoted from version *B*)

There the prince of the Northmen was put to flight, driven perforce to the prow of his ship with a small company. (Whitelock 70)

That the OE morpheme *Norþ* was and grew more negative in the course of the Viking Period is reflected in the phenomenon of it becoming part of compound nouns also used within the Viking frame, such as *norðhere*, *norþsciphere* and *norþþeod*.²⁰ All of these three formations seem to have been individual creations, never achieving a conventional status, though. *Norðhere* only occurs in one single annal in the *ASC* version *A*, i.e. 909 (see (3)) and was copied unaltered by the scribes of versions *B* and *C*, which date the entry to 910 AD (see (4) and (5)). The tripartite compound *norþsciphere* is also attested in only one single instance (6).

Scotta cyning 7 eall Scotta þeod; 7 Rægnald, 7 Eadulfes suna, 7 ealle þa þe on Norþhymbrum bugeaþ, ægþer ge Englisce, ge Denisce, ge Norþmen, ge oþre; 7 eac Stræcledweala cyning, 7 ealle Stræcledwealas."

20. The noun *norþleode*, however, was restricted to the people of Northern England.

- (3) & þy ilcan gere sende Eadweard cyng firde ægðer ge of Westseaxum ge of Mercum, & heo gehegode swiðe micel on þæm norðhere, ægðer ge on mannum ge on gehwelces cynnes yrfe, & manega men ofslogon þara Deniscena & þær wæron fif wucan inne. (ChronA (Bately) B17.1 [0517 (909.1)])

And that same year King Edward sent an army both from the West Saxons and from the Mercians, and it ravaged very severely the territory of the northern army, both men and all kinds of cattle, and they killed many men of those Danes, and were five weeks there. (Whitelock 61)

- (4) & þy ilcan gere sende Eadweard cing fyrde ægþer ge of Wessexum ge of Myrcum, & heo gehegode swiðe micel on þam norðhere ægþer ge on mannum ge on gehwylcum yrfe, & mænige menn ofslogon þara deniscra & þær wæron V wucan inne. (ChronC (O'Brien O'Keeffe) B17.7 [0448 (910.1.3)]; see (3) for translation)

- (5) & þy ilcan geare sende Eadweard cyning fyrde ægþær ge <of> Westseaxum ge of Myrcum, & he gehegode swyðe mycel on þam norðhere, ægþær ge on mannum ge on <gehwylcum> yrfe, & manege men ofslogon þara Dæniscra, & þær wæron V wucan inne. (ChronD (Cubbin) B17.8 [0431 (910.3)]; see (3) for translation)

- (6) & on þam ylcan geare wæs Suðhamtun forhergod fram scipherige & seo burhwaru mæst ofslegen & gehæft; & þy ilcan geare wæs Tenetland gehegode; & þy ilcan geare wæs Legeceasterscir gehegode fram norðscipherige. (ChronC (O'Brien O'Keeffe) B17.7 [0509 (980.1)])

And in the same year Southampton was sacked by a naval force, and most of the citizens killed or taken captive; and the same year Thanet was ravaged; and the same year Cheshire was ravaged by a northern naval force. (Whitelock 80)

2.3. Distinctly Distinguishing Terms for Distinctively Different Seamen

That the VIKINGS were very much defined by their affiliation to the sea and their remarkable seamanship becomes apparent in a high number of compound nouns created in Old English days. Amongst these are the endocentric compound nouns *sæmann* (*sæ* n. 'sea'),²¹ *særinc* n. (*rinc* n. 'man' [poetical]), *scegðmann* (*scegð* n. 'a light, swift vessel' < ON *skeið* n. <? CGmc. **skaiðan* n. 'ship'; see de Vries 487),²² *liþsmann*/*lidmann* (OE *lid* n. 'vessel, ship'; cf. ON *lið* n. 'ship', *liðs-maðr* 'shipman') and *æscmann* (*æsc* n. 'ash-tree'; cf. ON *askr*). They can be regarded as distinctive terms establishing diversity between the US and the OTHER by referring specifically to VIKINGS instead of 'regular' SEAMEN, which may not only be argued for by the context they are used in, but also by the fact that domestic seamen from England were referred to by a whole different set of lexical items in the OE inventory, e.g. *æglota* (*æg* 'water', *flota* 'vessel, ship'), *reðra* ('oarsman'), *scipman* (see e.g. ASC C, D 1052) or (*scip*)*rowend* ('oarsman, member of a ship's crew').²³

Particularly the compound nouns (*sæ*)*lida*, *sæmann* and *særinc* look like fairly neutral terms insinuating a broad range of extension. For *sæmann* this indeed proves to be true according to BT (811): in Old English times, it would be used both in reference to MEN JOURNEYING ON THE SEA, as well as to VIKINGS in specific. The noun (*sæ*)*lida* (*lida* n. 'a sailor, traveller') is also found in both contexts, but is only recorded in three passages contained in the DOEC, of which only two are relevant to our VIKING-frame (see (7) and (8)).²⁴

- (7) Byrhtnoð . . . him andsware: Gehyrst þu, sælida, hwæt þis folc segeð? (Mald A9 [0015 (42)])

21. The DOEC reveals seven matches for the cluster <sAman>, i.e. *sæman**.

22. The spelling in <þ> is not given as an alternative to <ð> by the DOEC. All seven hits, of which only two display the compound *scegðman**, are given as *scegð**.

23. Ælfric, for instance, in his *Life of Saint Edmund* mentions the noun *æsc* explicitly in connection with the Vikings Hinguar and Hubba (Treharne 146, line 21).

24. The third instance appears in the context of Saint Andreas meeting Jesus and his disciples on a ship: "Ongan ða reordigan rædum snottor, wis on gewitte, wordlocan onspeonn: Næfre ic sælidan selran mette, macræftigran, þæs ðe me þynceð, rowend rofran, rædsnotterran, wordes wisran" (And A2.1 [0146 (469)], 'Never have I met sailors more skilled, rowing more valiantly, acting more sagaciously, speaking more eloquently' [my translation]).

Byrhtnoth . . . gave him answer: ‘Sea raider, can you hear what this army is saying?’ (Scragg 19)

- (8) Þa æt guðe sloh Offa þone sælidan, þæt he on eorðan feoll . . .
(Mald A9 [0093 (285)])

Then in the battle struck Offa the sailor so that the latter dropped on to the earth. (Scragg 31)

The highly rare compound *særinc*, however, was not only exclusively limited to poetic contexts in its use, but also solely used in reference to NORSE SEAMEN, as suggested by the two occurrences the DOEC cites, one in *Beowulf* (see (9)) and the other one in *The Battle of Maldon* (see (10)).

- (9) Hylde hine þa heaþodeor, hleorbolster onfeng eorles andwlitan,
ond hine ymb monig snellic særinc selereste gebeah. (Beo A4.1
[0186 (688)])

Then down the brave man lay with his bolster under his head and his whole company of sea-rovers at rest beside him. (Heaney 47)

- (10) Sende ða se særinc superne gar, þæt gewundod wearð wigena
hlaford; he sceaf þa mid ðam scylde, þæt se sceaft tobærst, and
þæt spere sprengde, þæt hit sprang ongean. (Mald A9 [0046
(134)])

Then the warrior from the sea despatched a spear of southern make / in such a way that the lord of warriors was wounded. / Then he thrust violently with the shield so that the spearshaft fragmented, / and the spearhead vibrated so that it was dislodged. (Scragg 23)

As made explicit by the lexical item *sæ* being included in these endocentric compounds, the association between the person referred to and the SEA can clearly be taken as a given. The extension to VIKINGS must therefore have undergone both a specification as well as a cognitive pejoration process coming hand-in-glove with the negative experience linked with the VIKING. The DOEC all in all provides twelve instances of use for *sæmann*, ten of which are relevant for this investigation (see

again Table 1).²⁵ Three of these can be classified as neutral with respect to their referents, i.e. do not refer to SCANDINAVIANS, but to SEAMEN in the literal sense of its lexical morphemes (Ex A1.2 [0139(477)]; Ex A1.2 [0031(103)]; Ch 1402 (Rob106) B15.3.55 [0001(1)]). In four cases we find a clearly negative and explicit reference and attitude towards VIKINGS: *The Battle of Maldon* contains three of these and unmistakably sets a negative tone due to the battle frame (see (11), (12) and (13)).

- (11) Me sendon to þe sæmen snelle heton ðe secgan þæt þu most sendan raðe beagas wið gebeorge and eow betere is þæt ge þisne garræs mid gafole forgyldon þon we swa hearde <hilde> dælon. (Mald A9 [0012(29)])

Bold seafarers have sent me to you, commanded me to tell you that you must quickly send gold rings in return for protection. And it is better for you all that you should buy off this onslaught of spears with tribute-money than that we should join battle so grievously. (Scragg 19)

- (12) Gyf þu þat gerædest, þe her ricost eart þæt þu þine leoda lysan wille syllan sæmannum on hyra sylfra dom feoh wið freode, and niman frið æt us we willaþ mid þam sceattum us to scype gangan on flot feran, and eow friþes healdan. (Mald A9 [0014(36)])

If you are the richest man here decide that you are willing to ransom your people, willing to give to the seafarers, in an amount determined by them, money in exchange for peace, and to accept protection from us, we are content to embark with the taxes, to set sail across the sea, and to keep the peace with you all. (Scragg 19)

- (13) He bræc þone bordweall and wið þa beornas feaht oðþæt he his sincgyfan on þam sæmannum wurðlice wrec, ær he on wæle lège. (Mald A9 [0090(277)])

25. The occurrence in Wulfstan's *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* has been cited twice, since the DOEC includes two manuscript text versions. LawHL B14.2 [0012(10)] contains the noun *sæmend* 'arbitrator' and thus is irrelevant.

He broke through the shield-wall and fought against the warriors, until on those seamen his treasure-giving lord he nobly avenged, before he lay amongst the slain. (Scragg 29)

Wulfstan's *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* (homily 20) also contains this lexeme in an unambiguously harsh opposition to CHRISTIANS, which suggests that the seme [+heathen] in the VIKING-concept had grown to be particularly prominent:

(14) Oft twegen sæmen, oððe þry hwilum, drifað þa drafe cristenra manna fram sæ to sæ (WHom 20.2 B.2.4.2.B [0037(118)])

Often, two or sometimes three seamen drive droves of Christian men from over the seas. (my translation)

In the *Beowulf* poem we find two further instances of *sæmann*. In one of these cases, though, the term is used as a neutral referring expression with respect to an OBJECT made or used by men from the North (Beo A4.1 [0086(327)]).²⁶ The second instance (Beo A4.1 [0798(2949)]) refers to the SWEDES under Ongentheow from the Geats' perspective and occurs within the battle frame.²⁷ The assumption has been brought forward by some scholars (e.g. Ker; Newton 10; Kirner 465f.) that the *Beowulf* poem may have been produced as late as the 11th century, in the course of measures being taken in order to finally integrate and peacefully merge the Scandinavian immigrants in England into the English population. Such neutrally chosen terms may sustain such interpretative approaches.

Another set of OE compounds entailing the sea-feature can be found in formations containing the OE noun *fl(ē)ot* 'water; sea; floating vessel, ship' (cf. ModE *fleet* n., G *Flotte* n. 'fleet'). There is e.g. the OE compound noun *flotman*, which seems to have been used and perceived as synonymous to Lat. *pirata* and OE *wicing*, as some glossaries attest (see (15) and (16)). We find it four times in *Ælfric's Life of St. Edmund* (ll. 44, 48, 73, 84 in Treharne 146, 148), for example, where the compound *flothere* also occurs (l. 79 in Treharne 148).

26. Heaney (22f., l. 329) translates "sæ-manna searo" as "in a seafarer's stook."

27. Heaney (198f.) gives this instance in line 2954 ("þæt hē sæ-mannum onsacan mihte") and translates "that he could not hold out against that horde of seamen."

(15) *archipirata summus latro* flotman *Archipirata* flotman † wicing.
(AldV 1 (Goossens) C31.1 [3920 (3926)])

(16) *pirata* wicing oððe flotman. (ÆGl B1.9.2 [0273 (302.11)])

The nouns *scegðman* and *lipsmann/lidmann* then also are highly curious examples for ON borrowings or, to be more precise, borrowed free lexical morphemes getting included into vernacular word-formational processes very swiftly. It is certainly due to the high phonemic similarity between the West and North Germanic varieties that the integrative process was smooth in general, but in these particular cases also because they were lexemes particularly connected to a newly experienced, VIKING-associated extralinguistic frame, which needed to be named effectively. Nevertheless, each of these terms seems to have experienced their individual process of integration and conventionalization: The ON noun *liðs-maðr* ‘shipman’ may have been the source for what Gneuss would call a morpheme-by-morpheme loan-translation into OE *lidmann* (31f.). This is, for one thing, suggested by the fact that the compound is almost exclusively used to denote NORSE SEAMEN,²⁸ as in (18) and (19). What is more, the OE nouns *lida* ‘seaman, traveller’ (cf. ON *liði* n.) and *lid* n. ‘ship’ are attested for far too semantically positive uses,²⁹ which renders it improbable that either of these Old English morphemes was actually integrated in *lidmann*, since the latter was highly restricted to its negative extralinguistic referent.³⁰ As the few attestations of this compound noun show,³¹ it seems to only have been common (if common at all) in poetry. On the other hand, the latter suggestion is void for example in (17), where *liðsmen* occurs in the *E*-version of the *ASC*. Here, not even the referent is unmistakably clear, although “þa liðsmen on Lunden” (“the shipmen in London”) are mentioned in immediate syntactic proximity to Harold and his brother Hardacnute, both sons of King Sven “Forkbeard.”

28. BT list one work that presents an exception, i.e. “Liðmonna freá” (*Ulysses*), Bt. Met. Fox 26, 126; Met. 26, 63.

29. See e.g. “On lides bósm” (in the ark’s bosom) in Cd. 67; Th. 80, 21; Gen. 1332: 71; Th. 85, 6; Gen. 1410: Chr. 937; Erl. 112, 27; Aðelst. 27 (all citations from BT).

30. See also “Com þa to lande lidmanna helm swiðmod swymman; sælace gefeah, mægenbyrþenne þara þe he him mid hæfde” (Beo A4.1 [0461 (1623)]).

31. Only three instances are given for *lidm**, and only one for *liðsm**.

- (17) & Leofric eorl & mæst ealle þa þegenas be norðan Temese & þa liðsmen on Lunden gecuron Harold to healdes ealles Englelandes him & his broðer Hardacnute þe wæs on Denemearcon. (ChronE (Irvine) B17.9 [0995 (1036.3)])

And Earl Leofric and almost all thegns of the north of the Thames and the shipmen in London chose Harold to the regency of all England, for himself and for his brother Hardacnut, who was then in Denmark. (Whitelock 102f.)

- (18) Wodon þa wælwulfas for wætere ne murnon, wicinga werod, <west> ofer Pantan, ofer scir wæter scyldas wegong, lidmen to lande linde bæron. (Mald A9 [0032 (96)])

Then the wolves of slaughter rushed forward, they cared nothing for the water; the host of Vikings,³² west across the Blackwater, across the shining stream, they carried their shields, the sailors carried their lime-wood shields on to the land. (Scragg 23)

- (19) To raþe hine gelette lidmanna sum, þa he þæs eorles earm amyrd. (Mald A9 [0056 (164)])

Too quickly one of the seamen prevented him, when he disabled the earl's arm. (Scragg 25)

In the case of *scegðmann*, we also find that its use is highly limited to VIKINGS and DANES. The DOEC provides two glossary examples which confirm this and even suggest that *scegðmann* was one of the most conventional terms to refer to VIKINGS (see (20) and (21); see also Table 1).

32. Scragg's translation implying that "wicinga werod" may also be understood as a postmodification of "wætere" is highly misleading (although a reference to the sea as the "host of Vikings" would affirm the strong conceptual linkage between VIKINGS and the ocean, which I am advocating as a stereotypical feature inherent to the concept of VIKING in this paper). The phrase "wicinga werod" must of course be interpreted as an appositive to "wælwulfas," i.e. "Then the wolves of slaughter rushed forward, they cared nothing for the water, these Viking people." When rendered like this, the noun phrase "wicinga werod" may – apart from syllabically completing the line – even be seen as a lexical means of clarifying the highly rare wording "wælwulfas."

(20) Ða naman, þe geendiað on a . . . synd hi *MASCVLINI GENERIS* [Those words that end in -a . . . are masculine with regard to their gender]: *nauta* reðra; *pirata* wicing oððe scegðman; . . . ; *ET CETERA*. (ÆGram B1.9.1 [0190 (24.4)])

(21) *Pirata † piraticus † cilex* wicing † scegðman (AntGl 2 (Kindschi) D1.2 [0252 (252)])

BT even render its sense “A member of the crew of a scegð, a Dane, a pirate” (emphasis in the original), stating what can also be confirmed by attestations gathered in the DOEC, namely that the OE simplex *scegð* n. ‘vessel, light ship’ was mostly found in Viking and war contexts (see e.g. (22)).³³ Moreover, it is likely that *scegð* n. was individually borrowed into Old English, before it formed the compound *scegðmann*. What is additionally noteworthy is that the latter remained the only compound containing *scegð* n. in the OE inventory altogether, which again suggests its high associative restrictedness to the VIKING frame. Possibly, this was enhanced by the fact that *scegð* was pronounced with the typically Norse cluster /sk/ instead of the common Old English palatalized /ʃ/.

(22) Her behead se cyng þet man sceolde ofer eall Angelcynn scipu feastlice wircean, þet is þonne <of> þrym hund hidum & of X hidon ænne scegð . . . (CIgl 1 (Stryker) D8.1 0811 (1008.1)])

In this year the king ordered that ships should be built unremittingly over all England, namely a warship from 310 hides. (Whitelock 88)

2.4. Reflecting on One’s Own Righteousness by Emphasizing the VIKING’s Villainy

A compound which perfectly bridges the gap between the classificational criterion SEA on the one hand and the principal and fundamental VILLAINY of the VIKING on the other can be found in *æscman* n.: It responds to only three instances contained by the DOEC when

33. Further examples are given by the DOEC, e.g. in *ASC C, E, F* 1008, ChronE (Irvine) B17.9 [0811 (1008.1)]; ChronC (O’Brien O’Keeffe) B17.7 [0596 (1008.1)]; ChronF (Baker) B17.3 [0448 (1008.1)].

browsing for the cluster *æscma/en**, two of which seem relevant to our case (see (23) and (24)).³⁴

(23) Þa æfter þam þa giet þæs ilcan hærfestes gegadorode micel here hine of Eastenglum ægþer ge þæs landheres ge þara wicinga þe hie him to fultume aspanen hæfdon & þohton þæt hie sceoldon gewrecan hira teonan & foron to Mældune & ymbsæton þa burg & fuhton þæron oþ þam burgwarum com mara fultum to utan to helpe, & forlet se here þa burg & for fram; & þa foron þa men æfter ut of þære byrig & eac þa þe him utan comon to fultume & gefliemdon þone here & ofslogon hira monig hund ægþer ge æscmanna ge oþerra. (ChronA (Bately) B17.1 [0552 (917.42)])

Then after that, still in the same autumn, a great army from East Anglia collected, consisting both of the army of the district and of the Vikings whom they had enticed to their assistance, and they intended to avenge their injury. And they went to Maldon and besieged the borough and attacked it until more troops came to the help of the citizens from outside; and the army left the borough and went away. Then the men from the borough, and also those who had come to their assistance from outside, went out after them and put the army to flight, and killed many hundreds of them, both of the shipmen and of the others. (Whitelock 65f.)

(24) *Piratici* wicingsceaþan, sæsceaþan, æscmen. (CIgI 1 (Stryker) D8.1 [4814 (4836)])

The noun *æsc* used to entail a wide extensional range, not only denoting a certain kind of TREE and the rune symbol <F> (cf. <æ>), but also metonymically used to name ITEMS MADE OF WOOD. One referent which thus occasionally came to be referred to by the term *æsc* was a specific kind of small and light SHIP, mostly connected with vessels carrying DANISH VIKINGS (see ASC A 896 / B, C, D 897):

34. The third instance quotes Charta 1269 in Birch vol. 3: “Ðis synt þara X hyda landgemæra æt Stoce þat is þonne ærest of ðære hyðe andlang streames æt æscmannes yre & swa forð on midde weardne stream þhit cymð on <brunnan>” (Ch 781 (Birch 1269) B15.8.397 [0001 (1)]). What appears as a translation problem from the text given by the DOEC can fortunately be solved by consulting Birch’s print edition, as the latter capitalizes “æscmannes,” i.e. “Æscmannes” and thus identifies it as a personal name. This charter being dated to 970 AD, it is possible indeed that the person referred to may have been of Scandinavian origin.

- (25) Ða het Ælfred cyng timbran langscipu ongen ða æscas. (Jebson, quoted from version A)

Then King Alfred had “long ships” [sic] built to oppose the Danish warships. (Whitelock 57)

Not only a wooden vessel on the sea could be meant by *æsc* and respective formations, but also spears being made of wood were being referred to (see (26)). By thus opening up the warrior-frame, this associative link must have triggered the formation of the compound *æsc-man*, which came to be used in exclusively negative reference to the DANES (also cf. *ASC A 917*) and reflected visualizingly on the VIKING primarily encountered as a roaring WARRIOR.

- (26) Swa ic Hringdena hund missera weold under wolcnum ond hig wigge <beleac> manigum mægþa geond þysne <middangeard>, æscum ond ecgum, þæt ic me ænigne under swegles begong gesacan ne tealde. (Beo A4.1 [0499 (1769)])

Just so I ruled the Ring Danes’ country for fifty years, defended them in wartime with spear and sword against constant assaults by many tribes: I came to believe my enemies had faded from the face of earth. (Heaney 121)

The cruelty and harm coming with the VIKING under arms also becomes visible in a number of compounds addressing this particular feature even more explicitly. The so-called *Épinal-Erfurt Glossary* (c.700; Pfeifer; see also Sauer, “Old English Words”; “Archbishops”) does not only list a respective compound, but it is also very possible that this is even the oldest recorded mention of the lexical morpheme {wicing} in Old English altogether.³⁵ The copula compound *uicing-sceada* can be translated ‘viking-criminal’ (< OE *sceaða* n. ‘enemy, warrior’; cf. *sæsceada* (29)) or possibly even ‘harm, damage which has been done by vikings,’ according to OE *sceaðe* n. ‘crime, harm’ (“Old English Words” 159; “Archbishops” 390, “evildoer”) and was chosen by a glossator to render Lat. “piraticum” adj. ‘pertaining to pirates’ (“Old

35. Also, *flotman* is listed by the *Épinal-Erfurt Glossary*, which, as Sauer observes (“Archbishops” 402), matches the entry “wicing oððe flotmann” as renditions of Lat. *pirata* in *Ælfric’s Glossary*.

English Words” 132, 138).³⁶ According to Sauer, this is an example for “a Latin word or phrase [being] rendered by an Old English word or phrase that replaces the classical concept with a native concept” (124), and this is true when we accept that both Lat. *pirata* n. (< AGk. *πειρατής* n.) and its derivative *piraticus* adj. contained the essential semantic features [+men], [+raids], [+sea], [+ships], [+cruel],³⁷ [+greedy], etc. and had maintained both the neutral and the negative features to this day (cf. ModE *pirate* n.). The formation “uucingsceadan” (see (27) and (28)), however, does not hold these connotative features on an implicit level, but actually and explicitly renders the ‘harm done by vikings’ un-blanked.³⁸ This translation of Lat. *piraticum* thus must be regarded as an expressive display of conceptual features the glossator understood from and associated with the Latin word before him.

(27) *piraticum* uucingsceadan. (EpGl (Pheifer) D7 [0598 (598)])

(28) *piraticam* uucingsceadae. (ErfGl 1 (Pheifer) D36.1 [0709 (736)])

The high degree of synonymy or conceptual-semantic association between the VIKING, the sea, and the harm done by the Viking enemy is also expressed by glossary entries such as the following, which presents us with the only attestation of *sæsceaþ*. It contains the same second component as *uucing-sceada* and immediately follows it in one and the same entry:

(29) Piratici wicingsceaþan, sæsceaþan, æscmen. (ClGl 1 (Stryker) D8.1 [4814 (4836)])

36. As Pheifer’s edited text displays, the Épinal glossator wrote “uucing-sceadan,” whereas the Erfurt scribe rendered Lat. “piraticam” as “uucingsceadae” (39).

37. Particularly the feature [+cruel] must be considered one of the most deeply inherent attributes associated with MEN FROM THE NORTH, as Fraesdorff (42, fns. 35 and 36) showed by adhering to examples from the Bible (e.g. Ezek. 9.2, Dan. 11.40).

38. At this point a comment concerning the concept of the PIRATE should also be inserted, as it did actually not shift with regard to its semantic features but only to its referents: Not only were French and Italian coasts ravaged by Saracen sea raiders in the 9th and 10th centuries, but most strikingly we find a shift of viewpoint in a number of references to “piratae Angliæ” ‘pirates from England’ (Flórez 20: 133f.) raiding Spain’s coasts during the 11th century (Metlitzki 125). At the beginning of the 17th century, Captain John Smith for instance picks up the issue of English pirates and “how they taught the Turks and Moores to become men of warre” (Chapter xxviii, Arber and Bradley 2: 913–16).

Matching the conceptual feature [+rob] inherent to the VIKING, a number of collocative phrases and quasi-compound formations contain the lexical morpheme *hloþ* n. ‘crew of robbers, gang; prey, booty,’ as in *hloþhere* (*here* n. ‘army, troop’; e.g. in Bede 4 B9.6.6 [0662 (27.360.5)]).³⁹ The noun *hloþ* also does occur within the VIKING-frame, conjoining with *wicing* (see (30)).

- (30) & þy geare gegadrode on hloþ wicenga & gesæt æt Fullanhamme be Temese. (ChronA (Bately) B17.1 [0383 (879.2)]; see also the *C*, *D* and *E*-versions of the *ASC*)

in that year a gang of vikings assembled at Fulham by the River Thames. (my translation)

Having mentioned that the use of OE *wicing* was not at all as frequent as one would think and had ceased by the middle of the 12th century altogether, it is noteworthy that one of the youngest attestations of the term occurs in annal 1098 of the *E*-version of the *ASC*, displaying it as part of another compound (see (31)). It is, by the way, the only citation provided by the DOEC in response to *utwi** and does remarkably show a spelling in <k>, which, as suggested above, had usually been avoided for *wicing*.

- (31) & Hugo eorl wearð ofslagen innan Anglesege fram *utwikingan*, & his broðer Rodbert wearð his yrfenuma, swa swa he hit æt þam cyngre ofeode. (ChronE (Irvine) B17.9 [1551 (1098.7)]; emphasis added).

And Earl Hugh was killed in Anglesey by sea-rovers, and his brother became his heir, even as he obtained it from the king. (Whitelock 175)

Apart from compounds in {*wicing*} and other Old English morphemes already discussed, we find a small number of further terms coined for particular use in reference to the VILLAINOUS VIKING INVADERS.

39. The DOEC all in all gives 64 matches, 27 of which respond to <hloþ>, 37 to <hloð>. The hits include *hloþ/ð* both as simplex forms as well as component in compounds, such as *hloþslyhte* (LawAfRb B14.4.1 [0024 (29)]). In 14 cases, which partly represent duplicated token numbers due to sources being provided for each of the divergent spellings, *hloþ/ð* forms part of the personal name *Hloðwig* (e.g. in ChronD (Cubbin) B17.8 [0320 (885.23)]).

Among the relevant ones is e.g. *wælwulfas* ‘slaughter wolves,’ which, however, is only recorded in two instances (see DOEC; see also (18) above), namely in the Old English *Andreas* in the *Vercelli Book* (And A2.1 [0050(147)]) as well as in *The Battle of Maldon* poem (Mald A9 [0032(96)]; see also Tyler 238). But even if this compound is not quantitatively substantial at all either, it is highly complex from a semantic point of view. For one thing, it is a creative kenning drawing a fairly dramatic picture of the Viking enemy in the first place, with the second component *wulf* referring to their monstrous strength (cf. *Beo-wulf*). What is more, we face a curious pun regarding its first morpheme {wæł}: The Old English lexical inventory contained two homonyms, one of which bore the primary senses ‘slaughter, death, carnage; destruction,’ whilst the other one denoted ‘deep pools, gorges’ or the ‘sea.’ Both lexemes and their senses thus fit the basic stereotypical makeup of the VIKING, which makes a clear siding with either one of them difficult. In fact, it is very likely that the composer of the poem was making use of both denotations in order to pose a linguistic joke through ambiguity or, much rather, the sum of both senses all being true for the VIKING.

3. Conclusion: Reconfirming One’s In-Group Identity by Linguistically Pointing out the VIKING’s Otherness

As much as the villain is the essential component of any (tragic) hero’s story – in the particular frame this paper is based upon we may for instance think of Saint Edmund freely choosing his death, forced on him by the two villain Vikings Hinguar and Hubba, or, more generally, the evil VIKING attacking the ENGLISH CHRISTIAN for greed alone – so does a language’s lexical inventory reflect on such conceptual dichotomies by terms standing in oppositional semantic relations to each other.

The Old English conceptual segment and its linguistic representations we have looked into give a remarkable display of a number of extensionally synonymous and partly even intensionally congruent formations all used to refer to the – at first glance – incomplementarily different VIKING ENEMY from an Anglo-Saxon perspective. Particularly glossary entries (see (15), (16), (21) and (24)) show how high the level of intensional synonymy must have been perceived between many of these terms, too. Nevertheless, each of them highlighted specific conceptual features and emphasized individual features stereotypically inherent in the VIKING.

At the same time, the number of counted occurrences of most of the compounds discussed was highly scarce (see Table 1 above), with the formations *norðsciphere*, *sæsceaþa* and *ūtwicing* being *hapax legomena* altogether. The most frequent compounds then are the ones reflecting on rather neutral features of the VIKING, referring to their skills as sailors (*flotmann*: 14 occurrences), their general affiliation to the sea (*sæmann*: 10 occurrences) and their geographical situation in the North (*Norð/þmann*: 29 occurrences), the negative connotation of which cannot in the least be estimated.

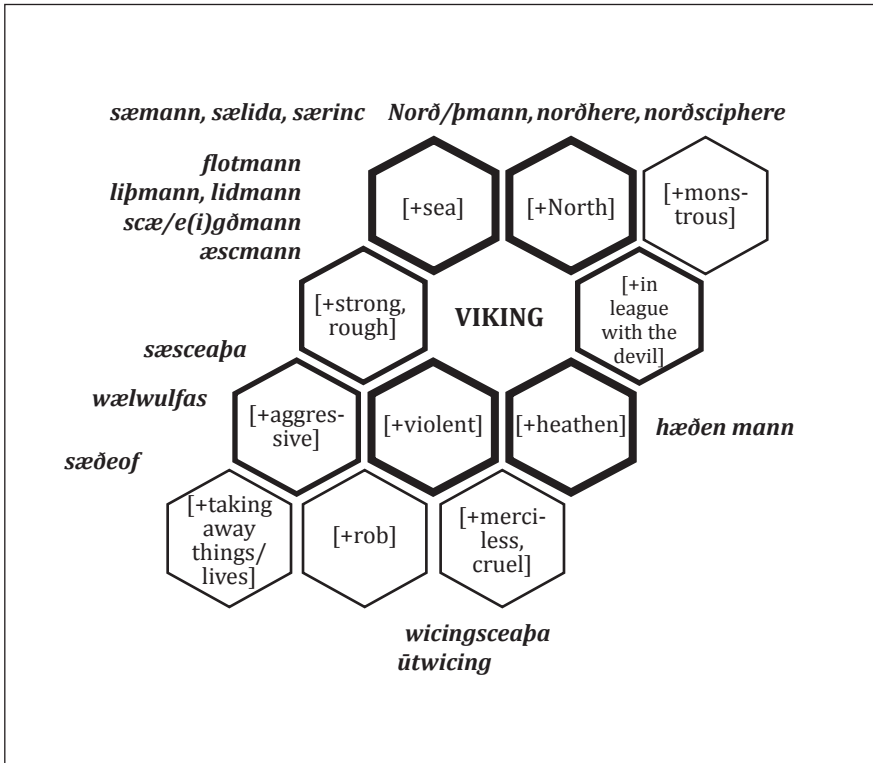


Figure 1. Onomasiological and semasiological relations between OE VIKING-compounds and the conceptual category they represent

Nevertheless, the relatively high variety of figurative formations does reflect on the felt need to put the VIKING into words and to describe them by highlighting their most central stereotypical features (see Figure 1). This also leads us to the pragmatic force of using such metaphorical references within the in-group of equals, as this must have been highly efficient with regard to building up and strengthening the common

Anglo-Saxon Christian identity, which definitely needed invigoration in the face of a brutal and heathen enemy sent by the devil himself.

However, as insinuated with regard to the above-mentioned incompleteness between the ANGLO-SAXON SELF and the VIKING OTHER, one must acknowledge that the latter cannot have been seen as a negative counter-category exclusively. This is suggested, for one thing, by the fact that the VIKING was much more often referred to by simple forms like *Dane* or *Danish* and compounds such as *flotmann*, *sæmann* and *Norð/þmann* than by actual semantically strong vocabulary like *sæsceaþa*, *sæðeof* or *wicingsceaþa* (2 occurrences) or *wæl-wulfas* (2 occurrences). Also, the very specific noun *wicing* seems to have been rather rare in use, being on a similarly frequential par with *Norðmann*. What is more, some of the Old English text passages discussed in this paper and the created compounds themselves do highlight positive and also admirable facets as well, such as the VIKING's expertise in shipbuilding, sailing and strength in combat.

OE compound lexemes	Attested ME form	ModE form
<i>æscmann</i>	†	†
<i>flotmann</i>	†	†
<i>liþsmann, lidmann</i>	†	†
<i>Norð/þmann</i>	† [<i>Norman</i> ₄₀]	<i>Northman</i> [<i>Norman</i>]
<i>norðhere</i>	†	†
<i>norðsciphere</i>	†	†
<i>sælida</i>	†	†
<i>sæmann</i>	<i>see man</i> ₄₁	<i>seaman</i>
<i>særinc</i>	†	†
<i>sæsceaþa</i>	†	†

40. The OED gives the first attested occurrence of Norman in Layamon's *Brut* (c.1205), line 7116. It has been in continuous use since.

41. See e.g. *Lazamon's Brut* l. 584 (Barron and Weinberg 32; Wright, "Political Poems" 2: 166).

<i>sæþēof</i>	<i>see þeue</i> ⁴²	<i>sea-thief</i>
<i>scæ/e(i)gðmann</i>	†	†
<i>ūtwicing</i>	†	†
<i>wælwulfas</i>	†	†
<i>wicingsceaþa</i>	†	†

Table 2. Diachronic (dis)continuities in the occurrence of VIKING-terminology

Morpho-semantically motivated creations such as the compounds under focus in this paper not only grant revealing insights into the cognitive make-up of the conceptual category VIKING in OE and eME times, but also serve to sketch or delimit the period of its conceptual relevance. In fact, the attestations of lexical creations suggest that our compound material discussed here clearly sprang from historical breeding grounds – and faded again when that soil dried out for good. When the VIKING ceased to exist by the end of the Anglo-Saxon period, not only was the OE noun/adjective *wicing* dropped completely, but so was the entire set of creative compounds once arisen with the VIKINGS’ appearance and gain of their socio-political relevance in England (see Table 2).

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42. See e.g. Babington and Lumby (1: 173; 6: 415).

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László Kristó

Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Piliscsaba

English Place-Names Unknown Heroes in the Story of Closed Syllable Shortening?

The aim of the present essay is to examine the relevance of English place-names to an issue I discussed in some of my previous works, viz. the question whether the so-called “Pre-Cluster Shortening,” a.k.a. “Closed Syllable Shortening,” was a genuine phonological change characterizing the transition from Old to Middle English. I argued that it was not: instead, the shortening was but a “side-effect” of the ongoing lexicalization of a range of items. In the past few years I have found no reason to change my mind, and I shall now present further evidence to support my earlier claim: the evidence of place-names in England.

This paper consists of two parts. Section 1 presents a brief overview of the problem – without, however, going into details; the reader is referred to Kristó (ch. 6.) for the specifics. In Section 2, I shall present the phonological evidence provided by place-names in England, based on Ekwall.

1. “Closed Syllable Shortening” (or “Pre-Cluster Shortening”)

It is a standard assumption in the literature that Old English (OE) had long vowels before certain consonant clusters (specifically, before those that made a closed syllable),¹ and that such long vowels were shortened in early Middle English (ME). The most spectacular examples – visible up to the present – include the Preterite forms of several

1. Hence the two different names, which, however, have different implications. “Pre-Cluster Shortening” suggests that the shortening is due to a consonant cluster, while “Closed Syllable Shortening” implies that it is the closed nature of the syllable that counts. There are (at least apparent) problems with both terms, but I prefer “Closed Syllable Shortening” on the whole, and I shall use that term from now on, abbreviated as CSS. At any rate, this question is not really relevant for our present purposes.

irregular weak verbs such as *keep*, whose Preterite form is *kept*, where the Infinitive form points to a historically long vowel, but the Preterite form can be derived from a short one. But how do we know that this modern difference is due to a sound change operating between OE and ME?

Crucially, the relevant information is provided by ME (and Modern English), rather than OE. The reason is that OE orthography did not indicate vowel length: for example, it has been accepted that *kept* had a long vowel in OE, which shortened in ME. The long vowel is assumed on the basis of (i) etymology, (ii) post-OE shortness. Neither of these, however, betrays anything about the length of the vowel in *kept* in OE itself – indeed, it may have been shortened by the time of our earliest OE texts! This is because most of the *shortened* long vowels of OE (all non-low ones, in fact) merge with their *originally* short counterparts no matter whether the shortening takes place in OE or ME. Compare *kept* (< \bar{e}) and *bed* (< e), *gosling* (< \bar{o}) and *god* (< o), *dust* (< \bar{u}) and *lust* (< u), etc.

The clue is, in fact, provided by those items which had an etymological *low* long vowel, i.e. \bar{a} , \bar{x} , or $\bar{e}a$. The diphthong $\bar{e}a$ develops in the same way as \bar{x} , so I shall not treat it separately.² In Late OE, then, we have \bar{x} and \bar{a} , both of which undergo raising (to mid-low position) by ME (and \bar{a} also becomes rounded), yielding ME (IPA) $\epsilon\text{:}$ and $\text{ɔ}\text{:}$, respectively (I shall simply denote them as \bar{e} and \bar{o}). Examples include OE *lædan* ‘to lead’ > ME *lēden* and OE *stān* ‘stone’ > ME *stōn*, etc. The latter change did not take place in Northumbria, where ‘stone’ appears as ME *stān* (cf. Scots *stain*). From now on, I shall refer to these vowel changes – collectively – as “Low Long Raising” (LLR). The important point is that LLR is one of the traditionally accepted defining changes separating OE from ME (at least in terms of the phonology of vowels). In practical terms, then, it is safe to claim that anything that happens *before* LLR is datable to OE, but anything that takes place *after* LLR is a ME event.³

In order to see why this is relevant for vowel shortening (or lengthening, too, for that matter, but that is not our concern here), let us mention what happens to the short low vowels of OE. These are \bar{x} (as in *pæþ* ‘path’), a (as in *catt* ‘cat’) and the “short diphthong” ea (as in *feorh* ‘hog’); they all merge in ME a , cf. *path*, *cat*, *farrow*. I shall call

2. For example, *clean* (= OE \bar{x}) has the same vowel as *dream* (= OE $\bar{d}ream$).

3. For the shortening/lengthening processes of OE and ME, see Lass (par. 10.4) or Mossé (par. 18–22), for example.

this change “Low Short Merger” (LSM) in this paper. Along with LLR, this is another defining change marking the transition from OE to ME: any form which shows the result of LLR or LSM is taken to be post-OE. This is extremely important, because if (and only if) a long low vowel – either OE \bar{a} or \bar{a} – shortens before the end of the OE period, i.e. before LLR/LSM occur, the resulting short vowel will undergo LSM and yield ME a . If, however, the shortening is datable to ME (i.e. after LLR/LSM), the long low vowel will undergo LLR first (yielding ME \bar{e}/\bar{o}), followed by shortening, resulting in ME short e/o , merging with OE e/o . To make things clear, a relative chronological summary is provided in (1) below.

(1) Shortening compared to LLR/LSM (N/A = not applicable)

	Input	Early (OE) Shortening	LLR/LSM	Late (ME) Shortening	Output
A	\bar{a}	a	a	N/A	a^1
	$\bar{æ}$	$æ$			
B	\bar{a}	N/A	\bar{o}	o	o^2
	$\bar{æ}$	N/A	\bar{e}	e	e^3

Notes concerning the “Output” column:

- 1 = merges with OE inherited short $\bar{æ}/a/ea$
- 2 = merges with OE inherited short o
- 3 = merges with OE inherited short e

As the reader can see, there are two possible relative chronologies, shown as **A** and **B** in the above table. As far as Closed Syllable Shortening (CSS) is concerned, the relevant question is whether it follows the scenario of **A** (in which case it is an OE change) or that of **B** (in which case it is a ME development). To illustrate the point, let us take another shortening process, known as Trisyllabic Shortening (TSL), which can be illustrated with the word *holiday* < OE *hāligdæg*: it is clear that TSL follows path **B**, i.e. $\bar{a} > \bar{o} > o$. This fact places TSL in the ME period.

To sum up, if CSS is a ME quantitative change (and that is how it has traditionally been described), it should follow the scenario in **B**. However, this is not the case: there are many items which follow path **A** (in fact, there might be more of them than those which follow **B**),

and there are some items which have variant forms in ME. Let us see a couple of examples:

(2) Examples of early (OE) and late (ME) CSS

(a) Early CSS (Path A)

For original æ :

OE *bræmbblas* > *brambles* **B** would give ***brembles*

OE *fætt* > *fat* **B** would give ***fet*

For original ā :

OE *āscian* > *ask* **B** would give ***ōsk*

OE *tāhte* > *taught* **B** would give ***tought*

(b) Late CSS (Path B):

For original æ :

OE *lædde* > *led* **A** would give ***lad* (but see below)

OE *læfde* > *left* (verb) **A** would give ***laft* (but see below)

For original ā :

???

As the reader can see, æ shortens early in some items, but late in others; as far as ā is concerned, I have found no clear example of late shortening (i.e. **B**)! Furthermore, the forms with æ showing late shortening often have variants exhibiting early shortening in ME texts. Besides ME *ledde*, *left*, for example, we find *ladde*, *laft*, too; further such variants include *wrappe/wreppe* 'wrath' < OE *wræþþu*, *lafdi/levdi* 'lady' < OE *hlæfdige*, etc.⁴

Well, it is all right, the gentle reader might say, but why is this so important? Instead of saying that CSS was an early ME sound change, we could say it had started in OE already, and it operated for several centuries. This stance would still not disqualify CSS as a phonological change. Things, however, are not that simple.

First, the pattern described above does certainly disqualify CSS as a sound change in the strict Neogrammarian sense: the change affects lexical items gradually, one by one, often producing variation, which is characteristic of lexically diffuse changes rather than Neogrammarian-type sound laws.

4. The ME data are taken from Mossé.

Second, all clear instances of late (ME, i.e. **B**-type) CSS are items which are morphologically complex, and the consonant cluster in question straddles a morphological boundary – this is the case in the Preterite forms of Class I weak verbs: OE *cēpte* ‘kept’ is *cēp#te*, *lǣfde* = *lǣf#de*, etc., where the “#” indicates a strong (“regular, productive”) morphological boundary. However, Class I of weak verbs gradually loses its regular, productive nature, and its members become lexicalized (so basically irregular, e.g. *kept*, *left*) or join Class II (e.g. *deemed*). Lexicalization leads to the loss of compositionality (the morphological boundary is weakened or even lost), and the phonology will treat lexicalized items in the same way as monomorphemic ones as far as phonotactics is concerned. This is where we arrive at an essential point: if we say that CSS is a phonological change between OE and ME, we imply that the two stages of the language differed in an important phonological way: OE did have long vowels in closed syllables, but CSS eliminated them, and ME did no longer have long vowels in closed syllables (i.e. superheavy syllables). The point I made in Kristó (*Restructuring*) is this: OE did not have superheavy syllables, either: the examples are only apparent (due to their morphological complexity). CSS takes place upon the loss of compositionality, i.e. it is but a side-effect. Old and Middle English are not different in principle. The issue, of course, is quite complex, but I do not wish to go into details here; the interested reader is referred to Kristó (ch. 6.) for detailed arguments.

What is genuinely important for us is that compounds frequently follow the same development: they easily become lexicalized. The OE word *hlǣfdige* ‘lady’, for example, was born as a compound (= *hlǣf#dǣge* ‘bread-kneader’). Its meaning, however, soon became lexicalized (unpredictable from the meaning of the two elements), and the loss of semantic compositionality resulted in the weakening and ultimate loss of morphological compositionality. The phonological makeup followed suit: the second element lost its stress, so its *ǣ* was reduced, yielding *dige* (this is the stage we find in recorded OE); the vowel of the first element was shortened before the consonant cluster *fd* – and, finally, this cluster itself was simplified.⁵

The discussion of compounds leads us to Section 2: English place-names and what they tell us about Closed Syllable Shortening.

5. To give a much later example, consider the pronunciation [ˈweskət] of the word *waistcoat* – it shows basically the same kind of changes as *lady*. Were it not for the spelling, no one would ever think of the word as a compound (indeed, the variant [ˈweɪstkəʊt] is a spelling pronunciation).

2. English Place-Names and Closed Syllable Shortening

2.1. Introduction: Why are Place-Names Important?

Place-names are very often compounds in origin, describing the type of settlement as well as its special characteristic features (or the person/tribe/etc. the place was named after). The English town of Oxford is a telling one, but the more recent Jamestown (Virginia) is quite clear, too. They are, as compounds, very special in the same way as proper names generally are, pragmatically speaking. Notably, they have no meaning: instead, they have reference. Even if a proper name is a word which has a meaning as a common (non-proper) name, this meaning is irrelevant for the proper name itself. The English noun *smith*, for instance, does have a meaning, but when used as a surname (= *Smith*), its *raison d'être* is to refer to a certain person – who may not be a smith at all. The same goes for place-names: Oxford *was* named so because of a ford and oxen; but once it was named, its name came to be used to refer to a settlement. Indeed, it is still called so, although both the ford and the oxen are long gone (the London street name *Haymarket* is another spectacular example)!

So far, this sounds trivial (maybe even funnily so), but it has a serious consequence: *proper names are lexicalized* very fast – so fast indeed, that we may regard them as lexicalized items the moment they are created. The word *Oxford* – once used to refer to a specific place – is no longer used in the sense of ‘any ford where oxen are driven through a river.’ Lexicalization may result in loss of compositionality, which, in turn, will typically be reflected in the phonological makeup of the item. The second syllable of the compound word *ox#ford*, for instance, is stressed (cf. *black#bird*); as the name of the English town, however, the loss of compositionality has led to its being unstressed. The same can be said about OE place-names. The OE compound *hām#tūn*, for instance, “ought” to yield modern *home#town*, but as a place-name, it yields *hampton* (as in *Northampton*). Note the following: (i) the element *tūn* loses its stress, (ii) the long *ā* of *hām* is shortened before the following consonant cluster, and (iii) a *p* is inserted in order to eliminate the monomorphemically illicit cluster *mt* (the same happened in the word *empty*, for instance, to give a non-proper name as an example). Place-names, then, are important for us because they are by nature lexicalized items, and if the view I have expressed in Section 1 about CSS is correct, they should provide ample evidence for it.

2.2. English Place-Names

Before setting out to discuss place-names, we should delimit our scope of investigation. First, by “English” place-names I mean settlement names in England; English-language place-names outside that country will not be considered. Second, I shall limit the discussion to place-names of native OE origin, leaving out Celtic as well as Scandinavian borrowings. Celtic place-names are quite rare on the whole inside England (except for the South-West); Scandinavian ones are numerous, but then, they would add undesirable complexity to the discussion. Third, I shall – for obvious reasons – concentrate on place-name elements which contain OE *ā* or *ǣ/ĕa*; as mentioned above, other vowels do not contribute to our understanding of the dating of CSS.⁶ Finally, I shall only list those elements which appear as independent OE entries in Ekwall.

It must be emphasized that the present section does not aim at exhaustivity. Indeed, it serves the purpose of illustrating the point. A thorough study of all relevant English place-names would have to include a full database along with a great deal of data (such as when and in what form a given place-name is attested, including variant forms, etc.). Furthermore, my source (Ekwall) does not generally indicate the pronunciation of place-names, and we all know how tricky that can be in England. All in all, the reader is kindly asked to regard this paper as a starting point for further detailed research, the result of which would probably be measured in hundreds, if not thousands, of pages.

First of all, I will provide a list of those OE elements which are found as independent entries in Ekwall’s dictionary, arranging them in columns according to their vowel. It must be remembered that OE *ĕa* merges with OE *ǣ*; I list the relevant items separately, though, in “sub-columns.” Elements marked with an asterisk are not attested OE words but reconstructed ones. Also, several elements with *ā* have an umlauted variant with *ǣ*; these are listed in the *ā* column together, separated by a slash (other variant types are shown in parentheses). Finally, the elements containing *ǣ* are listed in their West Saxon (WS) forms, but it must be borne in mind that WS *ǣ* often corresponds to

6. For example, the OE noun *brōc* ‘brook’ appears in *Brockton* (< *brōc#tūn*) with a short *o*, but this does not tell us anything about when the shortening took place: whether shortened in OE or ME, it will yield the same result, viz. it merges with original short *o* (as in *Brockhall*, where the *brock* part < OE *brocc* ‘badger’).

Anglian *ē*; for instance, WS *strǣt* ‘street, road’ = Anglian *strēt*. In such cases, the Anglian forms can be misleading, but more on this below.

(3) A selection of place-name elements

Elements with OE <i>ā</i>	Elements with OE <i>ǣ/ēa</i>	
	<i>ǣ</i>	<i>ēa</i>
(ge)māna/(ge)mǣne	(ge)mǣre	*ēan
*tāde	brǣmel	bēam
āc	brǣr	bēan
ān(a)	clǣne	ēar
bār	clǣte	ēast
brād	hǣs(e)	grēat
clāte/clǣte	hǣp	hēah (hēa, hēan)
fāg	lǣl	lēac
gāt	lǣs	lēah
grāf(e)/grǣf(e)	mǣd	nēat
hālig	mǣl	rēad
hām/hǣm(a)	mǣp	scēad (scēap)
hān	slǣp	scēap
hār	stǣner	stēap
hlāw/hlǣw	strǣt	
lām		
rād		
slā(h)		
snād/snǣd		
stān		

The observant reader will have noticed that some of the items are disyllabic, and the stressed vowel is followed by a consonant + a vowel (e.g. *clǣne*, *hālig*). It might be strange to include such items here, since a long vowel before CV cannot undergo CSS. Nonetheless, the vowel of the second (unstressed) syllable may be subject to syncope (e.g. *Clanfield* < *clǣne#feld*), after which the stressed long vowel *is* in a closed syllable.

What happens if these elements, used as the first ones of a compound, are combined with another (second) element in such a way that their long vowel finds itself in a closed syllable? To give a specific example, what if we combine *stān* (as the first element) with a consonant-initial second element, such as *tūn* or *stede* (= *stān#tūn*, *stān#stede*)? Based on Section 1, our expectation is that – if our assumption is

correct – the long vowels *ā*, *ǣ*, *ēa* will at least in some cases appear as *a* (according to the **A** type scenario, cf. (1) and (2) above). However, if CSS is not earlier than ME, i.e. it post-dates LLR and LSM, then they will follow the **B** type scenario, and *ā* will appear as *o*, while *ǣ/ēa* will yield *e*. The compound *stān#tūn*, for instance, will yield *stonton* according to **B** but *stanton* according to **A**.

An investigation of Ekwall’s dictionary is more than striking: almost all place-names which have one of the items in (3) as their first element have a variant (or variants) of type **A** – sometimes without type **B** variants. The element *stān*, for instance, is found with an *a* in most cases (e.g. *Stambridge*, *Stanbury*, *Stanway*, *Stambourne*, *Stanford*, *Stanton*, etc.), though *o* is also found (e.g. *Stonton*, *Storridge*) – not to mention *Stonehenge*, for instance, which has a long *ō*.⁷ For *ǣ/ēa*, we can mention *strǣt* (as in *Stratton/Stretton*) and *rēad* (e.g. *Radcliffe/Redcliffe*). Some further examples illustrating early shortening are found in (4):

(4) <u>OE element</u>	<u>Examples</u>
hām	Hampton, Hampstead
grāf/grǣf	Grafton, Grafham
brād	Bradfield, Bradley
āc	Acton, Agden
hǣþ	Haddon, Hadley
clǣne	Clandon, Clanfield
ēast	Aston, Ascot

It is beyond the scope of this paper to give an even near-complete list, but I hope the point is clear: not only do variants pointing to early shortening occur, but they abound.

One note is necessary, though, because OE *ǣ* – as mentioned above – can be misleading: many instances of WS *ǣ* correspond to non-WS *ē* in OE.⁸ The long *ē* of OE always yields *e* when shortened (whether in OE or later), which is why such non-WS forms are to be left out of consideration. As Ekwall writes, “BRATTON in Devon and BRETTON in Yorkshire may quite well be identical in origin, both containing Old English *brǣc* ‘newly cultivated land,’ Bratton the Saxon form *brǣc*,

7. As Ekwall himself mentions in his entry on OE *stān*, “in the first syllable *stān* generally appears as *Stan-*, more rarely as *Stone-* or even *Ston-*” (X).

8. Specifically, *ǣ* deriving from West Germanic **ā* yields Anglian *ē*, e.g. WS *slǣp* ‘sleep’ vs. Anglian *slēp* (cf. German *Schlaf*). An *ǣ* from West Germanic **ai* appears as *ǣ* in Anglian OE, too, e.g. *lǣdan* ‘to lead’ (cf. German *leiten*).

Bretton the Anglian form *brēc*" (xii). The Anglian form *Bretton* does not necessarily point to late shortening (type **B**), therefore (but the WS form *Bratton* does show type **A**).

All in all, the existence of "**A/B** variants" shows that CSS was not a genuine sound change: instead, items which became lexicalized in OE underwent the shortening earlier than those which became lexicalized in ME. *Stanton* (Cambridgeshire) and *Stonton* (Leicestershire) are both from OE *stān#tūn*, but the former shows path **A**, the latter path **B**. Please note that the form *Stanton* in Cambridgeshire clearly shows early shortening; such a form would be ambiguous in Northumbria (where OE *ā* does not undergo LLR) – much like *Bretton* or *Stretton* is ambiguous outside Wessex.

3. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper has been to show that English place-names support the conception of CSS as presented in Kristó (*Restructuring*). The paper has not been intended as a thorough analysis of place-names; instead, detailed work remains to be done, and the present short essay is more like a programmatic statement. In many specific cases, what may at first appear to be a genuine example may turn out to be false upon closer inspection, for one reason or another. All in all however, I believe that the data I have examined show that the lexicalization hypothesis concerning CSS is correct on the whole.

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Anikó Daróczy

Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary

The Coherence of Form and Content in Hadewijch

The Importance of Modality in Medieval Songs

Hadewijch, the 13th-century Flemish beguine, is the author of 31 mystical letters, 16 rhymed letters, 14 visions and 45 mystical love songs. This article is about her songs. The fact that Hadewijch was particularly musical is evident both from the clearly audible rhythm and pulsation of her way of speaking in her prose, as well as from the ease with which she handled complex strophic forms which she borrowed from the sacred and profane lyrics of her era.

Everything we know to date about the musical material that influenced her way of composing her verse is set out in the new edition of Hadewijch's songs (Fraeters, Grijp, and Willaert; for an English translation see Hart). These mystical love songs – her *Ritmata*, as they are referred to in the so-called Manuscript C in Ghent – were most probably sung, but until the 1990s no one looked systematically for possible melodies, and for decades these writings were known as *strofische gedichten* 'poems in stanzas.'

1. A Quest for Hadewijch's Music

1.1. Words and Melody: Searching for Contrafacts¹

Musicologist and musical performer Louis Grijp's article published in 1992 was the first real endeavour to restore Hadewijch's melodies. Fifteen years later Grijp, together with anthropologist, musicologist and musical performer Björn Schmelzer, continued the quest. At the present time, nineteen of the forty-five songs can be sung. Melody and text are included in the new edition, which is accompanied by four CDs containing all the melodies discovered alongside the recitation of the texts that do not (yet) have melodies. The book also contains a contribution by Grijp in which he updates his 1992 article and explains his

1. Contrafacts are songs that have different texts sung on the same melody – many secular songs have religious contrafacts.

research method (Fraeters, Grijp, and Willaert 325–40). Grijp took as his starting point the established fact that Hadewijch was influenced in her poetry principally by the lyrics of the *trouvères* and by religious lyrics. He compared the strophic form of her songs with those of Northern French poets and, where he found a melody – mainly Marian contrafacta – that was suited to the purpose, he placed the Middle Dutch text under the musical notation. Schmelzer traced a similar trajectory, and part of the results of his own discoveries can be heard on the CD *Poissance d’amours*, recorded by his ensemble Graindelavoix (see also Schmelzer).

1.2. “Outside” and “Inside”

In order to uncover additional melodies, there is now only one relatively straightforward and safe method, namely that of Grijp and Schmelzer: investigating a collection of medieval strophic forms until one comes across a song that has the same strophic form and a comparable metric structure as the song for which one is trying to find the melody (for example via Mōlk and Wolfzettel). This scientific and highly effective approach is indispensable. With the help of learned techniques, one is then in a position to bring dead musical material back to life.

Nevertheless, this approach cannot be more than an approach “from the outside,” that is, one in which a contemporary musicologist and performer works with material that no longer belongs to his or her own, living culture. Using such a technique, one automatically assumes that speaking and singing are two clearly distinct art forms that can thus be brought together only by artifice or by deliberate rapprochement. This technical approach goes hand in hand with a perhaps unconscious image of Hadewijch as a poet, a verbal artist and singer who likewise worked at fitting words and melody together.

Each reconstruction and each analysis of text and music from past centuries, whether treated separately or together, means essentially that we deal as scientifically as possible – and yet also to some extent intuitively and creatively as well – with material that has survived more or less by accident and that we are only now, after a gap of hundreds of years, beginning to discover. But why should we not be more daring and use our power of imagination and empathy somewhat more freely than a scientifically tested method such as that of Grijp and Schmelzer would allow?

My aim is then to suggest an approach that could help us see the process of adjusting words to melody more “from the inside.” After a short sketch of the function of Hadewijch’s songs, I am going to present my approach through investigating an anthropological model inspired by an oral tradition that is still alive in Eastern Europe. This tradition is studied mainly by ethnomusicologists interested not only in the outer circumstances of song production and the formal characteristics of songs, but also in the psychology of the composition of new songs using traditional word and melody patterns. They have also investigated the modes and the degree of variation when singers reproduce “old” songs. This approach is obviously cross-cultural and diachronic, as I am going to compare ways of composing/singing in a 13th-century Brabantine environment rooted in a then living singing tradition with one observed in the 20th century, a tradition that nevertheless can be traced back as far as the Middle Ages, or at least to a world that in many respects can be characterised as “medieval.” I am relying here on ideas about “modality” as developed by (ethno)musicologist and singer Dr. Rebecca Stewart, who views the Western chant tradition through her experience as a singer and researcher of non-European music. Being aware of the danger of borrowing techniques from one style and language into another, she nevertheless sees the importance and the fruitful results of understanding the shared principles behind related traditions.

My aim, besides calling attention to possible new areas of research in the realm of medieval poetry and mysticism, is also to offer insight into the possible mode of singing for future performers of the songs of Hadewijch. This will, I hope, not only enable them to “find” further melodies to the songs for which Grijp and Schmelzer have not yet found any, but also to perform the existing and easily accessible repertoire more freely, more intuitively and with greater conviction of the coherence between form and content in the songs.

2. Function, Form and Content

2.1. Hadewijch and the Function of Her Songs within Her Community

Songs in a medieval mystical milieu cannot be regarded as a form of artistic expression. In my view, it is essential that in our approach to all the extant writings by Hadewijch we should first of all understand that she was not a writer, a poet or a singer; but a mystical leader of a group of like-minded women, and that she used her immense talents

and her literary and theological knowledge in order to provide guidance in times that were difficult for herself and for her followers.

For her, the capacity to sense the mystical experience of love, something that for us is scarcely imaginable and certainly not accessible, was an essential reality. Her life of mystical love (or *minne*, to use her term for it) began, as she says, through a mystical experience in her youth,² and thanks to her writings we can follow the exemplary process of her mystical maturation, most clearly represented and structured in her *Visions*, where we can see this process as a linear growth (see Dros). She spoke to her circle of followers from the wellspring of her own experience. This is also true of her songs, but in a different form this time – for poetry by definition presupposes a different way of speaking than prose. What happens in the songs transcends the linear nature of a “narrative.” In Hadewijch’s mystical life, the dynamic between the coming and going of Love (*minne*) and a ceaseless quest for balance between those two movements play a constant role and are given even clearer expression in a genre in which one is not obliged to keep to a chronologically structured “narrative.” As Frank Willaert put it, her poetry is “the most adequate way to give verbal shape to an endless desire that begins forever anew”³ (*De poëtica* 296; my translation).

In his discussion of the function of Hadewijch’s songs, Willaert speaks of the communicative situation in which these songs (as well as her other writings) were created. Based on his research,⁴ it seems possible to sum up the (mystical) life journey of the “I.” The latter unfolds as follows: the inexperienced, young “I” begins her mystical life

2. One of the few specific reports on this is found in her Letter 11: “Since I was ten years old I have been so overwhelmed by intense love that I should have died, during the first two years when I began this, if God had not given me other forms of strength than people ordinary receive, and if he had not renewed my nature with his own Being. For in this way he soon gave me reason, which was enlightened to some extent by many a beautiful disclosure; and I had from him many beautiful gifts, through which he let me feel his presence and revealed himself. And through all these tokens with which I met in the intimate exchange of love between him and me – for as it is the custom of friends between themselves to hide little and reveal much, what is most experienced is the close feeling of one another, when they relish, devour, drink, and swallow up each other . . .” (Hart 69).

3. “. . . de meest adequate wijze waarop een eindeloos, steeds opnieuw beginnend verlangen, talige gestalte kan verkrijgen.”

4. The reconstruction proceeds through three stages: 1) an analysis of the forms in which the author and the addressees appear in the *Liederen*, 2) an analysis of the speaking subject in his or her own speech act, and 3) an analysis of the role of the noun *minne* in the communicative situation (Willaert, *De poëtica* 304).

in a state of great euphoria, is then disappointed by *minne* and falls into despair. And yet she grows in love. She comes to understand that suffering is part of the life of love, and opens herself up to complete *minne*. This account does not unfold chronologically in the songs, since it is familiar to both author and audience – only a few key moments of it are evoked; the chronology is provided by the audience’s capacity to order the textual material. The “I” speaks to a “thou” in which “I” and “thou” are mirror images of each other, for the mystical life cycle of the “I” is that of the “exemplary form of the mystical female lover with whom the addressee can identify” (Willaert, *De poëtica* 304; my translation). The “I” invites her followers to the true, full life of love. They are all members, in solidarity, of one and the same community.

2.2. The Necessity of a “Modal” Approach

What emerges from Hadewijch’s forty-five mystical love songs is the expression of a world of experience that courses through her whole life. It is precisely this “wholeness,” her complete dedication to the life of mystical love, that we must continually keep in mind when reconstructing her songs, even when we are working from a technical perspective (“from the outside”). We can gain some idea of her complete surrender to *minne* and thus take a first step to where we could get a glimpse “inside” by immersing ourselves as deeply as possible in her writings, for the more we read her, the more profoundly we are moved by something that can be traced back to the same underlying principle, the same constituent elements of her reality and the same dynamic, whether she is speaking in her *Letters* and *Visions*, singing in the *Songs*, or keeping silent when she finds the mystical experience ineffable. Wherever we begin from, if we dare to dig deep enough, we will reach the same insight, end up in the same space, and be taken up into the same force field – here, too, we arrive at the common underlying forces that govern her different modes of speaking. For those who strive for an understanding of the “mechanics” of her songs, it is indispensable to know the whole of her oeuvre in order to understand as profoundly as possible the tension between the nature of her experience and her attempts to give words to what is going on in her mystical consciousness.

If we study the content of Hadewijch’s songs in the mirror of her writings in general, taking into account their function, then we have already taken the first step needed for an approach to songs that come into existence within an oral culture. The oral text resists any approach

that fails to take account of its social function, its place within a particular community, the tradition from which it derives its authority, and the circumstances in which it is heard. By singing the singer creates/establishes a dynamic bond between his/her own consciousness and life and that of others.

As an extension of this oral approach, we can speak, certainly in reference to singing, of a “modal” approach. Modality is a complex notion and primarily means that something is in the process of becoming and is seeking a path, in a particular manner (in a particular mode), toward a point of resolution (Stewart, “Modal Singing” 560–62). This process of seeking is itself rooted in the time and geographical place in which the particular songs are performed; in other words, it is rooted in the tradition of a people or a group within that people as well as in the function of the song within that group. This implies that we have to take into account the following:

- 1) What is the nature of mysticism Hadewijch’s works are rooted in?
- 2) What is the aim of her act of singing? (E.g. for the singer, it is to relieve the profundity of the experience and to generate a certain emotional response from the audience; for the audience it is to open up to the singer’s experience.)
- 3) What are the possibilities offered by the tradition? In other words: What is the “mode” of singing? To find the “mode,” knowledge of the following is necessary:
 - a) the formal characteristics of the music of the age and geographical area, that is, the melodic and rhythmic modes and the modes of composing;
 - b) the vocal tradition the songs are rooted in; in other words, the singing technique, the breathing, and the influence of the language on the prosody.

From among the points above I shall elaborate on the ones that can be discussed in comparison to other traditions, namely the way shorter or longer verbal formulae and melodic patterns become one in the process of singing.

In modal music “interlocking intervals and rhythms . . . form themselves into recognizable nuclei which in turn transform themselves into other nuclei,” as Stewart points out. She contrasts this modal process with that of the tonal one,

. . . in which regularly determined and easily differentiated and identifiable points of departure and arrival (points of stability or

confirmation) take precedence over the more open-ended process of searching. This tonal process, which is primarily homophonic in nature, also requires a particular “tonal” approach. The most relevant example of tonal music is that of Western classical music from (at least) the 16th century until – with very few exceptions – today. (“Modal Singing” 560)

With Hadewijch’s songs we are in the very delicate zone between modal and tonal music. On the one hand, we are in the 13th century, that is, in the “era of modal music.” On the other hand, the musical material that has been identified by Grijp and Schmelzer is “fixed” in the modern sense of the word: there are written sources at our disposal, and now, thanks to the thorough work carried out by Grijp, we have the modern transcription of the songs, adjusted to the Middle Dutch texts. So, in a sense, we are dealing with “tonal” music, because the form is more fixed than not and allows in its present form little space for the process of “searching.” The transcription makes it very easy for the singers to sing the songs on the one hand, but on the other hand, it hinders a deeper understanding of the nuclei which are recognizably present in the melodic line and which would enable singers to use the given melodies more creatively, adjusting them with greater ease to the words.

A modal approach can therefore be highly relevant – indeed, the only relevant one, if we bear in mind the era when Hadewijch’s writings were composed and the function of her texts within her community – and offers an all-encompassing vision of the bond between the person singing and the situation in which the singer finds him- or herself.

3. Bound and Free: Models

Hadewijch grew up in an (overwhelmingly) oral culture and was, from childhood, familiar with its traditions.⁵ On the other hand, she could read and write and was educated, and so was also a representative of a written culture. As regards the oral culture in Brabant, the geographical region where Hadewijch’s songs were written, we can speak only from a historical perspective. But in terms of comparative material

5. On this subject see among others Reynaert; Willaert, *De poëtica*; Mommaers; Daróczy; and of course Grijp.

regarding the essence of this culture, or at least of certain aspects thereof, there still are living cultural traditions, even in Europe, with people who would naturally recognise the creation process of her songs. As I pointed out above, modal singing traditions have comparable underlying principles. This is why in our days ethnomusicologists and singers such as, for instance, Marcel Pérès, Björn Schmelzer and Rebecca Stewart choose to perform early vocal music inspired by their profound knowledge of and experience with still living oral traditions: Pérès uses the still existing Mozarabic techniques when performing early chant, while Schmelzer is inspired by Italian vocal traditions, and Stewart by her fifteen years of experience in the classic vocal music of Hindustan.

In what follows, I seek to provide an image of what that interiorised knowledge of one's own singing/poetic culture can mean, and of the influence of that knowledge on one's own songs/poems. We are now making the first step to viewing, in a couple of examples, the process of composition and performance "from the inside."

3.1. The Oral-Aural⁶ Medium: Songs of Lament and Songs of Mourning

The first examples are taken from two related types of song among two smaller ethnic groups in Western Transylvania (present-day Romania): the Hungarian-speaking Székely people and their neighbours, the Csángós.⁷ The first type is the old-style song of lament, the second is the song of mourning (also known as *dirges*).

The songs of lament are known in that region as *keserves*, which literally translates as 'songs of bitterness.' These are songs with a descending melodic line, consisting of lines of 6, 8, and sometimes 12 syllables that form stanzas of four lines with a simple rhyme pattern. Their melody mostly covers one octave, sometimes even a none; within the melodic line there is often a recitation on two or three notes. Their tempo and rhythm is *parlando*. The themes are quite limited in scope, just like Hadewijch's songs, which continually circle around the same theme. Here the themes are the absence of one's beloved, saying farewell to one's fatherland and parents or to life, exile

6. By adding the word "aural" I wish to emphasise the importance of hearing. I will limit myself hereafter to the word "oral," but I will use it to mean the complex of speaking/singing and hearing.

7. This first example is taken from a report on fieldwork by Bálint Sárosi.

and homesickness. The images that express these emotions are also relatively limited in number, but with numerous variations, and intertwined with each other. They very often begin with a theme taken from nature (the *Natureingang*, a topos in medieval lyrics that is often found in Hadewijch as well); images from nature appear frequently, in order to illustrate the frame of mind of the "I."

Sometimes dozens of verses of lament are sung to one melody. Since childhood the singers know these songs so well that not only the melodies, but also their form, the pure structure of the melodic line, indeed the material of which the songs are put together, is imprinted on their minds. This means that the songs are not simply reproduced, but there is often a process of improvisation on the spot, without anyone realising that something "new" is coming into being. The singers are, on the one hand, bound by the tradition of the genre, but on the other hand, the manner of singing affords them a great deal of freedom, as the melody and text are not too rigidly linked to each other.

Collectors of these songs point to the fact that a great deal of improvisation goes on and that changes appear in the number of syllables and even in the melody itself. It is also difficult for a collector to write down such melodies on the spot,⁸ since the singers can never sing precisely the same tune twice, even if they really want to. Nevertheless, the custom is to publish the first stanza with the melody, and then, where applicable, note under the lines of music the most striking variations of smaller verbal/melodic units. In ethnomusicological circles it has long been a commonplace that in traditional practice, a folk song does not have one "authentic" form that moves along a fixed line from sound to sound. This principle is for the most part true of the songs of lament as well. A feature of such traditional songs, given their living nature, is that they are flexible and variable within the boundaries permitted by the tradition and the genre, that is, by the possible modes in which certain melodic and verbal formulae are linked to each other, and thus move to a point of resolution.

The improvisational variation is part of their style. Ethnomusicologist Bálint Sárosi gives an example of such a case of variation. On one and the same tape recording, a Csángó woman sang, as she claimed, precisely the same song, but in the course of two or three

8. At present, melodies are of course being collected by means of recording equipment, and even Zoltán Kodály and Béla Bartók used such devices, but I still know people who in the 1950s and 1960s simply went from village to village with pen and paper.

verses it underwent the following change, which, however, appears as a change only to the ears of “outsiders,” who measure congruency by the degree of note-to-note correspondence:⁹

In that region, songs of lament may be sung by everyone regardless of age or gender. Most people have their own song of lament, for the most part only one per person, but they tend to know those of others as well. An outsider can easily get the impression that the verses appear in an arbitrary order when the singer sings them. It is true that they often have only their “key signature” in common, with one verse calling forth another (via an image, a melodic or verbal formula, etc.). A person’s “own” song is, in turn, more constructed, and the singers choose from among the possible verses that can be sung to “the same” melody those that apply to their own predicament, or they sing verses that were imprinted on them in times of great sorrow, and they organise these in a way that appears coherent to them.

Their relative freedom and emotionality bring songs of lament close to the only truly improvisational genre of songs that are sung in that region, namely the individualised songs of mourning. The genre is not restricted to the dirges that are sung only at ceremonies at the death bed and at funerals. It also includes improvised songs of “self-mourning,” sung lamentations about one’s life or dramatic moments of life, and songs sung for different types of loss. They are therefore often thematically linked to the songs of lament, and the similarity in theme also

9. Translation of Text A (left): “There is so much sorrow on my heart / that it has folded into two in the sky. / If it had folded once more, / my heart would have broken.” Text B (right): “Sorrow, sorrow, heavy sorrow, / why have you built a fortress in my heart? / Why have you not built it in the woods, / on top of a big tree?” (Sárosi 117).

triggers a similarity in form, as the singer tends to borrow patterns from one genre into the other; thus, in the flow of the sung prose text, one can distinguish shorter or longer segments from songs of lament. The dirges in the strict sense of the word, that is, mourning songs in the case of death, may be sung exclusively by women, an adult female member of the deceased's family. These women are able to express their own feelings and to pour their words, with the accompanying gestures, automatically into a form that they carry within themselves. Zoltán Kodály was the first to observe that beyond the free-flowing prose text of the dirges there is a hint of a closed melody, sometimes that of the songs of lament (156).¹⁰

Songs of mourning, in the strict sense, belong in a particular type of ceremony, and are normally not sung in other circumstances. They are therefore not easy to collect. Sárosi points out something that can be of interest to our present study of Hadewijch's songs: neither songs of lament nor songs of mourning can be sung with an indifferent heart. If the music collector is aware of this, he or she can quite easily collect songs of mourning, since after a woman has sung a few stanzas of a song of lament – according to Sárosi's experience as a collector, there are usually 8 to 10 stanzas – she attains such an emotional state that one can ask her also to express in song her own grief over a loss. In other words, she can no longer stop singing, or rather, she can no longer put a stop to the flow of emotions – thus the exemplary "I" of the songs of lament becomes an individualized "I."

This is a point that may well be of importance to us here: one of the reasons for the length of Hadewijch's songs can (also) be found here: one of the differences between Hadewijch's songs of love mysticism and their model, the secular love songs of the *trouvères*, is their length: the average number of verses in the *trouvère* song is 5. That of Hadewijch's songs is around 9.¹¹ A certain length is thus evidently necessary in order to elicit an emotional reaction, for there to be an emotional opening up on the part of both singer and listener. Willaert notes that an essential difference between the *trouvère* songs and the

10. Sárosi gives a few examples of these (119–21). Songs of lament (*keserves* 'bitter') and dirges (*sirató* 'songs of mourning') are linked not only by their form but also by their function. Among the Csángó people, it is common when accompanying the coffin to sing songs of lament instead of – or alternating with – dirges, especially if the deceased was young.

11. Willaert noted in a message addressing this question: "I do see a correlation between the number of lines per verse and the number of verses per song; the more lines per verse, the fewer the verses in the song" (message to the author).

mystical love songs lies in their function: whereas the *trouvère* only asks his public to listen to his lament, Hadewijch aims at her own emotional involvement and the involvement of her followers, an identification with the “I” of the songs (see Willaert, *De poëtica*, especially 345).

3.2. The Modal Way of Singing

The circumscribed nature of the form is not a limitation, but on the contrary, it makes possible a certain liberation. What is involved is an oral principle that does not limit the singer but provides him – or in this case, most decidedly *her* – with something to grasp on to, enabling her freely to express her feelings with the help of the deeply imprinted, familiar structures and melodic movements. Fixed structures thus help people express their deepest emotions,¹² thereby bringing them to life and allowing others to share in them.¹³

What we are talking about here is a modal way of singing. The raw material for the songs is a collection of verbal and melodic formulae, preserved in the memory, which one can draw on at the moment of “composition.” If a tradition is a living one, then it lives in the whole person. It is knowledge not simply of the contents, but also of the structures carried as if stamped on the memory, a memory that resides not solely in the head but in the entire body. It is the presence of an (unconsciously) memorised form, in which there is a continuum between the past (already stored in the memory) and the present (the reproduced and the new), for with the help of the built-in structures 1) one summons up what is already known and familiar, 2) one acquires new knowledge, 3) deep, personal feelings and experiences are given an outward shape. The new is an organic extension of what was there, and is always in a harmonic relationship with that which already exists. What is involved is speaking through song about something for which

12. The Hungarian poet Attila József (1905–1937) says in his poem “Szürkület” [Twilight]: “It’s a good thing that there are iambs and there is something / for me to hold on to” (my translation).

13. We know that memorisation also happens in a similar way in other genres. Parry and Lord’s research in the 1930s examined the way in which Serbian bards memorised and reproduced their long epics. The aim of their research was to discover how Homeric and early medieval epics were composed. They showed that bards had listened to these sung epics from their early childhood onwards. Later they were capable of improvising on the given material, and they created their ballads and epics anew with each performance, without being aware of the variations they made in the process (see Lord).

we have the words and melodies within ourselves, words and melodic lines that are ready to be born at the moment when we need them, and which are automatically given their form and position in a phrase, a verse, a melodic movement. These elements thus play a dual role in our existing structures: they can help us summon up what has been forgotten and give expression to what has not yet been given verbal form. In both cases, we are dealing with a (re)creation, for the way one sings is always dependent on the function of the song at that particular moment and on the needs of the public to whom the song is being tailored.

Such complete participation, such total dedication and capacity for improvisation is possible only within an oral culture. In such cultures, both memorisation and improvisation occur with the help of the whole body. By this process, one's deepest feelings are expressed, and the members of the group are bound together, yet it leaves the freedom of the intellect and senses unimpaired.¹⁴ Such a process is also

14. This does not mean, however, that songs and structures cannot also be introduced into the memory and internalised by any other channels than the purely oral one. I am referring here to my own experience. From childhood I have heard the songs sung in our region in Transylvania. I know many songs, ballads and dances that are typical of the area, but I have always found that the songs of lament that moved me the most were those that came from another region (also within Transylvania). These I did not learn as a child but later, around the age of twenty, and not from purely oral sources and not in the countryside. I am friends with ethnomusicologist Klára Sebestyén Dobó (1924–2013), who in the 1950s collected these types of songs, among others, from the Székely and the Csángó people and the surrounding area, and published them in several volumes (Sebestyén Dobó and Szegő; Sebestyén Dobó). In the 1980s I spent a week with her on several occasions. She told me a great deal about her experiences and showed me her notes (she noted the songs with pen and paper) and taught me, in the kitchen of a small apartment in a tower block in Bucharest, how to take down songs from hearing: I noted them while listening and singing along. I found that there were a number of songs that spoke to me more than the others. Those I kept repeating and searched the repertoires that Bartók and Kodály had begun to compile and publish together (*A magyar népzene tára*, 1951–1997, 10 volumes) for other, comparable melodies, which I then transcribed by hand into my musical notebooks and continued to sing them until I really knew them. This familiarity with the songs meant that I could trace the sometimes richly ornamented melodies, which at first sight and hearing seemed quite complex, back to a simple melodic line that enabled me to sing the songs differently each time. And this was true not only of the melody. As regards the content, this involved, as stated above, variations on only a few dozen images, expressed in various more or less regular but variable verbal formulae. If while singing I happen not to be able to “remember” a line, I can, without being fully aware of it, draw on a deeply rooted knowledge to substitute for the “forgotten” line another one with a suitable content, appropriate rhythm, the correct number of accents,

described by an Inuit hunter and singer named Orpingalik, who says the following about the birth of his songs:

Songs are thoughts, sung out with the breath when people are moved by great forces and ordinary speech no longer suffices. Man is moved just like the ice-floe sailing here and there out in the current. His thoughts are driven by a flowing force when he feels joy, when he feels fear, when he feels sorrow. Thoughts can wash over him like a flood, making his breath come in gasps and his heart throb. Something like an abatement in the weather will keep him thawed up. And then it will happen that we, who always think we are small, feel still smaller. And we will fear to use words. But it will happen that the words we need will come of themselves. When the words we want to use shoot up of themselves – we get a new song. (Bowra 32)¹⁵

Orpingalik is moved by a power that influences him physically and that he cannot express otherwise than through “a new song.” These individuals – Hadewijch, the singers of the songs of lament and Orpingalik – are bound up with that which they express in a particular form; it could be said that it is not something they *do*, but something they *are*. It is probably the oneness of the experience and of the expression of that experience that gives rise to a special unity between content and form: neither of them comes “first,” they call each other forth in a mysterious manner.

4. Summing Up: Hadewijch the Singer. From Inside Out

In the light of the models discussed above, we now return to Hadewijch. In what follows, we shall find ourselves in the space between inside and outside, aware that we remain outsiders, and make an attempt with the resources available to us to walk along a path that is not (or no longer) ours. Such a new perspective will hopefully help us gain greater clarity and understanding and a feel for a world that is far from us in time and experience.

etc. I can also sing a “new” song that I compile out of the ones imprinted on my memory and that I apply at that moment to a melody that I hear from within. That this is possible is due to the fact that I have a treasury of melodic and rhythmic movements that were passed on through my own tradition.

15. Bowra is quoting Rasmussen here (321).

I am going to present an idealized situation. We take our point of departure from inside – the birth of the word in the soul – and move outwards – the birth of the song that is audible to others. Or to put it differently: we begin with *the word* and arrive at the compositional unity of *many words*. We thus imagine Hadewijch during the transformation of what she has felt or feels into what she sings, in order to be heard and sung within her group.

In the deepest state, the mystic is touched and moved by a force that is inexpressible. This belongs to the essence of mystical experience as she describes it. We do not know whether she first saw images or first heard the mystical words that suddenly or gradually welled up from the depths of her consciousness or that were “given” to her. She allows herself to be captured by an image or a sound that she received in a mystical state of consciousness (or had received and now summons up), or else she allows herself to be moved by a feeling that stems from her way of living with/in *minne*. From this initiatory stage there follow the words, which, by way of set structures, stream into a person’s interior space. These images and structures – or images bound to structures – are ready to be born and come to life when they are given to the members of her circle. This stage involves conscious, structuring speech about her experience, directed to the life of others. This, then, is the stage in which she composes her love songs.

She is involved in the process with every aspect of her being: her song is born from the deepest experiences she has had since her youth, her oral and written education, her consciousness of her role as leader within her mystical circle, as well as the intensity of the moment when she sings (or speaks/sings/composes while speaking and singing). The principle of orality mingles with her rational mind, trained through textuality and literacy; various moments from her mystical life and elements of her (literary) knowledge play upon each other and influence each other. The result is a song the stanzas of which are bound together through an inner logic. Her disciples needed these communications about her experience and/or the teaching derived from that experience. In this way, the inner and the outer become one.

In some songs, the set order of the verses is clearer than in others; it could be said that the songs lie along a spectrum ranging from those that came into existence through a conscious act of composition to those that arose by a more associative process. Their raw material, however, is a register that was familiar to her circle, a collection of more or less fixed word combinations. The better acquainted one is with this

register, the clearer the inner logic of the compositions becomes. The majority of the songs, whether they are more or less “logical,” have a length – a duration in time – that is able to influence emotionally both the singer herself and the listeners on the spot, “here and now.”

A new song is born in which forces are at work such as the ones Orpingalik described. These forces are governed by principles that span a broad space; the space between purely oral principles such as those underlying the creation of songs of lament and songs of mourning, and those principles that, although marked by written texts, are nonetheless taken up into and work through the senses.

We have seen that the models are linked to each other through one leading principle: experience and utterance. As a consequence, content and form are but one. About Hadewijch, then, the following can be said: she was not looking for melodic lines that were suited to accompanying her words in a more or less aesthetically pleasing manner; but she heard herself speaking *in* the melody; it was the combination and the play of sounds that elicited certain words from her. While listening, Hadewijch let the Latin sequence and the French melody, for instance, flow through her senses to the place where her words and word combinations stood ready to resonate with them. The familiar melodies, with their specific melodic movements, gave direction to her words. What we consider to be separate media – melody and word, heard song and written text – are in her mind one *sanc* (song).

5. The Modal Quest: Singing Hadewijch

This is not to say that this is the same mechanism by which a singer in an oral culture sings out her own thoughts. Rather, what Kodály says in one of his informal notes on folk songs and folk ballads applies here: “In the language of chemistry, one could say: melody and word are a chemical bond, not a compound. It is true, however, that it is a bond of which the components are now beginning to dissolve. But grant one of the two enough time to have an effect on the other: they will be drawn back together into an inseparable whole” (Szalay and Bajcsay 373; my translation).

One could counter this argument by saying that there is a big difference between melodies whose structure contains the possibility of free variation and even improvisation (such as “simple” folk songs) and other melodies where that is less true (such as “complex” *trouvère* melodies). That is in a sense true, but only if we look at the “complex”

songs largely “from the outside.” In order to be able to use French verse forms, for example, for her own poems in another language, i.e. her mother tongue, Hadewijch had to be so well versed in the *trouvères*’ technique that it was more than a matter of “knowledge”: it had to be an interiorised form of knowledge that she carried not only in her memory but indeed also in her whole body. She wrote at least 45 songs with an average length of 9 verses, which means around 420 verses of diverse, yet comparable, structures. Even if she had been a beginner in the art of courtly poetry at the time when she began to write her love songs, which was clearly not the case, she had sufficient practice, musical as she was, after the first 50 verses (that is, five or six of the 45 poems) to be able to handle the melodies, and thus also the verse forms, with flexibility and freedom.

But what were these familiar melodies? We will never be able to demonstrate irrefutably which song she had in mind while composing a given poem. We must first of all proceed, following Grijp’s method, by tracking down as many melodies as possible from the French as well as the Latin and German repertoires. Then we could venture to undertake an experiment that rests upon two premises. First, the assumption that we have available the musical material about the “musical mother tongue”¹⁶ or the “musical cultural language” of Hadewijch; secondly, we must draw on the experience gained in the past few years in the performance of modal songs, which, thanks to their rhythmical cadence and the tension between the intervals, are supple and flexible in nature.

Taking this information on historical and existing oral models as a starting point, we can suppose that Hadewijch did not merely use the existing melodies that were familiar to her, but that it was natural for her to vary small modal melodic and rhythmical formulae – rooted in the tradition – when expressing an equally standardized image and/or text fragment, as is the case with (more or less) complex folk songs. At this stage of experimentation with Hadewijch’s songs, we can say only the following: if enough more or less concrete musical material is available, and given sufficient experience with medieval vocal (that is, modal) music, and if one is acquainted with singing practice from within the traditions in that genre, then one can – by experimenting through singing and speaking – find the right place for each word in the melodic line. And that is a foundation on which one can continue to build.

16. “Zenei anyanyelv.” An expression used extensively in Hungarian ethno-musicological research.

In an ideal case, before attempting to sing Hadewijch's songs, one should study her works as thoroughly as possible in order to understand the content of what one is going to sing. Knowledge of the content and structure of the mystical experience, the communicative circumstances in which songs are sung, and the singing techniques used in her time should give more weight to both the research and the performance. The new edition of all her works, of which the volume containing the songs has already been published, serves as a good starting point. The actual work with the songs that leads to performing them should start only when one has somehow interiorized at least some basic aspects of Hadewijch's mystical teaching.

Thereafter, in my view, three clearly distinguishable steps can follow on the modal path leading to a new understanding of the mechanism of the songs and to performing them: 1) Learning the songs which already "have" a melody, in such a way that one reaches a level where the words find their place in the melodic line with natural ease. 2) Recognizing the nuclei within the melodic lines and bringing the melodies back to their own simplified form, a kind of "sketch." In this way a simplified version of an already known melody comes into being, which enables the singer to work with melodic formulae and apply one melody to a song with a similar – not the same! – form. 3) The most risky step, needing professional guidance: when one can combine the melodic formulae specific to the style, one can create melodies for the texts which do not yet have a melody at all. One will then "compose" in a "modal" manner, and the result will be a song which is recognizable as "medieval."

Now I am going to elaborate on the first two points, imagining a learning process. This has already been tested during a workshop that took place in 2004 and was organized by Rebecca Stewart and myself:

- 1)
 - a. Take one song. Read it thoroughly, trying to understand what is actually going on in it. Reading it aloud, you will feel the natural rhythm of the language and recognize the smaller rhythmic/metrical units. You should do this several times; then take one stanza which feels clear and "close" enough, and try to learn it by heart.
 - b. Parallel with this, study the melody thoroughly, relying first on the modern transcription. Sing it through several times, until the melody is imprinted in your memory and "becomes your

own.” This means that you will be able to simplify the melodic lines and distinguish longer and shorter segments of melodic formulae – you are getting close to what Stewart identifies as “nuclei.”

- c. When you have the melody clearly in your memory – and I would even risk saying: in your body – let the words which you already know by heart come with the melody. Sing it several times, until the words fall naturally into their places. After a while you may even notice that you do not always sing it in the same way, but all variations will seem “right.” If you have completely interiorized one stanza, the rest of them will unfold naturally, that is, you will experience the natural coherence of word and melody.

2)

- a. Find a song without a melody that has a similar form to one which does have a melody and which you already know (same number of lines per stanza will often be sufficient resemblance).
- b. “Simplify” the melody that you already know, that is, reduce the melodic lines to smaller units that are lacking in transitional notes – in other words, make a sketch of the melody you know well. You are now in fact identifying the nuclei.
- c. Sing the simplified melody several times, bearing in mind as well how the melodic lines can be varied and augmented.
- d. Let the words of the new song come with the melody, and when you have found the right stresses and right pulsation, slowly try to bring the song close to the one you started with. An example: Song 2 can easily be sung to the “existing” melody of Song 3, Song 25 to that of Song 9, and Song 34 to that of Song 42 (numbers refer to Hart’s translation).

As an example I am going to show the *trouvère* song *Ne puis que je ne chant, / Puis que* by Colart le Boutellier. We are following three steps here. First, we can see the melody as preserved in MS M, f. 129v, then the modern transcription as adjusted to Hadewijch’s Song 34, stanza 7, and finally, the simplified melodic lines with the nuclei as identified by Stewart. Here we can also see the text of Song 42, stanza 3, perfectly suited for the same melody:

Colars li boueff.

De puis lassier que ie ne chât
 puis que fine amoz men se
 mouir. car del tor sui ason omant.
 nule autre ioie nest el mont. que de
~~quel~~ ~~ou~~ en amor suir. mais trop est
 affeblie. ~~par~~ mesdisant qui ~~par~~
 el secle ~~de~~ Feignone.

Die dus in minnen sijn worden een
 le mach wel swi - ghen loet ken - steet.
 Noch sien, noch spreken dats mijn ken -
 want ict. wet - we - se - ne wiet en - weet -
 Hre lief daer - lief al om - ne veet.
 En - de ghe - bru - ken een - ghe - ven -
 wat won - de - re rest - dat mi rou - we ver - sleet
 Dat mi dat noch es out - ble - ven ?

Die des in minnen sijn worden een
 Noch sien, noch spreken, dat wij leen
 Het is ghehij. Wee hogen wanne
 Sate ende sachte, veruile bequame

Ic mach wel swighen hont hee steet.
 Want int met wechere wet en weet
 Als olge ute ghegloten, minnen
 Maar boven al sijn ghevochte
 die onnegten sinne.

Hoe lief daer lief al ouerriet
 Si sijn ghesaecht doch berde diene

Ende ghebrukes een gheven.
 Die vet worden ghevoet daer innen

Wat worden seet dat wi rouwe verket
 Ende wie wil bekennen, minnen,
 Dat wi dat noch es ontelven?
 Van unnen samen die rike ghesinne.

3)

As I have pointed out above, this step is one which clearly requires professional assistance, for if the necessary knowledge of the tradition is lacking, there is the risk that one will go beyond the boundaries of the given musical tradition. Therefore, I would like to propose a close collaboration between (ethno)musicologists, performing musicians, literary scholars and (possibly) anthropologists. This type of collaboration would give additional value to the research that could be carried out by musicologists on their own. Inspiring examples are that of anthropologist and performer Björn Schmelzer and his group Graindelavoix and Benjamin Bagby with his group Sequentia. In one of the latter's projects, the "reconstruction" of the music of *The Poetic Edda*, they had one single strophe from the *Völuspá*, set to a simple melody, published in the 18th century. They did not even know whether it indeed survived from its origins as an oral formula for the vocalization of Eddic poetry. Bagby says the following about their method of "reconstruction":

In searching for paths to the vocalization of these texts, it was obvious to me that more musical information would be needed than this scrap of melodic material from the late 18th century, and I decided to make use of the techniques of "modal language" which Sequentia has developed over the years in work with

medieval song. Briefly, we identify a mode not as a musical scale, but rather as a collection of gestures and signs which can be interiorized, varied, combined and used as a font to create musical “texts” which can be completely new while possessing the authentic integrity of the original material. (11)

Such an approach is, in fact, the modal path that we outsiders will have to follow, but which can certainly lead to very fruitful results. We will only understand, or at least suspect, its importance at the end of our quest. A characteristic trait of modality is that it can be explained but not understood, followed but not controlled. Any tradition that tries to pin down the secrets of modality runs the risk of losing it forever, says Stewart (“Polyphony” 567).

6. Conclusion

This article is but a first attempt to understand “from the inside” a process that in time and experience is far removed from ours, and to do so by drawing on resources that are still available to us today. We have tried to observe Hadewijch in the composing process. But can we in fact situate her in an era that we no longer know “from the inside?” And can we situate her in our own era? One of the possible responses is in the negative. The culture in which Hadewijch’s works were able to come to fruition has disappeared. The moment we understand that we have to “save” something, it is already too late, because that understanding only comes when one looks at something “from the outside.” We no longer belong there.

However, it is also possible to answer in the affirmative: because Hadewijch is a mystic who wrote about the deepest possible human experience, she transcends her own historical period. Hence it would be more accurate to talk about a certain way of speaking – a mode – by which she gives expression to an experience that permeates her entire life. And if that is the case, then it is indeed possible to bring her works to life – or rather to bring back music to our reception/interpretation of Hadewijch – for 1) those who find her message relevant, and 2) those who wish to understand and to use the modal thinking of her era (that is, her manner of singing while speaking through structures and movements handed down by oral tradition). What we *can* try to do is to identify the structures that were Hadewijch’s own, build up a repertory of her musical mother tongue and learn to work with

that material, in such a way as to gain appreciation for something that we are hardly able to feel any longer, and for an oral culture that she shared in but that is no longer alive. We can therefore attempt to understand from within the meaning of the unity of form and content, and in so doing realise that a song lives only if that unity exists. We can seek out the resources, here and now, that make it possible to bring the singing Hadewijch to life, even if not exactly to the life that once was hers.

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Zsuzsanna Simonkay

Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest

False Brotherhood in Chaucer's "The Knight's Tale," Part 2

Palamon and Arcite – False Friends Will Be Friends

This paper is the second part of a longer study to which I gave the title "False Brotherhood in Chaucer's "The Knight's Tale." In the first part ("Sworn Brotherhood and Chaucer's Sources on Friendship") I explored the traditions of sworn brotherhood and the sources through which Chaucer got acquainted with it, from classical Antiquity (the Aristotelian–Ciceronian model) to contemporary romances (e.g. *Amis and Amiloun*), and to real-life sworn brothers (e.g. Sir William Neville and Sir John Clanvowe, who belonged to Chaucer's circle). I also touched upon Ovid, Boccaccio, Aelred of Rievaulx's *De spiritali amicitia*, and *Le Roman de la Rose*, and showed how all these works are interrelated. I needed to write that first part in support of my argumentation in this second part of the study, in which I analyse the specific case of Chaucer's most famous pair of friends, Palamon and Arcite's brotherhood. Since I am writing my dissertation on medieval friendship under Kati's supervision, I think it more than appropriate to dedicate to her this paper, which deals with – at least to me – the most exciting sample of friendship in Medieval English Literature, in spite of the fact that this friendship fails. Or does it?

In the first story of *The Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer sets the doctrines of idealized male friendship, i.e. sworn brotherhood, against the concept of "courtly love," the similarly idealized male–female love. This romantic passion turns out to be more compelling than any other rules or principles (similarly to sworn brotherhood depicted in traditional romances addressing the issue of friendship), even than the knights' code of conduct, and therefore, it results not only in the withdrawal of friendship vows but even in the changing of former bosom friends into mortal enemies. This is in harmony with the teaching of Reason in *The Romaunt of the Rose* (translated into Middle English partly by Chaucer himself), when she compares friendship to love: "This love to vertu all entendith / The tothir fooles blent and shendith" (5309–10), i.e.

the first is attracted to virtue, while the latter leads to death; and love indeed leads eventually to Arcite's death.

However, the story starts off as an ordinary friendship romance (suiting the story-teller, the Knight, more than any other genre would), beguiling the reader – both medieval and modern – who is used to poems of the like celebrating the supremacy of sworn brotherhood over all other kinds of relationships. At the beginning of the tale, we meet Palamon and Arcite as two knights who resemble the proverbial pair of friends, Amis and Amiloun, to a great extent, and thence seem to meet the requirements of *amicitia perfecta*.¹ Although Chaucer does not linger on the description of the former circumstances of the young friends, and he does not go into detail about their relationship either, in the course of the story, he gives some clues. Firstly, they are cousins born in an aristocratic family (they “weren of the blood roial / Of Thebes, and of sustren two yborn” 1018–19), from which we might presume that they are equals in every respect (a characteristic of perfect friendship), and it is also probable that they were brought up together (another characteristic of perfect friends). Secondly, although we are not informed about their looks, their clothing and arms are alike, which is explained by G. F. Beltz as a habit typical of knights of the same household so that they cannot be distinguished by the enemy:

As if members of one family, [knights] wore similar apparel and armour, desirous that, in the heat of battle, the enemy might mistake one for the other, and that each might participate [in] the dangers by which the other was menaced. (qtd. in Ingham 26)

And indeed, without being given any clues as to any differences physical, moral, or of any sort whatsoever, even the reader cannot distinguish them until their affection toward Emelye sets them apart; till then, however, they can be considered as “two versions of the same figure” (Edwards 35),² or *alter egos* – another trait of perfect friends according to Aristotle and Cicero.³

1. On the traits of the Aristotelian–Ciceronian *amicitia perfecta* and its relation to medieval friendship romances, see Simonkay, “Friendly Knights.”

2. See Cicero’s view on perfect friends: “Verum etiam amicum qui intuetur, tamquam exemplar aliquod intuetur sui,” “He, who looks upon a true friend, looks, as it were, upon a sort of image of himself” (7.23).

3. Catherine A. Rock also emphasizes the similarity of the knights, and she refers to the same scholars. In support of her theory she also adds Lee Patterson’s words: “they [i.e. Palamon and Arcite] are indistinguishable at the level of worth” (qtd. in Rock 416).

Thirdly, the fact that they are found by the pillagers lying together after the lost battle suggests that, in conformity with the rules of *amicitia perfecta* and sworn brotherhood, they help one another even in great peril and never part: “And so bifel that in the taas they founde, / Through-girt with many a grevous bloody wounde, / Two yonge knightes, liggyng by and by / Bothe in oon armes wroght ful richely” (1009–12). Concerning this scene Tison Pugh points out that “[t]he reader first sees them in a reverse image of Amis and Amiloun’s final resting place in a shared grave, in that Palamon and Arcite are buried but still alive” (293).⁴ It has to be added, however, to Pugh’s observation that while the grave signalled the end of the story of Amis and Amiloun (but presumably not the end of their true friendship, which is supposed to be eternal, beyond the death of the parties), it opens the story of the Chaucerian heroes and foreshadows the end of their friendship. Or rather, the end of their illusionary friendship, since, as I will argue later, their friendship may not have been true friendship – ever.

After the two knights are found in the pile of corpses, they are imprisoned and they spend some years in the same cell (an ironic realization of perfect friends’ living together⁵), supposedly in peace, like any other ordinary pair of friends, until Palamon’s “A!” (1078), a poignant cry upon catching sight of Emelye. Till that time we have not even heard them speak, but Emelye’s appearance and Palamon’s exclamation trigger a snowball effect which then has a disastrous impact on the two knights’ relationship. We learn that they pledged friendship (an element that is Chaucer’s own significant addition to the story of *Teseida*), which verifies the audience’s expectation that this story is somewhat similar to that of Amis and Amiloun (Stretter 237). At the same time, however, the reader is necessarily perplexed since it is in the heat of an argument that we first hear of their being sworn brothers, which condition would otherwise imply a perfect harmony in all matters and excludes such quarrels.⁶

4. One is also necessarily reminded of the historical sworn brothers who were buried in the same grave, mentioned in the first part of this study (Simonkay, “False Brotherhood in Chaucer, Part 1”).

5. See Cicero: “. . . una domus erat, idem victus isque communis,” “There was one home for us both; we had the same fare and shared it in common” (27.103).

6. As in Cicero’s views: “Est enim amicitia nihil aliud nisi omnium divinarum humanarumque rerum cum benevolentia et caritate consensio” “[friendship] is nothing else than an accord in all things, human and divine, conjoined with mutual goodwill and affection” (6.20). See also Aristotle: “ἡ γὰρ ὁμόνοια ὁμοίον τι τῆς φιλίας ἔοικεν εἶναι,” “concord . . . seems akin to friendship” (8.1.4).

At the first instance we hear of their oath, we are reminded of the classical brotherhood vows of romances:

On a day the childer, war and wight,
Trewethes togider thai gun plight,
While thai might live and stond
That bothe bi day and bi night,
In wele and wo, in wrong and right,
That thai schuld frely fond
To hold togider at everi nede,
In word, in werk, in wille, in dede,
Where that thai were in lond,
Fro that day forward never mo
Failen other for wele no wo:
Therto thai held up her hond. (*Amis*, 145–56)

The above oath taken from *Amis* is a typical example. The two brothers promise each other that from that day onwards they will be loyal in weal and woe, and they will help the other. From Palamon's enraged denunciation, we learn of a similar oath he and his cousin pledged:

"It nere," quod he, "to thee no greet honour
For to be fals, ne for to be traitour
To me, that am thy cosyn and thy brother
Ysworn ful depe, and ech of us til oother,
That nevere for to dyen in the peyne,
Til that the deeth departe shal us tweyne,
Neither of us in love to hyndre other,
Ne in noon oother cas, my leeve brother,
But that thou sholdest trewely forthren me
In every cas, as I shal forthren thee —" (1129–39)

Although they are not written there, the formulae and conditions of the oath of *Amis* and *Amiloun* and other sworn brothers⁷ ("While thai might live and stond," "bothe bi day and bi night," "In wele and wo, in wrong and right," etc.) are conjured up by the mere appearance of the word "Ysworn." There is an essential difference, however, between the two vows: namely, that while *Amis* and *Amiloun* swore in general to

7. On the brotherhood oaths in *Amis and Amiloun*, *Athelston*, "The Knight's Tale" and "The Pardoner's Tale," see Simonkay, "In Wele and Wo!"

“hold togider at every nede” and not to “[f]ailen other for wele no wo,” in the vow of Palamon and Arcite there is a special emphasis on love matters. No other brotherhood oath contains this promise explicitly, since in “true” sworn brotherhoods it does not even occur to anyone that the attraction to a woman might hinder friendship. This being said, one can assume that the inclusion of love life is intended to underscore that Arcite betrayed their pledge.

In her ground-breaking study of “The Knight’s Tale,” Catherine Rock presents numerous opinions on Arcite’s shameful death at the end of the story, most of them not seeing it as reasonable at all, while a few explaining it with his being morally inferior to Palamon. In Rock’s view, Arcite loses Emelye and has to die because of his faithlessness “as shown by his oath breaking and his changing of allegiances throughout the tale.”⁸ Firstly, he breaks his oath given to Palamon; secondly, he returns to Athens despite his pledge made previously to Theseus that he would not; thirdly, by returning to Athens he violates his allegiance binding him to Thebes: to his king and fellow-warriors; and fourthly, he forsakes his god Mars for Venus by changing in attitude from warrior into lover, and thus in his deeds he also ignores the knightly code of conduct. Rock considers these as such grave sins that can justify the knight’s eventual death. She refers to Ramón Lull, who made it clear in his *Book of the Order of Chivalry* that he detests oath-breaking as something greatly unsuitable to chivalry (qtd. in Rock 147). She also cites Richard Firth Green and Maurice Keen to emphasize the importance and sanctity of oaths in support of her theory (qtd. in Rock 147).

Rock’s arguments are convincing; I would add an important supplement, though. In contrast with her theory, I think that Arcite’s death is more about his failure in behaving as a true friend than about breaking any of the four other above-mentioned oaths. A similar example of betraying friends is presented in the 14th-century romance *Athelston*, in which Wymound has no other sin but turning against his friends, but this is considered so grievous a fault that he is killed at the end in a highly cruel manner. On the other hand, Amis, one half of the pair intended to exemplify the perfect sworn brothers, can be caught in the act of forswearing, too, notwithstanding the fact that he is well aware of its being a grave sin.

When Amiloun and Amis part (the first leaving for home, while the latter staying at the court of the duke), Amiloun specifically

8. Rock enumerates a number of studies concerning the issue and observes that most scholars were puzzled by the outcome of the story (427–28).

reminds Amis of his duties: “Be nought ogain thi lord forsworn, / And yif thou dost, thou art forlorn” (304–05). Amis also apprehends the consequences of being forsworn, since when he recounts his story to Amiloun and asks him to change places with him, he cries out: “And forsworn man schal never spede; / Certes, therfore y can no rede, / ‘Allas’ may be mi song!” (1102–04), meaning that he will perish if he swears falsely. Still, he starts an affair with the daughter of the duke and thus brings dishonour to his lord. It is true that the girl blackmails him and threatens him with accusing him of rape, but it would have been only knightly to face the false charge and its aftermath (even death) rather than defame his duke. We are informed by the gravity of his sin and whether it can be considered as forswearing by the steward: “‘Mi lord, the douke,’ . . . / ‘. . . In thi court thou hast a thef, / . . . / For, certes, he is a traitour strong, / When he with tresoun and with wrong / Thi douter hath forlain!’” (784–92). Here the steward calls Amis a thief and a traitor, who committed treason against his lord. Evidently, the duke looks upon Amis’s act similarly: “Who hath, . . . don me that schame? / . . . Ich have him don gret honour, / And he hath as a vile traitour / Mi douhter forlain” (794–825). In his outrage he decides that if Amis is guilty of the charge, he deserves death: first he wants to kill him on the spot, but the knight persuades him to give him a chance to prove his innocence, which results in the judicial duel between the accuser and the accused.

Another evidence that the act of seducing the daughter of one’s lord was considered as breaking the allegiance between lord and retainer is found in the work of Huguccio (*d.* 1210). In his commentary to Gratian’s *Decretum* (composed *c.* 1150), and especially in the passage in which he interprets the letter by Bishop Fulbert of Chartres (*d.* 1028) dealing with the feudal oath of fealty and “the responsibilities of anyone who swore an oath of faithfulness to a lord,” the Italian canon lawyer “noted that many things are tacitly understood when someone took an oath, vow, and or made a promise” (Pennington).⁹

9. Although the *Decretum* and Huguccio’s interpretation of it concern mainly ecclesiastical law, they are major sources for secular law as well. In his paper on the feudal oath of fealty, Kenneth Pennington shows that “the canonists were instrumental in developing the key norms governing secular oaths of fealty and applied them to a range of secular-oath-takers. They incorporated customary norms and mores into their thought. They drew upon Roman law and earlier canon law in their work. . . . Their definitions of a vassal’s obligations would remain virtually unchanged for centuries.” Pennington describes the story of the letter as follows: “By 1216 Fulbert’s letter had become the most important legal text for defining the oath of homage and fealty.

He listed six tacit obligations, honesty being one of them. According to Huguccio, the honesty towards one's lord was twofold: "A vassal could not injure a lord's justice or his women," the latter of which meant that "[t]he lord's wife and daughter were . . . not to be touched" (Pennington).

Although Amis sinned (and not only in this particular case – he and Amiloun deliberately deluded everyone in their environment by their change of places, and thus killed the steward unjustly), he is forgiven after paying the penalty: he had to sacrifice his own children for the sake of Amiloun, who, on the other hand, was punished by becoming a leper.¹⁰ Thus, at the end of the romance *Amis and Amiloun*, the two knights who were guilty of crimes similar to those of Arcite were not only forgiven but also praised.

I see the reason for the difference in the outcome of the two stories in that Amis and Amiloun remained loyal to each other, and they committed most of these sins in the name of friendship,¹¹ while Arcite can-

The letter's origins lie in a request that William V, count of Poitou and duke of Aquitaine made to Fulbert asking for a clarification of the obligations and duties that a vassal owed to a lord. William had troubled relationships with his vassals. In his reply (ca. 1020) Fulbert wrote a short treatise on the ethics of feudal relationships that circulated fairly widely." This treatise was included in various legal collections and it became a fundamental legal text. On Gratian, the "Father of canon law," and his collection of Latin sources of canon law see Landau. On Huguccio and his *Summa* on the *Decretum* see Pennington and Müller, especially the section entitled "The Summa Decretorum of Huguccio" written by Müller (142–60). The influence of his work is evinced by the fact that his glosses appear in several manuscripts of the *Decretum*. Furthermore, later glossators also quote his ideas. See the discussion of the glosses in Weigand.

10. On the unvirtuousness of Amis and Amiloun's acts and on their consequences, see Simonkay, "Friendly Knights" 17–21.

11. But not all. Cf. the Ciceronian theory, which allows deviation from virtue only if the life or reputation of one's friend is at stake: "cum emendati mores amicorum sint, tum sit inter eos omnium rerum consiliorum voluntatum sine ulla exceptione communitas, ut etiam si qua fortuna acciderit ut minus iustae amicorum voluntates adiuvandae sint, in quibus eorum aut caput agatur aut fama, declinandum de via sit, modo ne summa turpitudine sequatur;" "When the characters of friends are blameless, then there should be between them complete harmony of opinions and inclinations in everything without exception; and, even if by some chance the wishes of a friend are not altogether honourable and require to be forwarded in matters which involve his life or reputation, we should turn aside from the straight path, provided, however, utter disgrace does not follow" (17.61). In my view, here is the Christian element added to the traditional ideal of *amicitia perfecta* revealed: the knights commit unvirtuous deeds in the name of friendship, but Amis's original sin has nothing to do with Amiloun – that is why he is punished and

not be forgiven because he did not even hold on to his sworn brother. He sinned against Palamon in not being of his counsel and at his aid, a duty of sworn brothers: “thou sholdest trewely forthren me / in every cas, as I shal forthren thee — . . . Thus artow of my conseil without doute” (1137–41), “I . . . tolde thee my wo / As to my conseil, and to my brother sworn, / To forthre me . . . / For which thou art ybounden as a knight / To helpen me, if it lay in thy myght” (1146–50). Palamon’s words clearly define the responsibilities Arcite should have kept to. Furthermore, as Rock also points out, when Arcite is freed, he does not even attempt to help Palamon: he does not ask his friend, Perotheus, to whom he owes his escape, to save the other knight, too, nor does he collect rescue troops in Thebes for the aid of Palamon (Rock 421). Finally, he himself declares that he breaks with the other (“I defye the seurete and the bond / Which that thou seist that I have maad to thee,” 1604–05) and even states that in other circumstances he would kill him (“Nere it that thou art sik and wood for love, / And eek that thow no wepne hast in this place, / Thou sholdest nevere out of this grove pace, / That thou ne sholdest dyen of myn hond,” 1600–03).

My assumption that in order to understand the outcome of the story one should focus on the violation of sworn brotherhood rather than other transgressions might also be supported by another fact: right after the fall-out of the two knights follows the description of the exemplary friendship of Theseus and Perotheus, another addition by Chaucer to *Teseida* (Cooper qtd. in Rock 420).¹² Their affectionate love for each other¹³ gives a special emphasis to Arcite and Palamon’s enmity and strengthens the idea that the traditional values of friendship are at stake here.

While Rock agrees with Elizabeth Fowler in that the bond between Palamon and Arcite is based on various relationships, including “kinship, citizenship, class, sworn brotherhood, [and] knightly obligations” (Fowler qtd. in Rock 420) and states that “Arcite is thus repudiating more than simply an oath; he is, in fact, damaging his entire

at the same time tested in a way similar to Abraham’s test. See Simonkay, “Friendly Knights.”

12. We are told by the narrator that when one of the friends died, the other sought him out in hell. The two friends also appear in the *Metamorphoses* and in *Aeneid*, as well as in *Le Roman de la Rose* (see de Weever, “Perotheus”).

13. “. . . in this world he loved no man so / And he loved hym als tenderly agayn” (1196–97). Note that the wording is similar to what we find in *Amis*: “So wele tho children loved hem tho, / Nas never children loved hem so” (139–40).

constellation of bonds” (Rock 420–21), I would approach the issue from the opposite perspective. Since sworn brotherhood is traditionally superior to any other social bonds (including family relations, and also the bond that ties one to his lord),¹⁴ we cannot say that it is based on them. Rather, it seems that most of the time if the brotherhood prevails, the other bonds persist as well. Thus, it is because Arcite damages not only his other ties but also his friendship with Palamon, which he should esteem above all, that we can say that he is “damaging his entire constellation of bonds” in the name, or for the sake, of love.

Arcite’s excuse for his behaviour is expressed in his speech on the compelling power of love:

Love is a gretter lawe, by my pan,
 Than may be yeve of any erthely man.
 And therefore positif lawe and swich decree
 Is broken al day for love in ech degree.
 A man moot nedes love, maugree his heed,
 He may nat fleen it, thogh he sholde be deed. (1165–70)

As it seems, Arcite feels to be under the absolute conduct of love – similarly to the way the acts of sworn brothers are governed by their friendship in the extreme. Both types of affection are regarded as superior to anything else in the world: for Arcite love, for Amis and Amiloun friendship. Arcite justifies his breaking his oath by saying that love often makes men do so and Amis and Amiloun similarly transgress rules in the name of friendship. Furthermore, as one cannot live without friendship,¹⁵ in Arcite’s world view one cannot live without

14. Amiloun lets Amis delude his wife and sleep with her, Amis kills his children so that he can cure Amiloun from leprosy, and with Amiloun taking Amis’s place, they deceive everyone in their environment, especially the duke, who ordered the trial by combat. On friendship being superior to all, see Cicero: “Ego vos hortari tantum possum, ut amicitiam omnibus rebus humanis anteponatis; nihil est enim tam naturae aptum, tam conveniens ad res vel secundas vel adversas,” “All that I can do is to urge you to put friendship before all things human; for nothing is so conformable to nature and nothing so adaptable to our fortunes whether they be favourable or adverse” (5.17), and “[p]raestat amicitia propinquitati,” “friendship excels relationship” (5.19–20). In this context the word *propinquititas* refers to ‘neighbours,’ ‘fellow-citizens’ and ‘relatives’ at the same time; see note 2 to the passage.

15. See Aristotle: “ἀνευ γὰρ φίλων οὐδεὶς ἐλοιτ’ ἂν ζῆν ἔχων τὰ λοιπὰ ἀγαθὰ πάντα,” “no one would choose without friends, but possessing all other good things” (8.1) and Cicero: “sine amicitia vitam esse nullam,” “without friendship life is no life at all” (23.86).

love. Finally, as death does not put an end to friendship, one cannot escape love either, “though he should be dead.” It is clear that love and friendship are contrasted here, the same characteristics being attributed to each.

An essential difference is to be noted between the two concepts, though. While imperishable values are severely violated in both cases, the motivation of neglecting these rules is dissimilar: as Robert Stretter notes, too, Amis and Amiloun disobey the knightly virtues for the sake of their friendship – an altruistic, self-sacrificing love –, whereas Arcite neglects and betrays all morals that would otherwise bind him on the pretext of his desire for Emelye – a selfish, authoritarian love, which in Stretter’s words, “could not be more at odds with the ethic of mutual support that undergirds sworn brotherhood” (239).

Thus far the motivations of Arcite’s acts have been analysed thoroughly, while Palamon has scarcely been mentioned. My choice to deal with them separately rests on my conviction that Rock is right to a certain degree when she argues that while Arcite commits unforgivable sins under the governance of romantic love, Palamon “upholds the knightly duties fairly consistently” (416) – or, at least, it was not him who first turned against his friend, and he did not violate so many other principles as Arcite did. As Rock points it out, the difference in the two knights’ attitude is revealed in their reaction when catching sight of Emelye: while Palamon falls to his knees and prays to Venus unselfishly to let both of them escape, Arcite thinks only of himself and wants the girl for himself, by which he breaks his vow instantly, without thinking of his friend (Rock 417). I am also inclined to accept Lois Roney’s view that the difference in their apprehension of love makes the difference in their acts (qtd. in Rock 419). Since according to Palamon love is a matter of choice, while Arcite regards it as an irresistible force, Roney’s argument that if it had happened the other way round and Arcite had seen Emelye first “Palamon would have simply chosen not to love Emelye” seems acceptable (qtd. in Rock 419). We must not think, however, of the two characters in black-and-white terms.

Palamon, who might seem from the above analysis as – in Brooks and Fowler’s words – “morally superior to Arcite” (qtd. in Rock 427), acts in a questionable way when his fight with Arcite in the woods is interrupted by Theseus, and he reveals himself and Arcite to the king saying that both of them deserve death. To denounce a fellow knight in such a manner cannot wholeheartedly be regarded as a knightly deed.

Furthermore, he cannot be considered innocent in their separation, either, for it always takes two to make a quarrel: seeing his friend's irresistible devotion to Emelye, he could have given up on Emelye – it is a matter of choice, after all, at least in his world. On the other hand, Arcite, who is described by Roney as “insensitive to the feelings of others” (88–89 qtd. in Rock 426), evidently shows compassion when he thinks of his rival as “wrecched Palamoun / That Theseus martireth in prisoun” (1560–61). Thus, he might not have entirely forgotten about their association.

Although the two knights have fallen out, Chaucer seems to allude to their brotherhood here and there deliberately – as if he wanted to remind the audience that the tale told by the knight is in fact a story of friendship, and this story is governed by the traditional rules of friendship. Notwithstanding their animosity and his own betrayal, Arcite calls Palamon “brother” (1081) and “leeve brother” (1084) (both phrases used by Arcite, after the quarrel, at the end of his monologue in the prison), and “deere cosyn Palamon” (1234), and when Arcite is dying, Palamon is referred to as his “cosyn deere” (2764) by the narrator. What is more, just before their duel in the grove, which they undertake with the intention of killing the other, they are said to “heelp for to armen oother, / As freendly as he were his owene brother” (1651–52).

For many the decision of the two knights to fight until death might mean that in the contest between romantic love and sworn brotherhood the first surpasses the latter. Still, I see the complete victory of friendship in the outcome of the story. Although the two alleged friends fall out, the goddess of love becomes triumphant by Palamon eventually winning the hand of Emelye, the last will of Arcite obliterates Venus's success. Arcite does not lose Emelye but gives her up in favour of Palamon – although he evidently does not have a chance to live with Emelye happily ever after, since he is dying, he might as well wish that Palamon should not get her either. Moreover, he not only recommends Emelye to marry Palamon but also extols the virtues of his deadliest enemy that make him worthy of Emelye. At the end of the story it seems that the role of Emelye changes. In the course of the story she gives the impression of being an exception among the women appearing in romances in that she does not think of herself as a helpless object of male love. As Rock points out, in the temple of Venus “she prays neither to be *won by* nor *given to* the knight who loves her best, but rather that *he* be given to *her*. Although

she has been virtually invisible, always in the background of the *Knight's Tale*, Emelye is still an Amazon at heart, with a will to command her would-be lover" (426, emphasis in the original). At the end of the story, however, all her independence is taken: she assumes the role of the love-object, men decide about her, and she is simply given to Palamon. As Stretter writes of Egypt's bride in Lydgate's *Fabula Duorum Mercatorum*:

While we get at least some sense of Emelye's desires from her prayer in Diana's temple, the woman in the *Fabula* is given no agency whatsoever – no name, no voice, no inner life. Farvolden puts it succinctly: "Not acting, she is acted upon" . . . As in *Amis and Amiloun*, the woman in the *Fabula* functions primarily as an opportunity to showcase the calm, rational power of male friendship. She exists as a faceless token of exchange between men. (244)

What Stretter does not seem to realize is that at the end of "The Knight's Tale," Emelye becomes similar to the nameless girl in the *Fabula*.¹⁶

Regardless of whether scholars see Arcite's final act as humiliating from Emelye's perspective or not, they all agree that in the episode depicting Arcite's agony, the friendship of the two knights is *restored*. This, however, is a statement with which I do not entirely agree. Keeping in mind the principle that a friendship cannot ever have been true if it fails, I would rather say that it is *established* beside the death bed of Arcite – till then it has only been a fake one, an illusion. An evidence for this is that even before their actual argument, if we examine the knights' dialogue thoroughly, we can find clues indicating that their relationship might be problematic. At first it seems that Arcite is sensitive to his friend's woe and he is troubled by Palamon's cry when he asks: "Cosyn myn, what eyleth thee, / That art so pale and deedly on to see? Why cridestow? Who hath thee doon offence?" (1081–83). Such readiness to answer to a friend's misery is general in friendship romances. When Amiloun, for example, seeks his friend out after having a distressing dream of him, he finds Amis in the woods and asks: "Brother, . . . whi listow here / With thus mornand chere? / Who hath

16. According to Susan Crane, with this act "Arcite subsumes Emelye into a restored economy of brotherhood" (qtd. in Rock 428).

wrought the this wo?" (*Amis* 166–68). These friends, after extracting from their brothers the cause of their miseries, try to aid them in their need. Arcite, in contrast, without waiting for an answer from Palamon, continues with an impatient reprimand: "For Goddes love, taak al in pacience / Oure prisoun, for it may noon oother be. / Fortune hath yeven us this adversitee. / . . . / We moste endure it; this the short and playn" (1084–91). These kinds of words are alien to the spirit of sworn brotherhood and would be alien to a romance providing an example of perfect friends. Thus it seems that in "The Knight's Tale," while Palamon's first utterance displays passive affliction, Arcite's first speech act is a reprimand – an indicator of the utterer's active aggressive role throughout the poem, which, according to most scholars, leads to the dissolution of their friendship.

In Rocks words, "[t]he brotherhood of Palamon and Arcite seems truly dead" (420). In my view, it had been dead before Arcite's betrayal. They could not have been true friends if Arcite allowed himself to reply to Palamon's cry the way he did. Moreover, in the heat of their argument it turns out that they have a completely different world view, which is revealed not only by their acts but also by how they comprehend love. They lack the "accord in all things, human and divine," which would be by definition an essential element of true friendship.

In their vow they promised to hold together "[t]il that the deeth departe shal us tweyne" (1134). Nevertheless, at the beginning of the story, the illusionary death that foreshadowed their separation set them apart because they were only illusionary friends. As stated above, true friendship does not end with death – *Amis* and *Amiloun*, *Clanvowe* and *Neville*, and *Bloxham* and *Whytton* share even their grave with each other. The true friendship of Arcite and Palamon is established at the dying of Arcite, when the latter dismisses love as his main concern. When recommending Palamon to Emelye, he enumerates his friend's virtues, "trouthe, honour, knyghthede, / Wysdom, humblesse, estaat, and heigh kynrede, / Fredom, and al that longeth to that art" (2789–91), all that he himself abandoned for the sake of his desire. In the end, Arcite apprehends his faults and gives Emelye to Palamon, by which he does not *restore* their friendship but *establishes* it in its perfect form, which is superior to love.

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Mátyás Bánhegyi

Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary

Chaucer the Translator

A Medieval Forerunner of Modern Translation Theorists

Today the late-medieval poet Chaucer is regarded as a translator only by very few Translation Studies scholars in spite of the fact that Chaucer's contemporaries considered him a translator,¹ and current scholars on medieval literature likewise think of him as such. In his literary pieces, as was customary in the Middle Ages, he often used the works and plots created by other (not necessarily English) authors. Such non-English works were accessible to Chaucer in foreign languages, and they served as the starting points or ingredients for Chaucer's own literary creations. Examples are endless: the majority of the stories in *The Canterbury Tales* or *Troilus and Criseyde* also belong here (for a detailed discussion, see Holton). Nevertheless, there are three works by Chaucer which feature exclusively translations without any addition or literary reworking of the texts: these three "pure" translations are *Boece*, *The Romaunt of the Rose* and *Wretched Engenderynge of Mankynde*. Unfortunately, out of these three titles only one survived in full: the translation of Boethius' *De consolacione philosophiae* (of importance primarily from a philosophical and cultural historical perspective; henceforth referred to as *Boece*). *Boece* is one of Chaucer's lesser-known works, but it is relevant from the point of view of Translation Studies, as it contains numerous references in the glosses to the theory and practice of translation.² Apart from it, many of Chaucer's other works, notably *A Treatise on the Astrolabe*, *The Canterbury Tales* and *Troilus and Criseyde* also touch upon the issue of translation. This essay surveys Chaucer's views on translation, the discussion of which is preceded by the description of two theoretical approaches to rendition in foreign languages, prevalent in Chaucer's time. It will be argued that Chaucer's views on translation anticipate

1. E.g. according to a ballad by the French poet Eustache Deschamps (1346?–1406?): "great translator, noble Geoffrey Chaucer" (line 30 of the poem entitled "Grant translateur, noble Geoffroy Chaucier," Laurie and Sinnreich-Levi 70–71).

2. Chaucer's translation of *De consolacione philosophiae* was well known and enjoyed great recognition up until the eighteenth century thanks to editions by e.g. William Thynne, Thomas Speght or John Urry (Rudd 14 and 112). It is unfortunate that, partly due to this oblivion, Chaucer's views on translation could not be incorporated in modern translation theories.

quite modern arguments which Translation Studies as a discipline put forward only in the twentieth century. In other words: what Translation Studies perceived as a recent finding and regarded as a novelty may well have been raised by the fourteenth-century English poet.

So that we can understand Chaucer's views and practice of translation in the medieval context, we need to outline two theoretical models of translation that were decisive from the Middle Ages up to the Renaissance. It is noted here that the reasons for the existence, dominance and prevalence of such widely-held and unified views on translation are primarily the continued and influential presence of core Latin erudition, the prescriptive nature of the activity of the Church Fathers and the fact that the exchange of "high culture" took place through the mediation of a thin layer of educated scholars who were knowledgeable about contemporary translation theories. In fact, the sources of the above-mentioned two models of translation are the same: put in a simplified way, both draw on principles developed in Ancient Rome and yet, due to the different transfer "routes" of these ideas (mediated by rhetorical traditions vs. the patristic model) and several "ruptures" in the history of these models, finally two dissimilar approaches to translation emerged (Copeland, "Fortunes" 34).

The first model well-known in Chaucer's time developed around the fourth century AD: it emerged as a result of translating works of the Greek rhetorical tradition (Copeland, "Fortunes" 15), and was also influenced by Cicero's *De inventione* (Dugan 29). In the wake of the Aristotelian views and incorporating the ideas of Cicero's unfinished *De inventione*, this new rhetoric providing the foundations of this translation theoretical model had three main elements: (1) argumentative structure (*inventio*), (2) *elocutio*, which in modern terminology would roughly be equal to style, and (3) the art of presenting speeches, called *compositio* (including *dispositio*, *memoria* and *pronunciatio*). The model features *inventio* and *elocutio* as two distinct elements and advocates the primary role of *inventio* (argumentation) as separate from *elocutio* (rhetorical techniques). It may be claimed that due to this separation, meaning (which I equal here with the term *inventio* for the sake of simplification) and linguistic expression (which I associate here with the term *elocutio*) do not necessarily serve one and the same purpose in this model. This distinction between meaning and expression has later given rise to the possible complete separation of *elocutio* and *inventio* and the assumption that *elocutio* as a rhetorical means does not automatically serve, and should not by all means serve, the purpose of presenting the meaning of a text but rather functions as a decorative element. Such decoration was applied for the purpose of preserving

the powerfulness of the text (Copeland, "Fortunes" 18). Thus, *elocutio* and *inventio* are separate entities: they potentially function separately in texts and both have their unique implications for translation.

The second translation-theoretical approach prevalent in Chaucer's time was the patristic model, which was held by the Church Fathers, primarily by Saint Jerome (Copeland, "Fortunes" 19). Jerome and the Church Fathers in fact advocated this model as the only valid approach to translation. Jerome, who reached back to and cherished classical principles of translation, developed his own views promoting, in the first place, faithfulness to the original text and consented to minor but necessary changes for the closest preservation of the original meaning. Originally developed for Bible translations around the fourth century AD, this model asserts that the primary task of translation is to reproduce the single and unquestionable meaning of the text under translation and holds that linguistic expression is merely a means of conveying meaning. Faced with the dilemma of the possible opposition of *verbum pro verbo* (word for word) translation and *sensus pro sensu* (sense for sense; or more precisely put, meaning for meaning) translation, Saint Jerome advocates textual fidelity and the preservation of the original meaning of texts and prioritises this as the primary task of any translation activity (Copeland, *Rhetoric* 50–51; Copeland, "Fortunes" 21). For this reason and to avoid mistranslations, he recommends sticking to *verbum pro verbo* translation. Meaning and linguistic expression were seen to function hand in hand in an ideal situation, and linguistic expression was not viewed as a deceptive disguise. In fact, even the boundary between the meanings of the Latin words *sensus* (app. meaning) and *sententia* (app. expression) were blurred; this is likely to indicate that the difference between them no longer had such a decisive role to play as before, concerning thinking about and practising actual translation jobs (Minnis and Machan 169).

This shift in thinking seems to indicate that contemporary translation-oriented thinking in the late Middle Ages assumed that meaning is not that deeply hidden, it is not that deeply buried under the surface constituted by linguistic expression as it was believed before. In other words, *sensus* and *sententia* ceased to exist as two completely different principles potentially opposing each other. It may well be that this "appeasement" between *sensus* and *sententia* provided empowerment to produce creative translations in the late Middle Ages: this framework may have offered more freedom of expression for translators rather than limiting their text production by the imposition of strict rules concerning rigid adherence to *sensus* at the possible expense of *sententia*. Such an atmosphere of literary translation may have inspired

Chaucer to use texts created by other authors as raw materials and to present them to his audience in his creative translations and retelling. It is in this medieval context of thinking about translation that Chaucer expressed his own views on textual rendering in other languages.

Before going into details concerning the ideas expressed by Chaucer with respect to translation, it must be noted that in the Middle Ages there were no clear dividing lines between the “genres” of translation, the use of literary works written by other authors, and the creation of original literary pieces: plagiarism was an unknown concept up until the Renaissance. Given this, it is even more intriguing that Chaucer formulates his views on translation in connection with the works he translated: this way he ostensibly strives to separate his own work from other authors’ works. This becomes apparent in his “technical” translation of *Boece*, which can be regarded a professional technical text of a unique quality (Minnis and Machan 168) without any poetic addition on Chaucer’s part. In addition to *Boece*, Chaucer also refers to his views on translation in his *A Treatise on the Astrolabe*, *The Canterbury Tales*, and *Troilus and Criseyde*.

Chaucer incorporated scientific discussion on translation in his literary works rather than devoting a separate piece of writing to the topic or producing referent glosses. In the Prologue to *A Treatise on the Astrolabe*, Chaucer provides the following discussion concerning the rendering of meaning from one language into another:

But natheles suffise to the these trewe conclusions in Englissh as wel as sufficith to these noble clerkes Grekes these same conclusions in Grek; and to Arabiens in Arabik, and to Jewes in Ebrew, and to Latyn folk in Latyn; whiche Latyn folk had hem first out of othere dyverse langages, and writen hem in her owne tunge, that is to seyn, in Latyn. And God woot that in alle these langages and in many moo han these conclusions ben suffisantly lerned and taught, and yit by diverse reules; right as diverse pathes leden diverse folk the righte way to Rome. (28–40)

Chaucer argues that even if each language has its own linguistic system (“diverse reules”), it is possible to express the same meaning in each language; and wherever we approach meaning from, we will end up at the same place: “righte way to Rome”; that is, whichever language is used, the same meaning can be expressed. Thus, Chaucer asserts that in each language the Hieronymian concept of the one and the same meaning can be expressed, which seems to suggest that Chaucer deems the source and target texts potentially equivalent in terms of meaning.

Chaucer also addresses the issue of expressing the same meaning in the same language in diverse ways in the dialogue following “Sir Thopas” in *The Canterbury Tales* in the following fashion:

... ye woot that every Evaungelist
That telleth us the peyne of Jhesu Crist
Ne seith nat alle thyng as his felawe dooth;
But nathelees hir sentence is al sooth,
And alle acorden as in hire sentence,
Al be ther in hir tellyng difference.
For somme of hem seyn moore, and somme seyn lesse,
Whan they his pitous passioun expresse
I meene of Mark, Mathew, Luc, and John
But doutelees hir sentence is al oon. (947–52)

The quotation suggests that whatever linguistic expressions (this is what is referred to by the parallel of quoting the example of the four Gospels and basically the same “plot” behind each of the four texts) are used in a text (or in more precise linguistic terms, whatever the surface structure is), the meaning of the text remains the same if the same message (or referential meaning, if you prefer; here in the parallel: the Passion of Christ) is to be expressed. Based on the above, it appears that in Chaucer’s interpretation, the meaning of the source language text can be expressed not only in different languages but also through diverse wordings in the same language, or even the same message can be communicated with the help of different texts, which means that Chaucer finds all potential precisely formulated translation solutions equally acceptable and tantamount. This also signals that Chaucer does not believe that only one acceptable translation solution exists, but he asserts that there are several possible solutions.

Let us return to the discussion of *sensus* and *sententia* above and note that according to Chaucer’s late-medieval view, *sensus* and *sententia* live side by side in any text. From this it follows that in Chaucer’s views the meaning of the source text is not hidden deep below the surface of the actual source language linguistic expression. This means that irrespective of the surface structures of individual languages, Chaucer deems the translation of any source text theoretically possible and believes that translation is feasible without producing any significant changes in meaning. In other words, the meaning of any source text can be reproduced in any target text, and, as a consequence, equivalence between source and target texts exists. This view is expressed in “The Second Nun’s Prologue” in *The Canterbury Tales* (voiced by the

figure of the Second Nun). Actually, the lines below may also be interpreted as a foreword to Chaucer's translation of the legend of Saint Cecilia narrated in "The Second Nun's Tale":

... bothe have I the wordes and sentence
Of hym that at the seintes reverence
The storie wroot . . . (81–83)

The Nun claims (and of course through her the narrative voice; furthermore, Chaucer in his capacity as translator may also have declared his intention here) that she will render not only *wordes*, that is, the linguistic expression of the source text, but also *sentence*, i.e. the meaning of the source language text. This seems to indicate that both of these aspects are indispensable for a good and faithful translation. This suggests that Chaucer presupposes a kind of unity between linguistic expression and meaning with respect to both the source and target texts. The same idea is confirmed in *Troilus and Criseyde*:

And of his song *naught only the sentence*,
As writ myn auctour called Lollius,
But plainly, save oure tonges difference,
I dar wel seyn, in al, that Troilus
Seyde in his song, loo, *every word* right thus
as I shal seyn; . . . (393–98, emphases added)

Again, the *words* and the *sentence* of the source text are to be fully reproduced for faithfulness.³ Based on Chaucer's above views on translation, it can be concluded that his aim when translating is the concurrent rendering of both the linguistic expression and the meaning in the resulting target text. Chaucer also believes that it is possible to reformulate the linguistic expression and the meaning in the resulting target text without any conflict between these two textual features, and he actually advocates the faithful reproduction of both.

A similar theoretical approach to translation is revealed in Chaucer's translation of Boethius' *De consolacione philosophiae*. However, here the actual practice of translation applied by Chaucer is different. The translation features glosses in the target text, which provide background information and explanations for the reader. Using modern terminology, these glosses contain intercultural information

3. Even if Chaucer refers to a non-existing work as the source of *Troilus and Criseyde*, his claim that the reproduction of meaning is a vital aspect of translation holds valid.

facilitating the understanding of the text: the glosses explain differences between the perspectives of early Christian morality as expressed by Boethius and Christianity in Chaucer's age, and these notes also provide clarification and reconciliation concerning the differences and conflicts between pagan and Christian worldviews and cultures. The following lines from *Boece* illustrate Chaucer's provision of background information in the form of glosses:

What other thyng bywaylen the crynges of tragedyes but oonly
the dedes of Fortune, that with an unwar strook overturneth the
realmes of greet nobleye? (*Glose. Tragedye is to seyn a dite of a
prosperite for a tyme, that endeth in wrecchidnesse.*) (67–72)

Chaucer here uses a gloss to define Boethius' notion of tragedy for his contemporary readers. The use of glosses reveals that in the case of this translation the reproduction of meaning was Chaucer's primary concern, and that he deemed it important to provide some background explanation for his readers to facilitate their understanding of his text. Chaucer's practice may well signal his perception of different reader expectations and varied background knowledge available for his readers, which issue emerges in the twentieth century as one of the central concerns of Translation Studies regarding cultural differences (see Dimitriu ii) and the pragmatic implications of translation (see e.g. Hickey 1–8).

Chaucer's above views, even if they do not feature the terminology of modern Translation Studies, and even though they are not based on modern linguistic research, in our interpretation can rightfully be called "modern." The fact that Chaucer raises the question of *wordes* as opposed to *sentence* may signal, on the one hand, Chaucer's recognition of differentiating between the meaning of a text and its linguistic form with respect to translation, and, on the other hand, his conviction that these two features both contribute to a successful target text. It is also noteworthy that, concerning the translation of the technical text of *De consolacione philosophiae*, Chaucer deems the rendering of meaning primarily important (as indicated by the incorporation of numerous glosses), while he regards the linguistic expressions used in a target text as a poetic matter. Perhaps it is not a too far-fetched supposition to make that, by claiming the above, Chaucer apparently differentiates between the nature of the translation of technical texts (here: a text on philosophy) and literary texts (here: literature translated by Chaucer), which is a very relevant difference emphasised by genre-conscious modern Translation Studies.

In order to provide further evidence of the modernity of Chaucer's views on translation and to illustrate that Chaucer's thinking raises issues Translation Studies begins to discuss only in the twentieth century, a brief comparison between Chaucer's views and the modern classics of the theory of Translation Studies follows below. Parallels will be drawn between some crucial theoretical points noted by Chaucer and modern translation theory. As already pointed out above, Chaucer believes that each language has its own system of rules and that it is possible to express the same meaning in any language. This notion is very similar to one of the most often quoted positivistic claims in Nida and Taber's *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, phrased by the authors as "every language has its own genius" (Nida and Taber 53). Based on their experience of Bible translation, Nida and Taber attest that whatever is formulated in one language can certainly be formulated in another. This is exactly the same theoretical supposition as the one held by Chaucer. Chaucer also believes that it is possible to express the same idea when one translates from one language into another without compromising either meaning or linguistic expression. Thus, it is possible both in theory and in practice to produce a target language text that is equivalent with the given source language text. This attitude provides the foundations to those of Chaucer's works that feature pure translations (e.g. *Boece*) and also to the retelling of stories which were (partly) made available to Chaucer himself and his audience through translation. Without accepting the existence and the theoretical notion of equivalence between source and target texts, Chaucer would never have relied on translation in any of his literary works.

Chaucer also voices the view that the same meaning can be phrased in diverse ways in any language. This idea reappears in Translation Studies in two ways: in the form of intralingual transfer and as the choice between potential competing target language solutions. On the one hand, this notion can be linked to the precise understanding of the source text through the translator's reformulation of the source text, which may be connected to Jakobson's (234) notion of intralingual transfer (i.e. rephrasing the meaning in diverse ways in the source language; intralingual transfer is interpreted, in the scope of the present paper, as a means of understanding the source text). Based on Jakobson, it may be claimed that reformulation in the source language helps the translator understand the source text better: during intralingual transfer the translator rephrases the source text for himself in the source language in order to make the input text more readily, more easily and more fully understandable before commencing the actual job of translating. On the other hand, the concept that the same meaning can be

phrased in diverse ways in any language seems to indicate that Chaucer may have been assessing competing translation solutions when finalising his target texts and must have made conscious translator choices. Furthermore, the solutions he finally chose may also have been influenced by poetic decisions. The question of working with competing translation solutions and the idea that the translator follows some principle in the selection of translation solutions for the purposeful reproduction of the textual function of the source text is an independent research field in modern Translation Studies and is called the research of translation techniques, whereas systematic application of such solutions in a text of translation is called translation strategy (Molina and Hurtado Albir 498–99). Thus, it can be concluded that Chaucer already touched upon the questions of intralingual transfer as well as translation techniques and possibly the notion of translation strategy.

Chaucer's glosses in *Boece* suggest that Chaucer was well aware of cultural differences between Christianity presented in *Boece* and the Christianity of his own readers, different reader expectations and the diverse background knowledge of his audience, and through including explanatory glosses he tried to prevent potential misunderstandings such differences in pragmatic knowledge may lead to. This shows that Chaucer perceived the problematic nature of the translation of realias (gloss on tragedy above), which are culture-specific objects and notions that do not exist in the target language, and they still need to be rendered in the translation as they have some specific function. To clarify such realias, Chaucer opted for including relevant information in the glosses attached to his translation. Furthermore, it appears that Chaucer was also aware of the difficulties caused by differences in the pragmatic knowledge of Boethius and his audiences, and he provided his contemporary readers with background information, thereby compensating for their lack of knowledge and facilitating their understanding of his translation.

Based on the comparison of Chaucer's and modern translation theorists' views on translation, it can be concluded that Chaucer's views touch upon numerous theoretical questions modern Translation Studies undertook to address only in the twentieth century. As early as in the fourteenth century, Chaucer already makes references to some of the fundamental theoretical issues Translation Studies has been intensely discussing in the past decades. In my understanding, this makes Chaucer a fourteenth-century poet who can also be regarded a forerunner not only of modern translation scholars but also of modern translation theorists.

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Zsuzsanna Péri-Nagy

Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary

Nicholas Love's *Mirroure*

Some Directions towards Meditation and Contemplation

Nicholas Love's *Mirroure of the Blessed Lyf of Jesus Christ* was composed as part of an existing rich tradition of manuals written to instruct upon and help meditation and contemplation (Sargent, Introduction). The book was the Middle English translation of the *Meditationes Vitae Christi*, a highly influential work of devotion, attributed to Bonaventure, but written by the Franciscan Johannes Caulibus in the first part of the fourteenth century. The *Mirroure* contained the official approbation of Archbishop Arundel,¹ appended to it in 1410, guaranteeing its appropriateness for the instruction of the faith and the refutation of Lollardy. The translation was done for the laity to serve private devotion through meditation. Nonetheless, by Love's explicit claim (10) that he wrote his work primarily for an active, lay audience, the *Mirroure* becomes a new initiative. This characteristic of the text attracted critical attention which resulted in different interpretations. Michelle Karnes, in her book on the philosophical foundations of medieval imagination, devoted a subchapter entitled "Love's revisionary translation" to Nicholas Love's *Mirroure* (207–36). Here she supplies a thorough analysis of the changes Love made to the original Latin *Meditationes* in order to limit the capacity of his lay readers to reach any higher than affective meditation. Although her main idea that Love limited himself to the presentation of the technique of meditation seems to be correct, the arguments Karnes uses to prove that these transformations deprive the original text from its very sophisticated goals to instruct how to reach high contemplation do not seem convincing enough. My investigations through a close reading of the text of the *Mirroure* yielded different results, in the light of which I propose a more differentiated, nuanced approach to Love's supposed restrictions as regards the question of contemplation. In this paper I will attempt to present my interpretation of Karnes's arguments with an exposition of my theory on how Love tackled this issue. I would assert

1. Thomas Arundel (1353–1414), Archbishop of York from 1388, then Archbishop of Canterbury from 1399. See Aston.

that, although teaching and fostering meditation is the primary aim of Love, he did not exclude his audience from all possibility of reaching and experiencing contemplative phases.

1. The Question of Distancing

The main objection of Karnes against Love's method of translation is that he, modifying the original text, distances his readers from the scenes to be meditated upon. A precise charge refers to such passages where in the original scene the meditator was invited to witness the scene directly. The addition of certain clusters by Love, in Karnes's views, alienates the readers from the liveliness of the scenes. Karnes claims that this kind of reformulation "decreases the intensity and extent of desire" (402). She explains: "Love's divergence from his source in this matter indicates the lesser power that imagination has for him: in the *Mirror*, imagination creates distance from rather than proximity to the imagined scenes" (396). Another argument of hers is that Love omitted references to touching from the text of *Meditationes*. Karnes accuses further Love's attitude as distancing not only his readers from the scenes, but distancing even himself from his readers and the meditations he recommends.

In my view a fine-tuning of such assertions would be more appropriate: although it is true that in some cases Love does not present the scenes in the same detail as the *Meditationes* does, in the majority of cases there are no important differences. The texts quoted by Karnes are meant to illustrate that in the *Meditationes* the author calls for a direct identification with the imagined scenes, whereas Love in the *Mirroure* alienates his audience by adding the clusters "by inward imagination" or, "by devout ymaginacion," etc. to it. Although such additions may indeed interfere with a simpler way of formulation and thus they may cause a slight alteration to the reader's inner process of reception as opposed to that formulated in the *Meditationes*, in my reading these clusters were not intended by Love to serve primarily this purpose. They were added rather as a means of precision, which resulted from a more developed, specialised form of exposition of the meditative techniques that have emerged by the time of Love. Similar contemporary texts also testify to the fact that the conceptual set and vocabulary describing the techniques of meditation in such manuals had become more sophisticated by this time than those at the time of

the creation of the *Meditationes*, that is, some hundred years earlier (Baier). They also signal the difference between the complexity and precision of the personal style and intention of the two authors, the author of the *Meditationes*, and Love.

There are passages where in the original scene the meditator was invited to witness the scene directly. Love's translated passages all contain added clusters to the original Latin text: "Jesus then walked between the two sisters"² is contrasted with Love's variant: "we mowe se by devout ymaginacion how oure lord Jesus goþ before bytwix bo tweyn sistres" (133). In my interpretation, these alterations are marks of Love's consistent endeavour for more precision in his describing the methodology of the technique of meditation. An eloquent example follows. In the *Meditationes* we read: "The Lord Jesus opened the gates of Paradise which up to that time had been closed to humanity, and entered in triumph and joy, with all that happy and magnificent multitude" (Taney et al. 323).³ Love's version is as follows: "Nowe go we up by devout contemplacion to oure lorde Jesu beholdyng in ymaginacion of hevenly þinges by likenes of erþely binges, howe he with alle lat for-seide worþi & blisfulle multitude of holi soules, oponyng heven 3ates þat were before þat tyme sperede a3eynus mankynde . . . seide, Faþer I þonke þe" (216, emphasis added).

The mentioning of the "inner eye" and similar technical terms were present in other treatises about meditation-contemplation, amplifying the vocabulary and set of notions to rend more precision to the technique. Walter Hilton also develops a complex theory of how meditation works and uses the notion of the "inner eye" which enables the sensing and observation of spiritual realities. In one passage he evokes the figure of the Virgin Mary as the saint *par excellence*, and Hilton uses the term "goostley ighe," a notion that Love uses in his precise instructions how to meditate upon a specific text: ". . . for to see bi goosteli ighe the habundance of grace in hire hooli soule whan sche was heere lyvyng" (Hilton, *Scale* 126). Thus, I would rather conclude that these added clusters serve, in Love's text as in other contemporary ones, precision rather than distancing; a precision which deletes

2. "Vadit ergo Dominus Iesus medius inter duas sorores" (*Meditationes* 66, CCCM 153.230).

3. "Dominus autem Iesus cum uniuersa ilia felici et magnifica multitudine aperiens ianuas Paradisi usque tune humano generi clausas, intrauit triumphaliter et gaudienter" (*Meditationes* 105, CCCM 153.342).

the ambiguity of the original and decides for one specific way of seeing: seeing inwardly.

Another type of example may also be brought up. Where the *Meditationes* advises about regarding Christ, “at this point regard him lovingly for a long while” (247),⁴ the *Mirroure* has, “[t]ake now here gude hede by inwarde meditacion of alle hees peynes” (171). Although there is a difference between the two texts, I consider it to be minor, and it does not mean that Love would have attempted to distance his readers from the sight of Christ on the Cross. The reference to the Passion is rather attributable to the fact that by Love’s time the cult of the meditations on the Passion itself had gained a rich recent tradition, as manuals, tracts, and *Hours* on the Passion abound in these times. Love recurs to this tradition of devotion here, expecting that it will find resonance with his readers’ expectations and sensibility trained by these kin-texts.

Touching, a point raised by Karnes (395), according to my reading, is as present in the *Mirroure* as it is in the *Meditationes*. Here we have: “You too go with them: help carry the boy and observe carefully each and every thing said and done because they are sacred actions” (39),⁵ as opposed to Love’s text: “Now lat vs go with hem by devout contemplacion, & help we bere þat blessed birþen þe child Jesus in oure soule by deuocion” (48). I sense the essence is present as regards touching, as Love also agrees in encouraging his readers to touch Jesus, in the course of imagination.

An argument for Love’s method of encouraging the direct participation of his readers in the meditated scenes, just as the *Meditationes* does, is the presence of a great number of passages in the *Mirroure* which Love translated verbatim, without alterations, from the source text. These instruct the readers to meditate by rendering themselves present in the scenes to be meditated upon. These pervade the whole text of the *Mirroure* from the *Proheme* to the end. First, already in his *Proheme*, Love translates the passage of initiation into meditation from the *Meditationes*, in some parts complementing it with short explanations but leaving the core of the methodology intact, translating it completely, without tempering it, without any arrangements for “distancing.” The passage instructs the meditator to be present in

4. “Hic igitur eum diligenter considera per longam moram” (*Meditationes* 47, CCCM 153.165).

5. “Vade et tu cum eis: adiua portare puerum et conspice attente singula que dicuntur et fiunt, que deuotissima sunt” (*Meditationes* 11, CCCM 153.45).

his soul and use the “bodily wittes,” the senses, partaking in the imagined scenes and actions of the characters. Here the *Meditationes* itself makes some precisions:

Wherefore þou þat coueyest to fele treuly þe fruyt of þis boke. þou most with all þi þought & alle þin entent, in þat manere make þe in þi soule present to þoo þinges þat bene here written seyð or done of oure lord Jesu, & þat bisily, likyngly & abydyngly, as þei þou herdest hem with þi bodily eres, or sey þaim wiþ þin eyen þon puttyng away for þe tyme, & leuyng alle oþer occupacions & bisynesses. (13–14)

Love also translates a passage of the *Meditationes* which states that the martyrs could endure the pains of torments as a result of meditating on the Passion of Christ while being tortured, because meditation helped them to a spiritual exchange of bodies between them and Christ: “hire hertes bene more properly in cristes body by deuote meditacion of his blessed lif þan in hir owne bodies” (13). This is a powerful example which Love brings in by translation to encourage participation in the process and scenes of meditation, showing how efficacious such a participatory meditation can be. He also translates another section, now about the Incarnation, (a passage describing the heavenly scene where God sends the angel Gabriel on his mission), emphasising the presence of the meditator: “imagine of gostly þinge as it were bodily & þenk in þi herte as þou were present in þe si3t of þat blessed Lord” (22). Or later, the same happens with a part describing the birth of Christ: “And so ymagine we & set we oure mynde & our þouht as we were present in þe place where þis was done at Betlehem” (44). Or another passage: “Now take we here gude enent as we were present in alle þat is here spoken of for þis is a fulle deuout matire & profitable to vs” (59). The list could be continued. Moreover, Love translated the passage to stress the interaction with the characters in their actions as if the meditator were present: “Wherefore we devoutly wirshippyng & honouryng him take we oure leue at him at þis tyme, & go we forþ with oure Lord Jesu & his modere, in þe forseide wey” (57). Love’s translation is realised in such a way that it suggestively brings the reader inside the scene and makes him/her a real character in it, joining Jesus and his mother in leaving John the Baptist in the true Bonaventuran way. Thus, Love also encourages and gives instructions for the same participatory imagination as the *Meditationes* does. Again,

Love translated a passage from the *Meditationes*, without alterations, encouraging the reader to speak to Jesus, the main protagonist of the scene: “Wherefore we takyng gude entent by inwarde compassion of him in his jurneye, speke we to him devoutly in hert þenkyng in þis manere” (65). Love even adds a comment later: “by deuote ymaginacion as þou were bodily present . . . comfort oure lady & þat felawshipe praying hem to ete” (190).

A further example demonstrates that Love writes with a rhetoric which encourages personal involvement in the process of meditation while writing. After the long narrative text of the *Mirroure*, which was hitherto alternated only by the addresses to the readers, Love abruptly changes character. The author now addresses directly the protagonists of the scene described, that is, the Pharisees, thus drawing with himself his readers into the very scene to be meditated upon: “A fooles & foly consele, (hap not of 3ou þe wisman wryten), þat þere is no wisdam nor consele azeynus god?” (134). The emotionally charged speech of reprehension continues for some lines.

The *Meditationes* provides as many details in his instruction as Love, therefore it directs the meditation to the same extent as him. There is a difference, however, in the use of the address used in the Latin source text and that of the *Mirroure*,⁶ by changing the address from the second-person imperative (“You too go with them”) to the first-person plural (“lat us here go”). The choice of the person of the address causes in the *Meditationes* a commanding tone, whereas in the *Mirroure* it creates a participatory one. When writing instructions for the meditations or encouraging his readers to imagining the scene to follow, Love used in a great number of cases the second person plural but by this device (being, by the way, a gesture highly original to him in the context of late medieval English devotional translations and manuals of meditation-contemplation),⁷ he indicates rather an endeavour to create the impression of a common participation in the process of meditation with his readers.

6. Karnes critiques the usage of the first person plural instead of the second-person singular command, stating that: “Further, by changing the address from the second-person command (‘You too go with them’) to the first-person plural (‘lat us here go’), Love replaces the *Meditationes*’ union between the meditator and the biblical scene with one between himself as author and the meditator. The meditator of the *Meditationes* has the freedom to engage directly with the Bible, whereas Love, attaching himself to the meditator, permits an engagement that is decidedly more textual and remote” (396).

7. See the works of Richard Rolle, the *Cloud* author, Walter Hilton, etc.

This interpretation is supported by further instances. The first is when Love writes about his hopes that his readers might experience spiritual benefits in the course of meditation, asking humbly for their prayer for him. Although this was a traditional closing formula, a sort of *captatio benevolentiae*, Love succeeds in using a personal tone: “And amongis opere who so rediþ or heriþ þis boke felyng any gostly swetnes or grace þereþorth, pray he for charite specialy for þe auctor, & þe drawere oute þerof, as it is written here in English, to þe profite of simple & deuoute soules as it was seide before” (14).

Furthermore, Love hints to the benefit of such meditations by recounting a mystical experience of a certain person made in the course of meditating on the Passion, recounted in the chapter of the Last Supper, by which he most presumably means himself. Through the close similarity of this formulation with that of the Pauline model,⁸ his contemporary audience would have deciphered the *incognito* in the same way, identifying the author and enjoying a first-hand account of the fruits of the same meditations they were about to practice.

A further reason for the changes from first person singular to first person plural by Love is stylistic unity. For example, Love changes to the first person plural: “if we take here gude hede” (75), just as in the opening sentence of the next paragraph, clearly out of a concern for stylistically unifying the whole passage. In the *Meditationes* the corresponding section contains a passage with first person singular, followed by another one using second person plural, and then switching again to the second person singular in the respective opening instructional sentences. No other reasons, neither of content nor of anything else explain this variation of usage of the *Meditationes*, most likely a purely random accident. Thus Love, by his deliberate changes of address created the stylistic unification of the text as well as a more direct, participatory tone towards his audience.

2. Access to Contemplation

It is true that Love did not formulate the aim of his translation of the *Mirroure* in the same way as the *Meditationes* does. The latter states that the ultimate aim of the practice of meditation is accessing further stages, that is, contemplation. Although the *Meditationes* does not offer

8. See 2 Cor. 12.2.

a teaching about how to reach this phase (except in a tract attached to it about *Contemplation*), it does refer to this perspective several times. The *Mirroure*, in contrast, does not formulate such a goal explicitly, but it reveals systematically that there is more to follow after meditation for those who are not carnal and do not content themselves with persisting only in carnal thoughts and aims. When making the differentiation between the “carnal” and the more “spiritual” readers, Love cuts across the boundaries of the clerical–lay opposition and creates another categorization according to the spiritual maturity of his readers, let them be lay or cleric. Also, Love emphasises the materiality of the thinking of the “simple soules” (10), and that meditating upon Christ’s humanity befits them better than the contemplation of his divinity. Nonetheless, he strongly modifies his statement later on by adding passages where contemplation is forwarded. Thus, in the course of his text, he does not limit himself to presenting only an exclusivist model of meditation from which all traces of accessing higher contemplation are excluded. As these occasions are quite frequent and occur on various levels of the construction of his text, it seems more probable that they are the fruit of a conscious intention rather than simple lapses of memory.

Love does not intend to exclude actives from high contemplation definitively, although he does not expect such endeavours on part of the majority of his readers. He fashions his text for this majority, the “commune,” who will stay content with meditation, the success and accessibility of which he can guarantee. However, he does not exclude that some of his readers may aspire higher, and, which is also a crucial element of the game, they are the ones who are called by divine choice to more. For them he constructs a web of helping accessories which may offer assistance in acceding to contemplative experiences. These accessories are of various nature and they permeate the text of the *Mirroure* from beginning to end.

Love, besides offering texts for the meditation on the manhood of Christ, also brings forth the access to His divinity by various means. Firstly, Love translated various passages relating to contemplation from the original text of the *Meditationes*. Secondly, he also keeps (that is, translates) passages about issues of contemplation, such as the description of the heavenly court, encouraging the reader to imagine even the divine figure of God the Father, of the angels, etc., which was, according to the classical monastic tradition, the prerogative of contemplation, exceeding the subjects pertaining to meditation. Thirdly,

Love repeatedly inserted passages about contemplation by other authors, mainly from Bernard of Clairveaux, William of Saint Thierry and others, which (although most often briefly) provide a description of the basic elements of contemplation. Fourthly, Love recommended further reading on contemplation when explaining his excision of the *Tract on Contemplation of the Meditationes*, quoting the works of Walter Hilton, which were the most recent texts available in English about this issue and which offered a relation of the topic suited to the special state and needs of a lay readership.

Love's own words from his *Proheme*, which, quoting William of St. Thierry's *Epistola ad fratres de Monte Dei*, seem to suggest that he is regarding his readers as being only capable of carnal thoughts:

contemplacion of þe monhede of cryste is more liking, more spedfull, & more sykere þan is hy3e contemplacion of þe godhed, ande þerfore to hem is pryncipally to be sette in mynde be ymage of crystes Incarnacion, passion & Resurreccion so that a symple soule þat kan not þenke bot bodyes or bodily þinges mowe have somewhat accordynge unto is affecion where wit he maye fede & stire his devocion. (10)

In this he follows a well-established tradition. Jacques de Vitry wrote in very similar terms. This important passage of Love's *Proheme* is often quoted to illustrate that Love supposed only the capacity of material thinking of his readers. However, two important elements are usually not observed. First, Love uses the comparative form to describe the capacity of his readers to meditate on the humanity of Christ: "more lyking, more spedeful, more sikere," which is not suggesting complete exclusion of other possibilities as would be the choice of other adjectives as e.g. "only" or "most." The comparative form "more" leaves room for other options as well, for an eventual capacity of contemplating the divinity. Furthermore, the citation is usually not quoted to the end. The concluding lines of the paragraph change the outcome altogether. Love explains that in his book the scenes describing heavenly realities will be done according to the Gregorian principles: "þerfore is þe kyngdome of heuene likenet to erþly þinges. þat by þo þinges þat bene visible & þat man kindly knoweþ he be stirede & rauyshede to loue & desire gostly inuisible þinges, þat he kindly knoweþ not" (10). This implies that the meditation on the heavenly scenes depicted similarly to the earthly realities will lead to contemplative experiences: the

choice of words as “ravished” and “spiritually desire” pertain to the vocabulary describing contemplation. Thus Love, although admitting that the “symple soules” tend to be more attuned to material thoughts and thus to the practice of meditation, he leaves the possibility of, and even refers to, acceding to contemplation.

Hilton expounds the theory that the humanity and divinity of Christ are united; therefore it is possible to reach the one through beholding the other:

For in the persone of Jhesu aren two kyndes, that is, God and man, fulli ooned togidere. Bi the vertu of this blissid oonyng, which mai not be seid ne conceived bi mannes wit, the soule of Jhesu receyved the fulheed of wisdom and love and al goodnesse. As the apostel seith: Plenitudo divinitatis inhabitavit in [ipso] corporaliter. That is: the Godhede was ooned fulli to the manhede in the soule of Jhesu, and so bi the soule dwellide in the bodi. The mynde of the manhede of oure Lord upon this wise — that is, for to bihoolden the vertues and the overpassinge grace of the soule of Jhesu — schulde be comfortable to a mannys soule. (Hilton, “Epistle” 126)

Love has the same perception of the two natures, human and divine, united implicitly, and he often treats the two together. It is true that Love does not focus on the divinity as pointedly as the *Meditationes* does, but he repeatedly implies it by offering occasions for meditation on the divinity of Christ. He is not completely restrictive, and thus a more nuanced picture emerges here again from his text.

The author of the *Meditationes* wrote and Love translated several passages which emphasise the dual nature of Christ, both his manhood and his divinity, and thus they encourage the reader to meditate on both: “nozt only gostly in soule of his godhed, as illumynet a tauht of him, bot also in his bodily sizt” (45). After the passage of the Last Supper, Love translates about faith: “In feiþ also he enformede hem & stablet hem more perfiteley in byleue of his godhede” (155). In the scene of the Ascension, Love writes about how seeing the earthly implies seeing the divine: “hevenly thinges by likeness of erþerly thinges” (214). Love also counts on the working of grace which can reach everyone and which elevates the soul to unknown states of spiritual advancement, as exemplified in the scene of the Ascension: “Whoso hap grace inwardly to beþenke & diligently to discusse alle þe processe

of þis blessed and worþi sermon, skilfully he sal be stired in to þe brennyng loue of Jesu & likynglye reste in the swetnes of his blessed doctrine" (156).

Love also discusses issues which pertain to contemplation according to the classical theories of contemplation. Such is the meditation on divine realities of the Heaven, of the transcendental creatures as angels, and finally of the Divine Persons in their heavenly glorious essence, which were considered to be issues where meditation could transcend into the higher phase of contemplation. Referring to the scene of the Heavenly Court, the discussion between God the Father and Gabriel, Sargent (22) remarks that the description of the Father's face is shorter, the details are not translated by Love. This could have other reasons as well, not only the restriction of "contemplative issues." The same concern seems to operate here as later in the description of the Trinity, where limitation appears to be motivated by fear of heresy. In spite of all this, Love identifies verbatim the reading of the chapter on the Council in Heaven with contemplation: "onlich as a manere of parable & deuote ymaginacion styryng men to love god . . . And þus mykel & in þis maner may be seide & þought by *deuoute contemplacion* of þat was done aboue in heuen byfore þe Incarnacion of jesu, now go we done to erþe" (19, emphasis added). It is also of some interest that this scene of the Heavenly Court is one which was included in a great part with a close textual faithfulness into the text of the first N-Town Play, following the appearance of the figure named *Contemplatio*, unique to the English Mystery cycles. The indebtedness of the creation of this scene and of *Contemplacio* to Love's text is attested by several scholars (see Fletcher; Beadle 13–15).⁹ Presenting a heavenly scene in itself was recurrent in other plays as well as in other genres of religious literature. Nevertheless, the congruence of Love's usage of the term "contemplacio" in relation to this scene of the Heavenly Court (which in this form, with the debate of the four daughters of God was unique to the *Mirroure* and thus served as an identifying factor for the source-study of the drama) and the creation of a distinct, unprecedented figure of *Contemplacio* by the author of the N-Town text suggests an identification of the scene with this high form of spiritual activity by Love and also by the contemporaries.

Love translated the passage of Bernard from the *Meditationes* about grace, how it transforms essentially the mind and the soul,

9. For the influence of Love's *Mirroure* on the creation of the N-Town Cycle, see Davis; Sugano; Spector. See also *The Mary*.

premises of what happens in contemplation. If he did not intend this for his audience, or to leave the possibility, why did he translate such a passage? Love writes, paraphrasing Bernard: “bryngyng with hym so grete & so hye 3iftes of grace, þat it semeþ to þe soule, þat he faileþ in hire self, & lese mynde” (19). The description fits classical expositions of ecstatic rapture exactly, where the soul and the mind are both transformed, taken out of the natural realm. Later a very similar phrasing is repeated in the scene of the mystical experience and of the Pentecost. Bernard writes about prayer and ascetism, but Love informs his audience about these details, considering his readership as being worthy and susceptible of such expositions, thus preparing them for later descriptions of contemplative experiences.

In other passages Love openly encourages the aspiration to contemplation. He translates from the *Meditationes* a passage about contemplation, *expressis verbis* stating that whoever aspires to reach contemplation should exercise prayer. In the passage on the Pater Noster, in the chapter of Jesus’s prayer on the hill, we read: “Also if þou wolt come to heuenly contemplacion & fele gostly swetenes þat is felt of fewe chosen souls, & knowe þe grete graciose 3iftes of oure Lord god, þat mowen be felt bot not spoken, be a man of praiere” (83).

He continues in the same vein, offering teaching on contemplation, even emphasising that simple souls and unlettered persons may accede to contemplation by prayer and even to greater gifts of grace:

For by the exercise of praiere specialy *a man comeþ to contemplacioun* & þe felyng of heuenly þinges. Here mowe we see of hou grete gostly myzt & vertue is deuout preiere. And to confirmation hereof of al þo þinges þat bene seide before, þat holy writte and doctours seyinges fully preuene. Forþermore we haue a special profe in þat we seen euery day by *experience diuerse persones simple & vnlettred*, by þe vertue of praiere gete & haue alle þo þinges that ben seid before, & *many mo gretter 3iftes of grace*. (109, emphases added)

Furthermore, Love translates from the *Meditationes* a passage introducing the Passion where it is written that meditating on the Passion brings one to real contemplation, to a new state of grace: “to a neue state of soule . . . þat he never supposede before” (160), and which new state seems to be more than mere meditation, as it offers a

sensation in advance of the heavenly joys, which does pertain only to the realm of contemplation:

Of þe which he shuld fele a newe compassion & a newe loue, & haue newe gostly confortes, þorh þe which he shold perceyue him self turned as it were in to a newe astate of sole, in þe which astate þoo foreside gostly felynges, shold seme to him as a nerneste & partie of þe blisse & ioy to come. (160)

Closing the meditations on the Passion, Love adds a passage of importance, again a recounting of the possible mystical contemplation:

Sopely þis siht of oure lord Jesu hangyng so on þe crosse by deuote ymaginacion of þe soule, is so luyng to sume creatours þei felen sumtyme, so grete lykyng not onely in soule bot also in þe body þat þei kunne not telle & þat noman may knowe, bot onely he þat by experience feleþ it. (179)

Love does not elaborate whether the quoted persons are secular or clerics but writes about high contemplation, equating it with feeling spiritual sweetness, according to the Rolleian model, extending it also to the “symple soules.”

To the scene about the Transfiguration, Love added another important text in which he refers to the “chosen souls.” The scene itself is of significance, as it is the scene when Christ revealed his divine glory and essence, an issue of classical high contemplation rather than of meditation. Love explicitly refers to the possibility that to some chosen souls God may grant special spiritual understanding and the experience of a spiritual sweetness and comfort:

Þis is þe processe of þe gospel, in þe which whoso haþ grace of gostly vndirstanding & sweetness may se many notabylytes . . . & to feruent deuocion & loue of god, & speciali he þat haþ felyng aboute kynde ziuen by speciale grace may tast & haue miche gostly confort, *þat he graunt us* part of Jesus Crist, Amen. (116, emphasis added)

Love applies here the same terminology of contemplation he uses some pages later in his mystical experience, as well as the classical Hiltonian terms exposed in the *Scale* denoting the prerequisites of contemplation: “gostly understandyng,” feeling the “gostly swetenes and comfort.”¹⁰ Love does not differentiate here either between secular or monastic, he is all inclusive as the usage of the first person plural in his prayer testifies. Personal exegesis, interpretation of divine realities, and acquiring wisdom are all linked to sweetness, tasting and feeling. These all depend on the free distribution of divine grace, which enables even the simple ones as well as the more educated to accede to spiritual heights if they are worthy.

Love translated his source-text, the *Meditationes*, for the “symple soules” in a way to provide them with a tool facilitating meditation. Thus he answered the ever-growing thirst of his late-medieval lay compatriots for devotional literature. At the same time, he was one of the first clerical authors to acknowledge the possibility that lay persons may also be granted access to more elevated spiritual experiences than meditation. He fashioned his text with this recognition in mind, offering some directions towards contemplation, too, for those of his audience who were eventually blessed with a more acute sense for spiritual advancement, let them be clerical or lay.

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10. Hilton also uses the term “special grace” to denote the same concept: “But I mene of special grace felt bi inspiracioun of the Hooli Goost, in manere as it is bifore seid. The comone grace, that is charité, lasteth hool whatsoever a man doo, as longe as his wille and his entente is trewe to God . . .” (*Scale* 245).

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Tamás Karáth

Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Piliscsaba

Women Not to Preach?

Margery Kempe as an Unlicensed Preacher

“Once a man criticized my desire for knowledge by saying that it was not fitting for a woman to possess learning because there was so little of it. I replied that it was even less fitting for a man to possess ignorance because there was so much of it.” (Christine de Pizan 193)

Before writing this article, I found some gratification in the idea that Kati, in spite of all our admiration of the Middle Ages, was not born in the Middle Ages. All her insights and wisdom she shared with me and with my fellow medievalists in the undergraduate and doctoral classes would have been lost due to the limitations on women’s public speech and teaching. Then the autobiographical confession of Christine de Pizan led me to the more reassuring conclusion that the advice of wise women has probably always been at hand, irrespective of the fact whether those voices have been listened to or not. Without drawing any further forced parallel between the ways in which I have perceived Kati’s role in my personal and academic advancement, on the one hand, and the role Margery Kempe carved out for herself in late medieval English society, on the other, I would simply express my sincere thanks to Kati borrowing the words of Margery Kempe. When her *Book* switches, finally and conclusively, to an intimate first person singular voice, the moment and the ensuing thanksgiving condenses more than could ever be reached by Margery’s quests:

‘The Holy Ghost I take to witness . . . that, even though it were possible that I might have all knowledge and understanding of the secrets of God through the telling of any devil of hell, I would not have it.

‘And as surely as I would not know, hear, see, feel, nor understand in my soul in this life more than is the will of God that I should know, as surely God may help me in all my works, in all my thoughts, and in all my speeches, eating and drinking, sleeping and walking. . . ‘And [I thank you] for all those who have faith and

trust, or shall have faith and trust, in my prayers until the world's end, such grace as they desire, spiritual or bodily, to the profit of their souls, I pray you, Lord, grant them, for the abundance of your mercy. Amen.' (Kempe [trans. by Windeatt] 292–93 and 297)

1. Margery Kempe and Women's Public Speech

The marginality of Margery Kempe in the late medieval society of her native town, Bishop's Lynn, has attracted scholarly attention in a plethora of recent studies on her figure and text.¹ It seems that the scholarly interpretations largely exceed human capacity to fathom the complexities of *The Book of Margery Kempe*, usually labelled as the first autobiography of English literature, dictated by her to two amanuenses from the 1420s on. After the discovery of the only extant manuscript of the *Book* in 1934, the initial phase of research focused on the nature and the composition of the text.² Feminist criticism gave new momentum to scholarly investigations which revolved around questions of authority.³ In the past two decades, the *Book* has become a popular text in uncovering authorial strategies and alternative voices as part of the discourse on orthodoxy and heterodoxy, as well as the strategies of authorial (and female) self-fashioning (Erskine; Beckwith; Lawton; Riddy; Windeatt, "I Use but Comownycacyon" and Minnis, "Spiritualizing Marriage"). This paper is the fruit of my on-going project of translating the *Book* into Hungarian, in the course of which I have observed intriguing patterns of language and textual creation that reflect on the dilemmas of preaching authority and, in general, the public speech of women.

Barry Windeatt, editor and translator of *The Book of Margery Kempe*, has drawn scholarly attention to the overt and covert design of

1. For the most recent comprehensive reviews of the Margery Kempe scholarship with bibliographies, see Arnold and Lewis, Spearing (bibliography on pp. 95–97) and Windeatt, "1412–1534: texts" (esp. pp. 284–85). Barry Windeatt's critical edition of the Middle English text still has the most comprehensive bibliography of twentieth-century scholarly literature (Kempe [ed. by Windeatt] 453–67). For an up-dated thematic bibliography of editions and scholarly literature, see Watt.

2. The early edition immediately following the discovery of the manuscript of the *Book* attests to the first phase of scholarly and textual interest: Kempe, ed. by Meech.

3. Marea Mitchell surveys the turns of scholarly investigations of Margery Kempe with a focus on the shaping of the feminist critical reception of the mystic. Karma Lochrie's studies were engaged with the issues of gender, female subjectivity and the body (Lochrie, "*The Book of Margery Kempe*" and *Margery Kempe*).

teaching in the *Book*, whose study provides new tools and methods for the understanding of the work:

Questions about teaching as an aim and activity in *The Book of Margery Kempe* – whether Margery Kempe’s role constitutes teaching, or whether her book sets out to teach through some didactic design on its readership – can offer fruitful approaches to understanding the *Book* in the present. (“I Use but Comownycacyon” 115)

More recently, Rosalynn Voaden has most convincingly argued that “[t]here is considerable evidence in the *Book* that when Margery travelled in England she was, consciously, deliberately, undertaking a preaching tour, a preaching tour that she believed to be divinely commanded” (109). She concludes:

[Margery Kempe’s] book is a series of negotiations between ecclesiastical authorities and her own spiritual convictions, backed up by Christ’s injunctions and advice. However, when conflict could not be negotiated, then we see the steely determination that led her to defy the Church in order to obey Christ. This determination – and a good dose of street cunning – is evident in her underground preaching tour, in her mounting of an unofficial and invisible pulpit in towns and cities throughout England. What has previously been seen by scholars as a series of wanderings driven by spiritual anxiety and insecurity can now be seen to be a structured progress, a conscious but covert mission undertaken, in defiance of ecclesiastical doctrine and social norms, in obedience to Christ. (121)

While I also read the *Book* as an attempt to reconcile Margery’s strategies of taking the public floor and the perceived limitations on her public speech, I will rather focus on two related aspects of her “mounting a pulpit” for herself: firstly, Margery’s alternative way of preaching that is both spontaneous and institutionally oriented, as it implicitly defines itself in relation to the norms and forms of public and licensed preaching; secondly, the emphasis on Margery’s readiness to withdraw from the use of preaching provided that sufficient credit is given to her communication transmitted in her conversations or dalliances.

While it has passed for a commonplace observation in scholarship that Margery Kempe preaches all throughout her *Book*, in Chapter 52

of Book I she insists that she “come[s] in no pulpytt” (Kempe [ed. by Windeatt] 1.52.4194). After several failed attempts to find proofs of heterodoxy by the court of the Archbishop of York Henry Bowet in 1417, Margery finally defends the ultimate charge brought up against her by the claim that she is not abusing the authority of preaching:

‘Thow schalt sweryn that thu [ne] schalt techyn ne chalengyn the pepil in my diocyse.’

‘Nay, syr, I schal not sweryn,’ sche seyde, ‘for I schal spekyn of God and undirnemyn hem that sweryn gret othys wherso-eyvr I go unto the tyme that the Pope and Holy Chirche hath ordeynde that no man schal be so hardy to spekyn of God, for God almythy forbedith not, ser, that we schal speke of hym. And also the Gospel makyth mencyon that, whan the woman had herd owr Lord prechyd, sche cam beforh hym wyth a lowde voys and seyde: “Blyssed be the wombe that the bar and the tetys that yaf the sowkyn.” [Luke 11.27–28] Than owr Lord seyde ayen to hir: “Forsothe, so ar thei blissed that heryn the word of God and kepyn it.” And therfor, sir, me thynkyth that the Gospel yevyth me leve to spekyn of God.’

‘A, ser,’ seyde the clerkys, ‘her wot we wel that sche hath a devyl wythinne hir, for sche spekyth of the Gospel.’

As swythe a gret clerke browt forth a boke and leyde Seynt Powyl [probably 1 Cor. 14.34–35; 1 Tim. 2.11–14] for hys party ageyns hir, that no woman schulde prechyn. Sche, answeyng therto, seyde:

‘I preche not, ser; I come in no pulpytt. I use but comownycacyon and good wordys, and that wil I do whil I leve.’

Than seyde a doctowr which had examynd hir befortyme: ‘Syr, sche telde me the werst talys of prestys that evyr I herde.’

The Bischop comawndyd hir to tellyn that tale. (Kempe [ed. by Windeatt] 1.52.4194–217, emphasis and sources mine)⁴

Margery’s defence of her own communication strategies is very contradictory in this controversy. She justifies women’s right to speech with a Gospel passage that advocates “hearing and keeping” God’s word, but not actively proselytizing it. Secondly, when Margery is confronted with Paul’s prohibitions of the public speech of women, Margery is quick to

4. All further references to the Middle English text of *The Book of Margery Kempe* will be made to this edition, indicating the number of book, chapter and the lines.

make a distinction between the private and public spheres of communication, a basic distinction in theological discourse since the thirteenth century (Blamires and Marx 39–44; Minnis, *Fallible Authors* 186–207; Windeatt, “I Use but Comownycacyon” 115). Apparently, Margery’s answer did not reassure the authorities, anxious over the dissemination of the vernacularized word of God and over heterodoxy at the time. Indeed, Margery’s inconsistent argument becomes comprehensible in the context of Walter Brut’s examination by the Bishop of Hereford, John Trefnant. Brut was an educated lay Lollard, whose examination in front of a surprisingly large body of theologians took place in 1391–93. In the Bishop’s *Register* William Brut’s stance is summed up as follows:

God considered the question of whether preaching the word is superior, inferior, or equal to the administration of the body of Christ, when he responded to the woman who said, ‘Blessed the womb that bore you and the breasts which gave you suck,’ saying, ‘Rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it.’ If they are blessed who hear and keep the word of God, they are even more blessed who preach and keep it, because it is more blessed to give than to receive. (Lochrie, *Margery Kempe* 110; Blamires 258)

As Karma Lochrie observes, Brut’s strategy is twofold: he negotiates the Pauline prohibition with the restriction that it is not a limitation on women’s capacities; secondly, he conflates the teaching that it is better to give than to receive with Christ’s answer, “rendering preaching the word more blessed than hearing and keeping it” (*Margery Kempe* 111). The fact that Walter Brut’s case triggered palpable anxiety is also manifested by MS BL Harley 31, which preserved a series of *questiones* that partly quote, partly silently allude to, opinions of Walter Brut. As it has been surmised, the texts may have been written by a participant of Walter Brut’s examination (Blamires and Marx 39).

Brut’s stance is interestingly elaborated in an independent argument by Cardinal Adam Easton, whose *Defensorium* of 1385–90 responded to voices doubting in St. Bridget’s claims of saintliness. Easton’s “loophole,” promulgating women’s public speech (though not teaching) in church, can be outlined as follows:

The Apostle himself gives a rule concerning women praying and prophesying – this should be done with their heads covered (1 Cor. 11.5) – which would not be possible without speaking.

Consequently, a woman is able to speak in church in order to pray and prophesy. However, she cannot address the whole church without a special privilege or license. (Minnis, *Fallible Authors* 206)

Minnis concludes:

[w]hat is quite clear . . . is Easton's concern to avoid any suggestion that Bridget usurped priestly functions, or invaded public space of the kind reserved for an ordained priest and his congregation. For him a nunnery is a domestic space, and therein nuns can quite legitimately be taught and speak aloud their rule. (*Fallible Authors* 206)

Repercussions of an intensifying controversy over women's public speech can be traced in the pastoral and sermon literature of the period. While some earlier theological discussions of women's public speech deliberately blurred preaching and teaching in order to justify women's exclusion from the public realms of communication, some fifteenth-century English documents show renewed sensitivity in distinguishing between the two activities.

Margery Kempe's argument joins the opening discussion of the *Speculum Christiani*, a popular pastoral manual of Lincolnshire origin, written probably in the first two decades of the fifteenth century:

Magna differencia est inter predicacionem et doctrinam. Predicacio est, ubi est convocacio sive populi invitacio in diebus festivis in ecclesiis seu in aliis certis locis et temporibus ad hoc deputatis, et pertinet ad eos qui ordinati sunt ad hoc et iurisdictionem et auctoritatem habent, et non ad alios. Informare autem et docere potest unusquisque fratrem suum in omni loco et tempore oportuno, si videatur sibi expedite, quia hoc est Elemosina, ad quam quilibet tenetur. (*Speculum Christiani* 3)

[There is a great difference between preaching and teaching. Preaching occurs in a place where there is a summoning together or following of people on holy days in churches or other special places and times ordained thereto. And it belongs to them who are thereto ordained, who have jurisdiction and authority, and to no one else. Teaching means that each body may inform and teach his brother in every place and at a suitable time, as he sees

it necessary. For this is a spiritual almsdeed, to which every man who possesses cunning is bound.] (Lochrie, *Margery Kempe* 111)

Similarly, an anonymous preacher is careful to maintain the distinction between those authorized to preach and the rest:

Yf thou be a prest, and havest kunnyng and auctoryte, preche and teche Godes worde to his peple; and yf thou be no prest nother clerk, but on of the peple, thenne bysy the in the halyday to here prechyng of Godes worde, and be aboute with thy goede spekyng and styryng to bryng thy neyzebores to betere lyvyng. (MS BL, Harley 2398, f. 91b qtd. in *Speculum Christiani* 243)

Early anti-Wycliffite diatribes are targeted against laymen in general resuming pastoral functions. In the course of the polemic, however, the motif of women unnaturally appropriating public roles of teaching and preaching becomes more articulate. A late fourteenth-century preacher is alarmed by laymen, among them women, spreading the word of God:

Ecce iam videmus tantam disseminacionem evangelii quod simplices viri et mulieres et in reputacione hominum laici ydiote scribunt et discunt evangelium et quantum possunt et sciunt docent et seminant verbum dei.

[Behold now we see so great a dissemination of the Gospel, that simple men and women, and those accounted ignorant laymen in the reputation of men, write and learn the Gospel, and, as far as they can and know how, teach and scatter the word of God.] (MS CUL li.3.8, f. 149 qtd. in Aston 50)

The most zealous advocates of orthodoxy of the highest ecclesiastical ranks also voiced their indignation over female preachers. Reginald Pecock, Bishop of Chichester in the mid-fifteenth century, a most ambitious challenger of Lollard arguments, writes in his *Repressor of Over Much Blaming of the Clergy*:

[T]hilk wommen whiche maken hem silf so wise bi the Bible, that thei no deede wollen allowe to be vertuose and to be doon in mannis vertuose conversacioun, save what thei kunnen fynde expresseli in the Bible, and ben ful coppid [haughty] of speche anantis [regarding] clerkis, and avaunten and profren hem silf

whanne thei ben in her jolite and in her owne housis for to argue
and dispute ayens clerkis. (Pecock 123)

Thomas Netter of Walden, provincial of the English Carmelites from 1414 until 1430, and author of the frighteningly voluminous *Doctrinale Fidei*, commissioned by Henry V, also attests to Lollards' advancement of women. A patron of private female devotion, he is strongly against women appearing in public roles, which he ridicules in his work: "the heresy gathered such strength that 'in the city of London the most foolish of women, set up on stools, publicly read and taught the scriptures in a congregation of men'" (qtd. in Aston 65). Anecdotes of women celebrants of masses and female public orators became so much the stock elements of the pulpit discourse that a sermon, attributed to John Swetstock, sarcastically raises the question: "Why should not women be priested and enabled to celebrate and preach like men?" (qtd. in Aston 65; Haines 151–52).

2. The Profit of Margery's Speech

After contextualizing Margery's strategies of addressing a wider public, my aim is not to make correspondences between her *Book* and elements of the underlying contemporary discourse. Rather, I will argue that preaching in the *Book* forms a narrative and textual pattern, which is deployed by the author(s) to serve a unique strategy of Margery's internal empowerment. This strategy is opposed to the common concept of the autobiography and scholarship, which presents Margery in a constant quest for the external authorization of her visions and authority. To anticipate my conclusions, I will demonstrate that the *Book* pursues three intertwining strategies to position Margery vis-à-vis preaching. Firstly, Margery's open declarations justify women's right to speak by finding a loophole in the Paulian interdict of female teaching in public. In this, she pursues the argumentative strategies of William Brut and Cardinal Adam Easton, as has been illustrated before. Secondly, the *Book* blurs the distinction between preaching and dalliance in two ways: (1) the text shapes Margery's homely conversations on the model of preaching by textual borrowings from preaching episodes, and (2) the text puts especial emphasis on the dallying and conversational, almost familiar, nature of official and authorized preaching episodes. As part of this process, the *Book* does not fail to highlight the deficiencies of public preachers. The third component of Margery's

strategy is her acknowledgment of the authority and the male prerogative of preaching as far as it justifies Margery's authority of visions.

Scholarship has often been tempted to base interpretations of the *Book* on some selected or emblematic episodes of the narrative. The axiom of digging deep in details, while keeping the whole narrative in mind, is easily lost when focusing on selected passages of the work. Samuel Fanous proposed that the very narrative of the *Book* provides its own internal emphases. He cautioned that "the imposition of external structures on the *Book* can deflect attention from its own internal subtext, unwittingly concealing emphatic structures beneath the text's literal surface" (157). Clarissa Atkinson tentatively suggested that there is a perceivable pattern in the development of preaching within the narrative: Margery's love of sermons increases as she advances in her vocation. "During her early struggles, her spiritual education was most often conducted in private colloquy and meditation. By the time she reached Rome, however, she could not be content without an English-speaking preacher" (Atkinson 115).

In line with Fanous and Atkinson, I also propose that there is a perceivable pattern of preaching which structures and interprets the larger narrative. The work consists of two books of unequal length. Book I comprises 89 chapters, covering practically all of Margery's life: the birth of her first child, her conversion, her pilgrimages abroad (to Jerusalem, Rome and Santiago) and at home (to persons of institutional and devotional authority, such as Philip Repingdon, Bishop of Lincoln; Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury; Julian of Norwich), her examinations in York and Leicester, her imprisonment in Leicester, as well as her pilgrimages to shrines and holy places. Rarely do we see Margery in a stand-still; most of the time she is *en route*. Book II, at first sight, seems to be an epilogue, accounting Margery's last journey to Danzig and her return. In its tone and emphases it forms a strikingly homely and familiar representation of a reconciled woman in contrast to the series of public confrontations of Book I.

The *Book's* references to preaching can be classified in two broad categories: (1) preaching events that effectively take place in the course of the narrative (in the order of the narration, but not necessarily in chronology, as the *Book* is admittedly inattentive of chronology); and (2) evocations of preaching. The preaching episodes themselves appear in two clusters: the first occurrences of preaching are all related to Margery's pilgrimages abroad. The very first mention of a sermon, still in Bishop's Lynn, Margery's native town, is triggered by her departure to the Holy Land. She actively initiates the occasion

of preaching by asking the parish priest to speak on her behalf, as she wants to settle debts with people:

Whan tyme cam that this creatur schuld vysiten tho holy placys wher owyr Lord was whyk and ded, as sche had be revelacyon yerys aforn, sche preyd the parysch preste of the town ther sche was dwellyng to sey for hir in the pulpyt that, yyf any man er woman that cleymyd any dette of hir husbond or of hir, thei schuld come and speke wyth hir er sche went, and sche, wyth the help of God, schulde makyn aseth to ech of hem that thei schuldyn heldyn hem content. And so sche dede. (1.26.1939–46)

Representations of preaching culminate in the chapters describing her stay in Rome, where Margery's endeavours to imitate St. Bridget become intertwined with her enfolding criticism of the role she is given in passively assisting in the dissemination of God's word. Although her dissatisfaction with available sermons and preachers to her is disguised in complaints about the intransitivity of language barriers, the two miracles illustrating the gift of tongues in these chapters implicitly suggest that language is not the real problem for Margery. When Margery listens to a Dutch (probably German) preacher in Bridget's room, she is able to decipher meaning from the sermon: "Sche was in the chawmbre that Seynt Brigypt deyde in, and herd a Dewche preste prechyn of hir therin, and of hir revelacyonys and of hir maner of levying" (1.39.3129–31). On other occasions, however, she has no access to the words mediated by foreign preachers in Rome. She complains to the Lord, who promises to preach to her personally:

Sumtyme, whan the forseyd creatur was at sermownys wher Duchemen and other men prechyd, techyng the lawys of God, sodeyn sorwe and hevynes occupying hir hert cawsyd hir to compleyn wyth mornyng cher for lak of undirstondyng, desyryng to be refreschyd wyth sum crumme of gostly undirstondyng unto hir most trustyd and entyrlyest beloved sovereign, Crist Jhesu, whos melydiows voys swettest of alle savowrys, softly sowndyng in hir sowle, seyde: 'I schal preche the and teche the myselve, for thi wyl and thy desyr is acceptabyl unto me.' (1.41.3230–38)

Margery's successful intercession for a personal mode of preaching, directly by Christ to her, interiorizes public preaching and draws it into her private realm. The evocations of preaching are more informative of this process. The very first evocation of preaching immediately

follows Margery's insistence on her right to speak of the Scripture, in general on women's right to teach:

'What kanst thou seyn of God?'

'Ser,' sche seyth, 'I wyl bothe *speke of [God]* and heryn of hym,' *rehersyng the monk a story of scriptur*. . . .

Than a yong monke seyde to this creatur: 'Eythyr thou hast the Holy Gost or ellys thou hast a devyl wythin the, for *that thu spekyest her to us it is Holy Wrytte*, and that hast thou not of thisel.'

Than seyde this creatur: 'I pray yow, ser, yeve me *to tellyn yow a tale*.' (1.13.867–69 and 874–78, emphasis added)

Margery's mode of communication is texted (and identified by others) with the vocabulary of everyday and familiar conversations: she simply wants to "speak," "rehearse a story" and "tell a tale."

In the ensuing chapter, the very first mention of anything related to public and authorized preaching in the *Book*, we read that "it was to hir gret solas and cownfort whan sche was chedyn and fletyn for comownyng in scriptur which sche lernyd in sermownys and be comownyng wyth clerkys" (1.14.938–42). Margery's anecdotic incursions into the discussion of biblical stories are here transformed into "comownyng in scriptur," the expression applied to situations of her private instructions by priests ("comownyng wyth clerkys"). Margery's storytelling, thus, exceeds the circumstances of private conversations and is identified with teaching, which is not restricted to the domestic forms of instructions. This first evocation of preaching discloses Margery's strategies of investing herself with the skills and capacities of a preacher. The passage (1.14) proves Margery's preparation; she is knowledgeable in Scriptures, which she demonstrates in her clash with Archbishop Bowet.

In her apology for the vulgar tale about the priest, the tree and the bear, she equals her strategies with a good preacher's methods of cautioning his audience against misgovernance:

The forseyd creatur seyde to the clerk: 'A, worschiful doctowr, ser, in place wher my dwellyng is most, is a worthy clerk, a good prechar, which boldly spekyth ageyn the mys-governawns of the pepil and wil flatyr no man. He seyth many tymes in the pulpit, "Yyf any man be evyl plesyd wyth my prechyng, note hym wel, for he is gylty." And ryth so, ser,' seyde sche to the clerk, 'far ye be me, God foryeve it yow.' (1.52.4260–67)

The next two instances of evocations of preaching confirm Margery's virtual status as a preacher. A passage in Chapter 59 emphasizes again Margery's incessant inspiration from books and sermons. She increases spiritually through hearing holy readings and sermons: "Thus, thorw heryng of holy bokys and thorw heryng of holy sermownys, sche evyr encresyd in contemplacyon and holy meditacyon. It wer in maner unpossibyl to writyn al the holy thowtys, holy spechys, and the hy revelacyons which owr Lord schewyd unto hir" (1.59.4832–36). Yet, in the preceding chapter, Margery practically positions herself above preachers who are unable to fill her soul with adequate words:

On a tyme, as the forseyd creatur was in hir contemplacyon, sche hungryd ryth sor aftyr Goddys word and seyde:

'Alas, Lord, as many clerkys as thu hast in this world, that thu ne woldyst sendyn me on of hem that myth fulfillyn my sowle wyth thi word and wyth redyng of holy scriptur, for alle the clerkys that prechyn may not fulfillyn, for me thynkyth that my sowle is evyr alych hungry. Yyf I had gold inow, I wolde yevyn every day a nobyl for to have every day a sermown, for thi word is mor worthy to me than alle the good in this werld.' (1.58.4776–84)

She is ultimately superior to most preachers, as she finds no satisfaction in their sermons. Furthermore, she entitles herself with the claim of assessing and judging them.

All the rest of the evocations of preaching situations are directly or indirectly related to Master Alan of Lynn, Margery's intimate Carmelite friend, one of the rarely named good preachers of the *Book*. In Chapter 70 of Book I, Margery implores the Virgin Mary by reminding her of Master Alan's sermons (5695–704). In Chapter 70 Margery solicits God to take away her cries at Alan's sermons (6092–100). In Chapter 86 God compares the efficiency of preaching God's word to Margery's tears (7157–62). Chapter 88 tells that Master Alan pleases God, because he often excused Margery's weeping in his sermons. God confirms that He wants to maintain Margery's crying by sermons (7325–30). In Chapter 89 Margery prays God that Master Alan may preach the best sermon he can. God grants that Alan will preach a "rith holy sermowne," as if He spoke through him (7383–92).

These evocations are used as elements of an extended argument to illustrate that Master Alan's public preaching is the result of a joint authorship of Margery and him. Thus, Margery not only invests herself

with the ability to act as a preacher, but also demonstrates her skills in co-authoring sermons. Margery's claims of having all the abilities of a public preacher do not, however, grant her an important condition of public speech, i.e. authorization and the pulpit.

Although, in a crucial moment, Margery renounces preaching from the pulpit, she constantly blurs the very thin boundaries between public preaching and conversations. The realms of preaching and private conversations are permeable: expressions pertaining to one of these spheres also define and construct the other one. Margery's dalliances are paralleled by the ways in which the preaching episodes are constructed. Common to both is an irresistible drive to speak. Furthermore, both dalliances and preaching mingle conversational elements of vocabulary with a more formal and institutional register, whose intersection is aptly described by the expression of "story of Holy Writte." The first few episodes of Margery's conversations provide sufficient examples to illustrate the repetitive and consistently ambiguous language of these episodes:

'Ser,' sche seyth, 'I wyl bothe speke of [God] and heryn of hym,' rehersyng the monk a story of scriptur. (1.13.867-69)

. . . Than a yong monke seyde to this creatur: 'Eythyr thow hast the Holy Gost or ellys thow hast a devyl wythin the, for that thu spekest her to us it is Holy Wrytte, and that hast thu not of thiself.'

Than seyde this creatur: 'I pray yow, ser, yeve me leve to tellyn yow a tale.' (1.13.874-78)

And sche seyde: 'Ya, serys, forsothe I may no lengar hold yow comenawnt, for I must nedys speke of my Lord Jhesu Crist, thow al this world had forbodyn it me.' (1.27.2140-42)

Whan our Lord has thus sweetly dalyed to hir sowle, sche thankyd hym of this gret comferte, having good trost it schuld be as he seyde. Sythen sche, rising up, went forth in the street and met casualy wyth a good man. And so they fellyn in good comunicacyon as thei went togedir be the wey, to whom sche had many good talys and many good exhortacyonys tyl God visited hym wyth terys of devocyon and of compunccyon to hys hey comferte and consolacyon. (1.38.3040-47)

[S]che telde in hyr owyn langage, in Englysch, a story of Holy Writte, [whech] sche had lernyd of clerkys whil sche was at hom in Inglond, for sche wolde spekyng of no vanyte ne of no fantasiis. (1.40.3209–12)

Two passages in question clearly illustrate the natural and free flow of textual elements from one realm into the other, which produces remarkable patterns of expression. In Chapter 52 of Book I, Margery is commanded by the Archbishop of York to tell her shocking tale of the pear tree:

Than seyde the Erchebischoep to hir: “Thow schalt sweryn that thu [ne] schalt techyn ne chalengyn the pepil in my diocyse.’

‘Nay, syr, I schal not sweryn,’ sche seyde, ‘for I schal spekyng of God and undirnemyn hem that sweryn gret othys wherso- evyr I go unto the tyme that the Pope and Holy Chirche hath ordeynde that no man schal be so hardy to spekyng of God, for God almythy forbedith not, ser, that we schal speke of hym. And also the Gospel makyth mencyon that, whan the woman had herd owr Lord prechyd, sche cam beforh hym wyth a lowde voys and seyde: “Blyssed be the wombe that the bar and the tetys that yaf the sowkyn.” [Luke 11.27–28] Than owr Lord seyde ayen to hir: “Forsothe, so ar thei blissed that heryn the word of God and kepyn it.” And therfor, sir, me thynkyth that the Gospel yevyth me leve to spekyng of God.’

‘A, ser,’ seyde the clerkys, ‘her wot we wel that sche hath a devyl wythinne hir, for sche spekyth of the Gospel.’

As-swythe a gret clerke browt forth a boke and leyde Seynt Powyl [probably 1 Cor. 14.34–35; 1 Tim. 2.11–14] for hys party ageyns hir, that no woman schulde prechyn. Sche, answeyng therto, seyde:

‘I preche not, ser; I come in no pulpytt. I use but comownycacyon and good wordys, and that wil I do whil I leve.’

Than seyde a doctowr which had examynd hir befortyme: ‘Syr, sche telde me the werst talys of prestys that evyr I herde.’

The Bischoep comawndyd hir to tellyn that tale. (4194–217)

Margery identifies her tale as an *exemplum* and diverts the charge of subversion by claiming that she is very much in the tradition of pastoral correction of sinners by the device of shocking.

Although the ultimate context for Margery's tale is private conversation (in a legally and formally very dubious scene), the *Book* keys this passage with obvious allusions and attributes of preaching to resonate preaching. In the ensuing chapter (1.53), the imprisoned Margery looks out from the window and tells many good tales to those who would listen to her: "Than stode sche lokyng owt at a wyndown, tellyng many good talys to hem that wolde heryn hir, in-so-meche that women wept sor and seyde wyth gret hevynes of her hertys: 'Alas, woman, why schalt thu be brent?'" (1.53.4367–71). While the vocabulary of the passage encloses this bizarre scene in the frame of private conversations, the circumstances of speech will rather shape Margery as a public speaker, with her figure standing or towering over passers-by who would "listen to her."

Another example for the permeability of the spheres of public speech (preaching) and private conversation (dalliance) can be observed in a sequence of two chapters. Chapter 41 of Book I describes Margery's habit of attending sermons in Rome: "the forseyd creatur was at sermownys wher Duchemen and other men prechyd, *techyng the lawys of God*" (3230–31, emphasis added). In the following chapter (1.42), we see Margery casually roaming the fields with her fellow-countrymen as she transmits them her instruction "in the lawys of God":

On the Fryday aftyr, as this creatur went to sportyn hir in the felde and men of hir owyn nacyon wyth hir, the which sche in-formyd in the lawys of God as wel as sche cowde – and scharply sche spak ageyns hem for thei sworyn gret othys and brokyn the comawndment of owr Lord God – and as sche went thus dalyng wyth hem, owr Lord Jhesu Crist bad hir gon hom in haste to hir hostel, for ther schulde come gret wederyng and perlyows. (1.42, 3326–33)

The reiterative textual pattern creates a chain of the transmission of God's word: priests in Rome instruct Margery in the laws of God, who, in return, instructs her fellows on the same matter. This chain does not indicate any rupture or suspension of the channels and the manner of dissemination. The preaching context is extended to situations that do not conventionally occur in *questiones* as the exceptional spaces for women to practice their skills of speech and instruction (e.g. nunneries or the household).

Yet, the *Book* is very careful to identify Margery's dissemination of the Scripture as dalliances, conversations or telling stories and tales. Her insertions into contested slots of the public space do not cast doubt on the authority of preaching, as she admits in Chapter 52. She does not come to the pulpit; she *uses* communication and good words. Indeed, she does not simply communicate and tell good words, but, as she puts it rhetorically, she uses them. And "use" implies intentions and purposes. She uses them, as she does with the second cluster of preaching episodes (1.61–62, 67–69, 78, 2.2 and 9), to which I shall return to come to my conclusions.

Margery accounts the chronicle of preaching in Lynn in relation to her weeping. Beyond documenting the names, venues and themes of the sermons with the precision of a chronicler (absolutely untypical of the *Book's* overall narrative), the text makes its point obvious. The enumeration of the Lynn preachers is instrumental only as far as they arbitrate over the nature of Margery's crying and ultimately acknowledge the divine source of Margery's intensive devotion.

Chapters 61–62 construct a quasi-propagandistic detraction against William Melton OFM, as he would not tolerate Margery's presence at his sermons. The stalemate of Margery's expulsion from the attendance of William's sermons and her unquenchable desire to attend them is broken in the continuation of the Melton-episode in Chapters 67–69. In Chapter 67 a parson of university degree arrives to preach all day, while Melton is preaching in Lynn. He reconciles people with Margery and defends her cries (5538–59). Chapter 68 enumerates further public speakers whose major concern becomes the issue of Margery's attendance. During the Chapter of the Dominicans in Lynn many friars preach in the town's parish church, among them Master Thomas of Constance (5560–65). Another doctor of divinity preaches in the parish church; he defends Margery against her detractors. Afterwards, an Augustinian friar preaches in their house (5582–616). Chapter 69 relates the intervention of other good and tolerant preachers with the obvious intention of "citing" them as authorities in the polemic against William Melton:

Also on a Good Fryday at Seynt Margaretys Chirch, the Priowr of the same place and the same town, Lynne, schuld prechyn. And he toke to hys teme, 'Jhesu is ded'. Than the sayd creatur, al wowndyd wyth pite and compassyon, cryid and wept as yyf sche had seyn owr Lord ded wyth hir bodily eye. The worschepful

Priowr and doctowr of divinite suffyrd hir ful mekely and nothyng mevyd ageyn hir.

Another tyme Bischop Wakeryng, Bischop of Norwich, prechyd at Lynne in the seyd cherch of Seynt Margarete, and the forseyd creatur cryid and wept ful boystowsly in the tyme of hys sermown, and he suffyrd it ful mekely and patiently, and so dede many a worthy clerk, bothyn reguler and seculer, for ther was nevyr clerk prechyd opynly ageyn hir crying but the Grey Frer, as is wretyn befor. (1.69.5617–30)

The “chronicle of preaching” in Lynn concludes with banning Margery from attending the public sermons of Friar William by her confessor:

Whan hir confessowr perceyvyd how the worthy doctowr was chargyd be obediens that he schulde not spekyn ne comownyn wyth hir, than he, for to excludyn al occasyon, warnyd hir also, be vertu of obediens, that sche schulde no mor gon to the frerys, ne spekyn wyth the sayd doctowr, ne askyn hym no qwestyons as sche had don befor. And than thowt sche ful gret sweme and hevynes, for sche was put fro mech gostly comfort. Sche had levar a lost any erdly good than hys comunycacyon, for it was to hir gret ences of vertu. (1.69.5651–59)

But this is not yet the ultimate and authoritative verdict on Margery’s share of the public space. The description of the activity of Master Alan and the *Book’s* textual strategies to present Margery as his co-author not only justify the apotheosis of Alan as a preacher and communal peace maker, but also render justice to Margery’s visionary power by fusing the world of preaching (and within that the figure of Master Alan) with Margery’s internal world of visions (and within that the words of Christ):

And on a tyme, as sche lay in hir preyeris in the chirche the tyme of Advent befor Cristmes, sche thowt in hir hert sche wolde that God of hys goodnes wolde makyn Maistryr Aleyn to sey in a sermown as wel as he cowde. And, as-swithe as sche had thowt thus, sche <herd> owr Sovereyn Lord Crist Jhesu sey in hir sowle:

‘Dowtyr, I wot ryth wel what thu thynkist now of Maistryr Aleyn, and I telle the trewly that he schal sey in a rith holy sermowne. And loke that thu beleve stedfastly the wordys that he schal prechyn, as thow I prechyd hem myselfe, for thei schal be

wordys of gret solas and comfort to the, for I schal spekyn in hym.' (1.89.7383–92)

Book I of Margery's autobiography identifies preaching with the contested field of visionary arbitration, in which Margery also claims her presence and recognition. While Margery's access to the public sphere is described in confrontational terms and is supported with a constant textual strategy that blurs conversation and preaching in Book I, Book II resolves the limitations on Margery's public speech by two episodes which illustrate the duality of her figure: the one attending public sermons and using sermon material for her own private meditations, and the public speaker who castigates, instructs and corrects people:

Sche thowt that sche wolde fyrst gon to Walsyngham and offeryn in worschep of owr Lady, and as sche was in the wey thedirward, sche herd tellyn that a frer schuld sey in a sermown in a lityl vilage a lityl owt of hir wey. Sche turnyd into the cherch wher the frer seyde the sermown, a famows man, and a gret audiens had at hys sermown. And many tymys he seyde thes wordys:

'Yf God be wyth us, ho schal be ageyns us?' – thorw the which wordys sche was the mor steryd to obeyn the wil of God and parformyn hir entent. (2.2.7646–54)

Sche spak boldly and mytily wherso sche cam in London ageyn swerars, bannars, lyars and swech other viciows pepil, ageyn the pompows aray bothin of men and women. Sche sparyd hem not, sche flateryd hem not, neithyr for her yiftys, ne for her mete, n[e] for her drynke. Hir spekyng profityd rith mech in many persons. (2.9.8248–52)

Margery becomes an unlicensed preacher, but a very reluctant one, who is willing to withdraw as soon as the pulpit acknowledges the divine inspiration of her visions.

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Benedek Péter Tóta

Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Piliscsaba

Sir Gawain and Ted Hughes: Neither Heroes nor Saints yet Canonised

Contextualising Hughes's Rendering of a Passage from *Gawain*

The rendering of Sir Gawain's arrival at the Green Chapel and meeting the Green Knight there seems to be an accidental episode in Ted Hughes's oeuvre in 1997, one year prior to his death in 1998. However, within the broader and narrower contexts of Hughes's writings and publications, the passage in question may have an overall and focal significance.

The extract's linguistically and formally open beginning and ending make the omitted parts preceding and following the excerpt operative in reinterpreting the preserved passage. Such an interactive presentation and understanding of the selected scene emphasises the loss of heroic qualities and highlights the incompetence of attaining saintly features – heroism and sainthood being the two abstract and extreme ideas composing the essence of a man's chivalric character with special respect to women.

The motifs of the translated passage and the omitted parts reoccur in both the broader and narrower contexts of Ted Hughes's oeuvre, integrating the extract as a functional passage in literary history and the history of a literary life – canonised.

1. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* in *The School Bag*

In a letter of 15 September 1956, Hughes mentions his private tape recording of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and expresses his willingness that he would gladly record the complete romance for the BBC. In the same letter he outlines a radio programme: sharing information "about Gawain" with the audience followed by a reading in four parts (*Letters* 48). Eventually Hughes's early dream of reciting *Gawain* did not come true.

In 1997, at long last and at least partially, Ted Hughes achieved an ambition of a lifetime and published a passage from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (lines 2160–349) in his own rendering in *The School Bag*, an anthology edited together with Seamus Heaney. *The School Bag* is a personal selection of poems that can make literary history edifying and enjoyable. The editors' choice of English verse suggests that the texts included are worth remembering. It is probably for this reason that Hughes's "Afterword" concentrates on "Memorising Poems" (563–69). On the one hand, Hughes thinks that "a vivid visual image" can help memorise poems; as he phrases: "the more absurd, exaggerated, grotesque that image is, the more unforgettable is the thing to which we connect it" (563). On the other hand, "visual imagination" is complemented with "musical or audial memory." Audial memory "is wide open to any distinct patterns of sounds." This pattern "includes rhythm" and is "made by the sequence of syllables." Hughes's formula of the audial imagination imitates his pattern of phraseology about visual imagination: "The stronger the pattern is, the more memorable the line will be" (567). As the *Gawain*-poet's lines are in Hughes's rendering: "The burn bubbling under as if it boiled" or "The right crypt for that ogre, in his greenery" (15, 32; *Gawain* 2174, 2191). The voiced bilabial plosive /b/ and the liquids /l, r/, and the post-alveolar fricative /r/, respectively, provide rhythmic patterns for the visual images of the dynamic flow in the first quotation and the rigid room in the second one.

The learning process that started in 1956 and produced its outcome in 1997 is documented in a long essay on "Myths, Metres, Rhythms" composed by Hughes in 1993. "By 'mythologies'" Hughes means "the *picture* languages" that represent and make operative "the deeper shared understandings which keep us intact as a group – as far as we are intact as a group." These deeper understandings can be regarded as a "bank account" of a shared memory (310; emphasis added). "The 'mythologies'" in Hughes's understanding "give meaning to language" and "*rhythms*" provide "musical expressiveness to it" (320; emphasis added). As an example, Hughes demonstrates the "mythic symbol" of rural England (317) and "the living memory of the total world" (319) with a poem of his own "In the Likeness of a Grasshopper" (1986) that includes the characterization of the insect: "A wicker contraption, with working parts" (317). This line imitates *Gawain* by displaying the visual – though slightly absurd, exaggerated or grotesque – image of the fragile creature's mechanism and by letting the rhythmic patterns of the bilabial semi-vowels /w/ and the velar plosives /k/ together with the

echoing inversions of /-trap-/ and /part-/ be heard. Hughes learnt in the school of the Pearl Poet “the music of *Gawain's* lines” (356) and made some “attempt to reintroduce or adapt or make anything new of the old metre of the *Gawain* tradition” (357–58).

Thus, *The School Bag* taught Hughes and made him able to hear, “to keep the audial faculty wide open” (“Afterword” 568) and to recreate the *Gawain*-heritage by the act of adaptation.

2. *Gawain* besides Ovid and after Shakespeare

Unfortunately, Ted Hughes’s unfinished rendering of some parts from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (*Selected* 156–72) could not earn an introduction by the translator-poet. In this case – for the sake of substituting the missing guidance – we have to be content with Hughes’s introductions to his choice of Shakespeare’s verse (Hughes, *Choice* 1–3) and his passages from Ovid’s tales (Hughes, *Tales* vii–xi) – publications that are chronologically the closest to Hughes’s *Gawain* and can serve as a framework of approach in understanding Hughes’s twentieth-century version of the fourteenth-century romance.

As for the idea of adaptation then, Hughes regards Ovid as a model figure: “He too is an adaptor” (Hughes, *Tales* viii). Another one can be Hughes himself. Both of them are interested only in those stories which inspire their imagination. They work with them just as long as they set into motion their poetic activity (see Hughes, *Tales* viii). What Hughes recognizes as a shared interface between Ovid and Shakespeare can be transferred on to the relationship between Ovid and himself: “A more crucial connection, maybe, can be found in their common taste for a tortured subjectivity and catastrophic extremes of passion that border on the grotesque” (Hughes, *Tales* viii). As if the critical quality of extremities were illustrated by Sir Gawain’s arrival “at a crossing place” (“From *Gawain*” 14; *Gawain* 2173) during his quest for the Green Chapel following the comment on the spot: “He thought it strange” (“From *Gawain*” 11; *Gawain* 2170), or as one could say: absurd, or grotesque. In addition, Hughes understands that Ovid and Shakespeare were magnetized by a special selection of “[m]yths and fantastic legends, wonder-tales about the embroilment of the natural human world with the supernatural” (Hughes, *Tales* ix). As Hughes perceives, Ovid is engaged in “the current of human passion” as it “mutates into an experience of the supernatural” and he “adapts each myth to this

theme" (Hughes, *Tales* ix). Seemingly Hughes also admits that Ovid's thorough examination of "human passion *in extremis*" is not reduced by his "cavalier lightness of touch" (Hughes, *Tales* ix), either. This remark by Hughes can anticipate Sir Gawain, the knight, upon his arrival at the Green Chapel: "Turning his doubts over . . . He dismounted there, light as a dancer . . . Debating in himself" ("From *Gawain*" 10, 17, 20; *Gawain* 2169, 2176, 2179).

Besides his tales from Ovid (1997), Ted Hughes's rendering of *Gawain* (1997) comes after his introduction to the revised edition of his choice of Shakespeare's verse (1991). In his original collection of 1971, Hughes included "portable chunks from the holy structures" of England's "national hero" (Hughes, *Choice* 1). Hughes is convinced that these passages – "taken out of context" (Hughes, *Choice* 1) – can be understood without difficulty because they are "self-sufficient outside their dramatic context and capable of striking up a life of their own in the general experience of the reader" (Hughes, *Choice* 3).

Seemingly we are about to believe that Hughes learnt through his experiments with twenty-four passages from Ovid's tales – "about two hundred and fifty in all" – and a choice of Shakespeare's verse that even a de-contextualised "proportion" deserves "full attention" (see Hughes, *Tales* viii) since the essence in it can ideally be regarded "as a sort of musical adaptation" (Hughes, *Shakespeare* 43).

3. Sir Gawain De-contextualised at the Green Chapel

We – students and scholars reading Hughes's rendering of Sir Gawain's arrival at the Green Chapel and meeting the Green Knight there ("From *Gawain*"; *Gawain* 2160–349) – can be easily contented with this passage as the formal conclusion of the contract Sir Gawain and the Green Knight mutually accepted in King Arthur's court. The compositional dénouement starts with strained suspense (Sir Gawain's arrival and doubtful expectation), followed by the dramatic interaction between Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (verbal exchanges in five parts due to the interference of four blows: one referring to Sir Gawain's in Camelot and the three actual blows by the Green Knight). These slightly less than 190 lines of descriptive introduction and dramatic development of Hughes's rendering from *Gawain* imitate the "swiftness" of "filmic economy" (see Hughes, *Tales* ix), resembling a well-selected sequence of visual images in rhythmic arrangement.

Zooming in on the Green Chapel in the descriptive introduction (“From *Gawain*” 12–39; *Gawain* 2171–98), we can see a detailed view of the place in 28 lines. The Gawain-poet refers to it 11 times, employs 8 lexical items and uses 3 of them twice.¹ Hughes alludes to it 12 times, operates with 10 lexical items and activates 2 of them twice.² Such a wide scale of synonyms provides a rich spectrum of the Green Chapel. The semantic shades of this spectrum vary. Some items (“mound,” “tump,” “knoll,” “gappy rock-heap”) are of dual value, identifying natural or manmade constructions above ground level that can even suggest a grave underground. Other items (“chapel,” “oratory,” “church”) specify constructions above ground level erected by humans aiming at supernatural realities. The remaining items focus on some underground space: a “cave” (an underground natural hollow), a “crypt” (an underground cell or vault, a burial place beneath a chapel or church), and a “cell” (metaphorically or metonymically: an underground room owing to a cellar’s connotation, or a grave in poetic use). Neither the oscillation (the movement or action) between the highest and deepest points, nor the amplitude (the distance between the extremes) can be checked. This vertical vibration is spread horizontally. The sequence of items of dual value with visible appearance above ground and mysterious content underground is terminated by an item of natural underground referent (mound – tump – knoll – tump + cave). The sequence of items erected above ground is completed by an item constructed under ground (gappy rock-heap – chapel – oratory + crypt). The last sequence including items dedicated to supernatural reality is concluded by a polysemous item of metaphoric value (chapel – church + cell). The changing proportions of these sequences display a tendency of shortening wavelengths: 5 (= 4+1) items in 12 lines, 4 (= 3+1) items in 9 lines, 3 (= 2+1) items in 7 lines. The reducing frequency of the rhythm of the occurrence of the visual images can attribute dramatic propriety to Sir Gawain’s more and more turbulent state of mind on his arrival at the Green Chapel while “[t]urning his doubts over” and “[d]ebating in himself” (“From *Gawain*” 10, 20; *Gawain* 2169, 2179).

Sir Gawain’s agitated state of mind or soul is philologically controlled by the compositional balance of the symmetric arrangement of

1. *Gawain*: *lawe* (2171, 2175; ‘mound, knoll’), *berwe* (2172, 2178; ‘barrow, mound’), *olde cave* (2182), *crevisse of an olde cragge* (2183), *chapel* (2186, 2195), *oritore* (2190), *kyrk* (2196), *wone* (2198).

2. “From *Gawain*”: “mound” (12), “tump” (12, 19; ‘mound, barrow, tumulus’), “knoll” (13; ‘mound, clod’), “cave” (23), “gappy rock-heap” (24), “chapel” (27, 36), “oratory” (31), “crypt” (32), “church” (37), “cell” (39).

the number of lines. Hughes encloses the first 8 lines in between the two instances ("From *Gawain*" 12, 19; see *Gawain* 2171, 2178) where he inserts a lexical item of the late 16th century into the 14th-century text: "tump" (see *OED*). The last 8 lines of this closely scrutinized section are separated by a lexical item Hughes methinks arbitrarily introduces into the text though there is not anything of the kind in the original ("From *Gawain*" 32: "crypt"; see *Gawain* 2191: -). However this balance of symmetry controls the situation, its content still accelerates revealing Sir Gawain's altering psychic disposition. The first 8 lines describe his arrival as he dismounts his horse, "light as a dancer"; the central 12 lines disclose his doubtful debate in himself that leads him to a desperate sense of desolation; and in the last 8 lines his five wits warn him of his own expected destruction.

The simultaneously effective reducing frequency of rhapsodic oscillation, balance of symmetry, and gradually increasing sense of Sir Gawain's "tortured subjectivity" (see Hughes, *Tales* viii) secures the strained suspense's memorable dynamism. The energy generated by this polymodality irradiates the passage's dramatic interaction between Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.

The smooth transition between the introductory strained suspense and the forthcoming dramatic development is granted by two antithetic movements shown while zooming out. We can see Sir Gawain as "[h]e clambered up on the top of the busy cell" ("From *Gawain*" 39; *Gawain* 2198) and the Green Knight as "suddenly he was there, from under a cliff" ("From *Gawain*" 62; *Gawain* 2221). Their contrasted appearance interlocks them as if they corresponded to each other. In such a correspondence, they could easily keep their word (see "From *Gawain*" 79; *Gawain* 2238), honour their contract (see "From *Gawain*" 83; *Gawain* 2242) and keep the terms of their covenant they agreed in King Arthur's Court (see "From *Gawain*" 169–70, 179; *Gawain* 2328–29, 2340). The complementary contrast of these two knights provides a sure framework for the dramatic development whose beginning corresponds to its end where one of the actors, the Green Knight identifies the other, Sir Gawain "as a true man" ("From *Gawain*" 82; *Gawain* 2241) and "as a good man" ("From *Gawain*" 188; *Gawain* 2349), respectively. The soundness of such a unanimous and inclusive structure is easy to remember; however, the development between such a beginning that anticipates the end and such an end that recalls the beginning is more than rough. There are four blows mentioned. The first one evokes the original challenge ("From *Gawain*" 90; *Gawain* 2249). The second one,

which is the first actual blow, fails because Sir Gawain “shrank his shoulder a little from the sharp iron” (“From *Gawain*” 100–09; *Gawain* 2259–68). The third one, the second actual blow, is stopped by the Green Knight being convinced by Sir Gawain’s firmness (“From *Gawain*” 129–32; *Gawain* 2288–91). The fourth and at the same time last blow that is actually the third one only slightly slices through the skin of Sir Gawain’s neck as a symbolic atonement (“From *Gawain*” 150–55; *Gawain* 2309–14). The sequence of fair, unfair, generous and semi-serious (if not disgraceful) blows fluctuates their value. This wave-like pattern is accompanied by the preliminary and in-between rise and fall of [1] the equality in braveness (see “From *Gawain*” 87; *Gawain* 2246), [2] pretended braveness that conceals fear (see “From *Gawain*” 98–99; *Gawain* 2257–58), [3] revealed fear that betrays braveness (see “From *Gawain*” 113–14, 118; *Gawain* 2272–73, 2277), [4] braveness recognised as if it were mocked (see “From *Gawain*” 137–39; *Gawain* 2296–98), and [5] alarmed braveness as disguised fear suppressed by defensive oration and being almost questioned by suspicious admiration (see “From *Gawain*” 157–77; *Gawain* 2316–38).

The simultaneously effective patterns of ups and downs, rise and fall of heroic values and qualities oscillate in the opposite direction and with shifted frequency, thus threatening the idea of a hero. The peril of lurking rhythm-interference increases the probability of the hero’s extinction among such “catastrophic extremes” (see Hughes, *Tales* viii). This prospect cannot seemingly be altered since the scale of guarantee decreases until it vanishes. The wish – “God protect you” (“From *Gawain*” 80; *Gawain* 2239) – of eternal and divine value is followed by a secular desire – “Let your high rank, that Arthur gave you, preserve you” (“From *Gawain*” 138; *Gawain* 2297) – of transitory and human value, and ultimately, because no more promise for the future – not even of earthly value of fragile nature – is offered, the vacuum or the black hole of the lack of any hope is left behind that swallows even the corrupt remnants, the “cowardice of that hero” (“From *Gawain*” 114; *Gawain* 2273).

Looking at Hughes’s rendering of this autotelic passage again, one can become aware of the opening line starting with “Then,” which refers to what went on before. In addition, the closure of the passage seems to make difference between the covenant in Arthur’s Hall, that is “the terms agreed in the King’s Court” (“From *Gawain*” 169–70, 179; *Gawain* 2328–29, 2340) and the “contract” Sir Gawain and the Green Knight “agreed on that first night” (“From *Gawain*” 186; *Gawain* 2347)

that might have been followed with further nights at Hautdesert. What is more, had not Hughes omitted the serial number “First” (see “From *Gawain*” 184; *Gawain* 2345), readers could understand that the Green Knight’s interpretation of his own behaviour and strategy of three blows is supposed to be continued despite the fact that the above analysis might have proved: the passage in question has its independent and self-sufficient merits.

It is in this sense after all that we have been exposed to the “irresistible momentum towards the ending of the hero’s ordeal at the Green Chapel, which is deceptively presented as the climax of the story, but which, in the end, unexpectedly reduces itself to a statement about an earlier episode in the poem” (Putter 38).

It means then that Sir Gawain’s visually and rhythmically memorable episode at the Green Chapel is worth re-contextualising.

4. Re-contextualising the Green Chapel Episode in *Gawain*

What precedes the three blows Sir Gawain receives from the Green Knight before arriving at the Green Chapel is his sojourn at Hautdesert, where he is entertained by the Lord and Lady of the Castle. The Lord of the Castle proposes Sir Gawain playing the Exchange of Winnings for three days. The mutually agreed rules of the game state that whatever they gain during the day they are supposed to bestow upon each other. The Lord of the Castle, called Bertilak, goes hunting, and Sir Gawain enjoys the comfort of the Castle in the company of Bertilak’s wife, the allegoric figure of femininity and womanhood in general by virtue of her anonymity. Bertilak proves himself to be an irresistible hunter and returns with substantial kill each day. Day after day, Sir Gawain resists the physical approaches of the more than attractive Lady of the Castle except her kisses.³ On day one, Bertilak gives Sir Gawain a deer and is kissed once in return. On day two, Bertilak brings Sir Gawain a boar and is kissed twice in exchange. Day three alters the sequence of exchange:

3. Sir Gawain’s virtue seems to be reflected in Hughes’s “Fidelity” describing his premarital disposition while fighting a battle against the temptation of carnal pleasure (55–56, 58). Meanwhile, Hughes wonders: “What / Knighthood possessed me there?” (27–28). He also admits: “A holy law / Had invented itself, somehow, for me” (33–34). However, the modality of Hughes’s utterances expresses that he cannot believe whether he could be a hero or a saint, either.

Sir Gawain kisses Bertilak three times before getting his kill – a fox. Sir Gawain’s cunning tactics at the moment serves his strategy of a hopeful end. The wily knight’s fraudulence is meant to conceal his breach of agreement. Having resisted the lovely lady’s physical temptation in the form of faultless flesh and her psychological temptation with the symbol of a rich ring of red-gold to slip on his finger, Sir Gawain could not refuse the temptation of the serpentine green girdle as a love-lace from around the love-some lady’s kirtle because she told him that this piece of cloth would not let its wearer be killed. He retains this gain of the day hidden to be used when meeting the Green Knight at the Green Chapel.

Sir Gawain’s suppressed failure of trustworthiness due to his sly iniquity and unfaithfulness because of his cowardice is revealed by the Green Knight alias Bertilak. In the lines immediately following the lines of Hughes’s rendering, the Green Knight gives an explanation for his second and third blow, as well. Out of his complete reasoning we learn that the first two blows acknowledged the kisses of the first two days in the game of the Exchange of Winnings, while the third blow cut his neck because of his lack of honesty, trustworthiness, truthfulness and faithfulness. Relying on deceitful tricks as a fox, Sir Gawain ruins the idea of an illustrious warrior and fails the test of a hero.

The green girdle, however, was not only kept hidden by Sir Gawain but it also sneaked into his heart (see *Gawain* 1855) as a snake. Preparing for the doomed day and deed at the Green Chapel, and to ease his conscience, Sir Gawain approached a priest and asked him to hear his confession. He was given absolution after having confessed his sins “without omission more or less” (see *Gawain* 1880–82). Though the absolution formally, objectively is correct, the repentance and contrition remains subjectively corrupt because Sir Gawain does not admit his unfaithfulness whose evidence is the secret girdle from around the waist of Bertilak’s wife, as if it were the figurative equivalent of adultery. The omission of unfaithfulness and the fact that instead of penitential satisfaction he takes further pleasure with some fair ladies (see *Gawain* 1885–86) mock the sacrament of penance and ridicule confession. Sir Gawain’s attitude ruins this religious act, and he fails as a person who was originally offered the universal call to holiness.

The Green Knight’s secular absolution after Sir Gawain’s second confession (see *Gawain* 2374–88) following the episode at the Green Chapel comes belatedly (see *Gawain* 2391–93). Moreover, this knightly reconciliation cannot amend the actual failure of the once hero and would-be saint.

5. Re-contextualising the Green Chapel Episode in *The School Bag*

As an exemplary text in its own right, the *Gawain*-passage in Hughes's rendering finds itself in a new context in *The School Bag* (485–92). It is preceded by Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky" (484–85) and followed by John Lyly's poem, "Pan's Syrinx was a girl indeed" (492).

"Jabberwocky" exemplifies nonsense in ordered poetic form. The poem's absurd, exaggerated and grotesque imagery outlining its plot can be easily registered "in the conscious memory" (see Hughes, "Afterword" 563). The form of address in the second stanza – "my son!" (5) – establishes a hierarchic relationship between a senior and a junior, a superior authority and a subject – maybe a king and a knight. The superior authority letting the junior subject go on a mission warns him what to be aware of: the Jabberwock (5), the Jubjub bird (7) and the Bandersnatch (8) – three magic, mysterious or mythic, almost supernatural creatures. All three of them are characterised by /b-/s as, for example, the "bulles and beres, and bores" besides dragons and giants (see *Gawain* 720–23), the creatures Sir Gawain has to fight with. On his mission, the junior subject as a warrior-figure is in search for his "foe" (10), as Sir Gawain was in quest of the Green Knight. At the tree that turns out to mark the spot for his fight (11), he "stood awhile in thought . . . / in uffish thought he stood" (12–13); where "uffish" might – maybe with the derived meaning based on the interjections "ugh" of disgust and horror, and "oof" producing the sound that people make when hit in the stomach, respectively – imply the additional psychological sense of not being able to digest something or cope with a challenge. This was also the case with Sir Gawain on his arrival at the Green Chapel "[t]urning his doubts over" and "[d]ebating in himself" ("From *Gawain*" 10, 20; *Gawain* 2169, 2179). Despite these parallels, the junior warrior's glorious and hilarious triumph (20) does not correspond to Sir Gawain's failure. However, we can have second thoughts about the junior warrior's accomplishment since the whole plot is set into the framework of the first stanza mirrored in the last one. Accordingly, as is reflected in Humpty Dumpty's explanation, it all takes place "in the wabe" (2, 26), that is "the grass-plot" (the green world as a space with "raths" [4, 28], the representatives of the species called "green pig" in it) and "round a sun-dial" (Carroll, "Humpty" 61) – all day and all night without end as long as time can be kept. And as for "the wabe" itself: "it goes a long way before . . . a long way behind"

and “a long way beyond” the sun-dial (Carroll, “Humpty” 61; emphasis added). If the third and at the same time ultimate dimensional aspect is “beyond,” then the whole event or plot is out of reach, cannot be comprehended or can be comprehended only as absurd, exaggerated, grotesque; therefore, *Gawain* and “Jabberwocky” can still mirror each other as supernatural nonsense.

Lyly’s *Syrinx*-poem follows Hughes’s *Gawain*-rendering in this triple arrangement, suggesting a possible elaboration upon the theme of love either courtly or mythic, either divine or earthly. The source of Lyly’s composition can be found in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Book 1, lines 689–712. Compelled by lust, Pan wants to rape *Syrinx*, a nymph of Arcadia. In order to protect her chastity, she was transformed into the reeds from which Pan then made his panpipe. Pan is said to be born with goat-horns displaying his phallic nature that is complemented with the reed whose Freudian symbolism can be of equal value resembling the female genital passage. Pan, the amorous god of nature, shepherds and flocks failed, lost his love, but gained his means of art through her figurative substitute.

Hughes’s love of nature and pastoral life, and the tragic loss of his love due to the death of his first wife, the poet Sylvia Plath, whose first name echoes a grove, forest or woods, quite likely justify the choice of this poem: “her I miss” (line 15). Lyly’s poem can be characterised by heavy alliteration like the *Gawain*-romance, and in this poem we can also recognise an alternate version of alliteration that could be called reversed alliteration imitating Gerard Manley Hopkins’s phrase of “reversed rhythm” examined by Hughes (see “Myths” 341–65). A short example of this device of “audial imagination,” that is, reversed alliteration (see Hughes, “Afterword” 568), in Lyly’s poem can be illustrated by the adjectival phrase in line 3: “dear reed” – the initial and final letters/sounds are exchanged and the neighbouring graphic/acoustic /r/ signs become coupled, or rather united. A longer example comes in line 5: “Nor flute, nor lute, nor gittern can” – the alveolar nasal consonant /n/ changes position by the end of the line, and the acoustic inclusion creates an echoing effect. A similar experience produced by the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ can be perceived in the last line of the poem’s closure:

... this quill –
Which at my mouth with wind I fill –
Puts me in mind, though her I miss,
That still my *Syrinx*’ lips I kiss. (13–16)

This closure discloses the mind of the poem's speaker, and the act of disclosing attributes to him a confessional disposition. The confessional character may evoke the nature of Sylvia Plath's poetry in and through Hughes for us.

Can such an evocation happen? However supernatural nonsense such an awakening might sound, sensibly it cannot be reversed definitely because of the "physical momentum of inevitability" (Hughes, "Afterword" 568) of the reversed alliteration: the acoustic effect re-sounds wherever one turns. Supernatural sensation: by her art and the means of her art Hughes might also state that "still her lips I kiss in my works of art" by virtue of "audial memory" (Hughes, "Afterword" 568).

6. Contextualising the Green Chapel Episode among Hughes's Poems

In a letter of 17 May 1978, Hughes recalls what T. S. Eliot said to him: "There's only one way a poet can develop [sic!] his actual writing . . . And that is by reading other poetry aloud . . . What matters above all, is educating the ear" (393). Hughes met Eliot, talked to him, and discussed poetry with him a few times "in 1960 and 1961" (159–60, 165–66, 167, 327). Hughes might have taken note of what Eliot told him because Hughes had already read out and even recorded poetry on tape, for example, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* in 1956, though privately (see Hughes, *Letters* 48), before Eliot advised him to do so. Hughes takes over in the same letter: "What matters, is to connect *your own voice* with an infinite range of verbal cadences & sequences – and only endless actual experience of your ear can store all that in your nervous system. The rest can be left to your life & your character" (393; emphasis by Hughes).

The practice of reading aloud other poetry echoes in Hughes's rendering of the Green Chapel episode as well as in his poetry. The scenery at the Green Chapel consists of "Trees" (2), "strange" (11; as a general descriptive adjective), "the edge of the river" (13), "the river's edge" (14), "burn" (15; as water of a small river), "a rough branch" (18), "grass" (21), "weeds" (31), "stump" (134) and "roots" (135). Owing to the audial memory and imagination refined by reading aloud, the majority of this verbal sequence of components or some of their synonyms or metonymic equivalents – known to Hughes as early as 1956 although set in this order in 1997 only – contribute to

a poem first published in 1961 and in a volume of the same title in 1967: “Wodwo” – a word borrowed from *Gawain* (721). “Wodwo” (re-duplicating the initial signs of *word* as if echoing in itself) shares or echoes the following words: “leaves” (1), “the river’s edge” (2), “water” (3, 4, 27), “river” (5), “weeds” (8), “root[s]” (11, 26, 27), “stump” (16), “trees” (22), “queer” (18, 28; as strange). This is the way Hughes developed his actual writing through the visual and audial imagination he learnt from the *Gawain*-romance. Having kept “the audial faculty wide open” (Hughes, “Afterword” 568), Hughes learnt composing not only phrases and lines but whole passages. This faculty being kept wide open also taught him keeping fundamental questions wide open. For example: “What am I?” (“Wodwo” 1, 3, 15) The repetition of this question accompanied by others (6, 6–8, 8–10, 17, 19–21, 26) works out the poem’s rhythmic pattern that helps keep the question and also the spectrum of tentative answers wide open. Human? Animal? Hero? Saint? Author? Authority? Scientist? Egoist? Etcetera? The answer is not granted yet. Nevertheless, the speaker of the poem takes his stand: “I’ll go on looking” (28) – namely for the answer.

Hughes – according to his “Epiphany” – had been “A new father” (5) for a year in 1961, when “Wodwo” first appeared, and a still young husband for five years. Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath had their first child, Frieda, on 1 April 1960. Thus, the answer to the question – “What am I?” – is definitely: a husband and a father. He was supposed to manage a complex situation known as “marriage” (52, 54). “Epiphany” – a narrative monologue – tells us a thought-provoking incident. The speaker of the poem meets a fox-cub in the traffic of London, which is not its habitat. The narrator seems to be a friend of foxes and starts thinking about integrating it into his family setting. The fox-cub represents “the tragic myth as a living organism” that helps understand how the poet’s “public language comes to carry such a naked, intimate current of private feeling, such a constant charge of urgent apprehension and inner crisis” (Hughes, *Shakespeare* 51). The way of thinking of this townsman imitates the dramatic monologue of “Wodwo” living in the wilderness: posing a long series of questions without answers (20–21, 23–24, 27–38, 53). The dramatic correlative of questions without answers is reflected by Wodwo’s behaviour – “Nosing here” (1) – as well as its imitation in “Epiphany” – the speaker’s “thoughts felt like big, ignorant hounds / Circling and sniffing around” (41–42). His way (of thinking) takes him “*over* Chalk Farm Bridge” (3; emphasis added) heading towards “the tube station” (4) underground. The simultaneity

of this rise and fall dynamically expands the space where questions fail to find their proper answers. In such a situation the speaker – either a husband or a father – proves to be “*slightly light-headed*” (5; emphases added) in the hidden alliterative tradition of *Gawain*. He cannot be an illustrious actor since the homophone *light* provided for him is swallowed by its surrounding *sly* attitude: cunning – a characteristic feature of a deceptive and (self-)deceiving fox as has been seen in *Gawain*. This dark illumination turns the speaker’s epiphany into the manifestation of failure and for this reason he “hurried / Straight on and dived as if escaping / Into the Underground” (46–48) – where he could figuratively find a fox-hole underground. In “Epiphany” the epiphany becomes a “test” (52, 53). The keywords of the poem’s closure are: test, marriage, failed (52–54). Concentrating on their position, we can see the following formula: test – marriage – marriage / failed – test – failed / failed – marriage – failed. In this arrangement we can see that only the finite verb “failed” takes a securely balanced disposition highlighting the imbalance – that is, the failure – of the marriage tested. The timing of the marriage-test is “April” (2), however, maybe owing to the “evening,” the declining part of a day, it is not Chaucer’s April of sweet regeneration (1), but Eliot’s “cruellest month” of *The Waste Land* (1).

Turning to the poem’s second person singular anonymous addressee, the ghost, the spirit or soul of Sylvia Plath, the timing in the opening line of “The Offers” – “Only two months dead” (1) – does not designate *The Waste Land* only, but desperately transfers “the dead land” (2) from Eliot’s poem. Sylvia Plath died on 11 February 1963. Two months later it is April again. The dramatically narrative monologue assumes the form of a dream-vision. “The crucial evidence of the mind’s myth only presents itself,” as Hughes puts it, “in the equivalent of ‘great dreams’ – narrative or symbolic works” (Hughes, *Shakespeare* 40). This dream-vision takes place in “the dead land” or under the ground, that is, “in the Underground” (“The Offers” 45) referring to “the underworld” (78) and the “afterworld” (100). If “Epiphany” arrives above the ground and “The Offers” comes under the ground, we can accept their complementary reflection as each other’s positive or negative equivalent. If epiphany is manifestation, then in “The Offers” epiphany cannot seemingly take place since the speaker is “[u]nable to manifest” himself (9). If the speaker escaped in “Epiphany” (47), in “The Offers” he “[l]ess and less / Did . . . think of escape” (104–05). As he ignored the fox-cub in “Epiphany” (10), so is he “ignored” by

the addressee in “The Offers” (6–7). The pattern of positive–negative counterparts can also be pointed out within “The Offers” in succession and in paragraph length as follows in the coming examples. The speaker’s “dream . . . was no dream” (5). The speaker’s “emptiness” is due to his perception of the addressee: “where you had been and abruptly were not” (57). The speaker’s slightly twisted hemispheres “know you you yet realise that you / Were not you” (68–69). Although the speaker’s manifestation, that is epiphany cannot occur in his own dream-vision (9), his dream by its nature can still make the beloved one’s appearance an “offer” (43) “revealed” (44) to him as an epiphany. The presence of these dualities – as if representing a figurative gaping gash – in subsequent poems and simultaneously in one poem may express the speaker’s uncertainty and imbalance being still *alive while* being engaged with someone belonging to the realm of death. As he puts it: “I struggled *awhile* / In my doubled *alive* and dead existence” (87–88; emphases added). It is in such a state that his dream-vision – in which he failed or was failed (at a point that was his “examination and approval” [46] of “the testing moment” [48]) to establish contact with the desired person’s apparition – offers him the possibility of getting in touch with her “three times” (58).

The pattern of the four offers – one at the end of the paragraph-length part of the dream-vision (43) followed by a series of three more (58–117) – can evoke the pattern of the dramatic development based on blows at the Green Chapel and the Exchange of Winnings at the castle of Hautdesert in the background. The structural memory of the movements in the pattern of 1+3 recalls the *Gawain*-model of being tested as far as trustworthiness, truthfulness and faithfulness is concerned. However, the difference between the *Gawain*-episode and “The Offers” is that the simile of the last instance in Hughes’s poem refers to the beloved as a “roe” (109) on the one hand, and as “a cobalt jewel” (111) on the other hand. The roe can allude to the deer, the uncorrupted – trustworthy, truthful, faithful – exchange of the winnings of the first day in Sir Gawain’s romance. The cobalt jewel might allude to the piece of jewellery Sir Gawain was offered the third day. In Hughes’s poem the roe can represent what is given the poem’s speaker, and the magnetic cobalt jewel can express what attracts the poem’s speaker. The outcome might suggest that the speaker of the poem is attracted to the roe-deer of forests (in Latin: *silvae*): he is irresistibly, peremptorily (see 114) drawn by the beloved one. Her “familiar voice” therefore “[w]ill startle out of a river’s uproar, urgent” (114–15) in

the alliterative tradition of the *Gawain*-poem, in the form of an underground river suggested by the occurrence of the line's liquids. This is the way the ultimate and inevitable expectation is phrased: "Don't fail me" (117).

In a full poem then, imitating a passage-length part of the romance, Hughes made some "attempt to reintroduce or adapt or make anything new of the old . . . *Gawain* tradition" (see "Myths" 357–58). Reactivating the *Gawain*-romance, Hughes seems to have discovered "some important truth" about himself and Sylvia Plath. It may further suggest that Hughes read *Gawain* "not as fiction but as a mirror of reality" (see Putter 39).

7. The Green Chapel and Court Green: Literary Life-long Learning

In Hughes's experience *Gawain* "as a mirror of reality" and a source of "some important truth" about personal relations (see Putter 39) turned out to be one of the "[m]yths and fantastic legends, wonder-tales about the embroilment of the natural human world with the supernatural" (see Hughes, *Tales* ix). As a mirror's reflection, some truth, myth, legend or wonder-tale of that sort – as Hughes might have put it – "magnetized our life into a special pattern" (see Hughes, "Myth" 139). When the pattern is contextualised, "we look through them into . . . a wonderfully well organized circuit of interior illuminations" (see Hughes, "Great Theme" 103). "Out of context," however, Hughes goes on, the meaning has to be worked out of the "more or less chaotic half-digested turnover of experience, the flux of half memories," and "at the moment of reading . . . we look through them into our own darkness" ("Great Theme" 103–04). This darkness comes late in the "evening" (see "Epiphany" 2) or under the ground (see "The Offers"), keeping the person in "doubled alive and dead existence" (88) or rather as "a hostage stopped / In the land of the dead" (103–04). Such a special kind of election may resemble the way a shaman can be "chosen" in Hughes's understanding (see Hughes, "Regenerations" 56). The shaman is elected by a spirit in a dream that may include some slowly developing drum rhythm as if "in a dead trance" –

And there you were, suddenly back within reach.
I got on the Northern Line at Leicester Square

And sat down *and there you were. And there*
The dream started that was no dream.
I *stared and* you *ignored* me.
Your part in the dream was to *ignore* me.

.....
The whole weight of my unbelieving *stare*
On your face, impossibly real *and there*.

.....
... shuddered ...

.....
... You came behind me ...

And spoke - ...

... 'THIS is the last. THIS one. THIS time
Don't fail me.'

(see "The Offers" 2-14, 111-117; emphases added)

- whose central episode is "a magical death" (see Hughes, "Regenerations" 56-57). The shaman's initiation dream also includes the act of "dismemberment" that can be symbolically replaced by a wound or a cut or a gash (see 57) as is included in Hughes's rendering of the Green Chapel Episode ("From *Gawain*" 185; *Gawain* 2346), and compositionally-figuratively in "Epiphany" as well as "The Offers."

The scene of the Green Chapel "as a mirror of reality" can reflect Court Green, a residence - "our house" ("The Offers" 106) - in Devon Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath bought in 1961 to avoid the urban turmoil and troubles they experienced in the Chalk Farm area of London. While describing Sir Gawain's Green Chapel in his rendering, Hughes alludes to it as a "tump" on the one hand, introducing a 16th-century lexical item into the 14th-century text, and on the other hand he refers to the Green Chapel as "crypt," introducing an additional word not having an equivalent in the original text. "Crypt" is a vaulted underground burial place, and "tump" is a barrow, a sepulchral mound often enclosing masonry, an ancient tumulus (see *OED*). In a letter of August 1961, Ted Hughes describes Court Green as follows: "a house with 6 bedrooms, a stable with 3 stalls, a spare 2 room cottage, a big vegetable garden, an extensive orchard and 2½ acres of land. Also a thatched roof. It's an old farm - part of it 11th Century. There's a prehistoric *tumulus* or fort-mound in the orchard. It's a knock-out" (Hughes, *Letters* 186; emphasis added). Later in a letter of 13 May 1963, Hughes refers to "the rooms and corners" of Green Court as the site of "Sylvia's greatest

happiness and worst grief" (219). According to a letter by Hughes in the Autumn of 1986, "Sylvia's residence at Court Green" was "precious to her" (517), where at least for a short period of life Sylvia was convinced – as she phrased it in a letter of 27 January 1962 – that "Ted's been a saint" (Plath 444). However, as Hughes put it 35 years after her death in a letter of 20 February 1998, following Sylvia's death "C.G. had trapped" him into an "arid sterile alienation" from himself, nevertheless, in 1972 he "started living at C.G. again" (710, 712). Anyway, Hughes had to extricate himself from this trap. As a man of letters he cut and removed extracts from other works of art and implanted them into the figurative and traumatic cuts, gashes and wounds of his own life-work for the sake of healing regeneration. The excerpts – extracts, portable chunks, tales, passages – from Ovid, Shakespeare and the *Gawain*-poet, and "little attempts" (712) about his shared life with Sylvia Plath being sealed by the visual image of the tumulus at Court Green helped Ted Hughes "simply make it public – like a confession," published as "Birthday Letters" (713). Birthday in the sense that "the shaman is resurrected, with new insides, a new body created for him" by the spirit. The shaman "sings himself into ecstasy, entering the spirit realm. . . . The results, when the shaman returns to the living, are some display of healing power, or a clairvoyant piece of information" (see "Regenerations" 57). The shaman, thus, "lives a martyrdom to the defeated cause. This explains . . . his heroic, lifelong, patient attempt to rescue the Female" (Hughes, *Shakespeare* 90).

In the "Postscript" to his examination of the *Gawain* tradition following Gerard Manley Hopkins, Hughes attributes a feminine character to the music of *Gawain's* lines. When in the "Postscript" together with Hopkins he learns that "[s]he is not dead" (see Luke 8.52), a quotation from Hopkins announces the glad tidings of joy: "There lives the dearest freshness deep down things" (Hughes, "Myths" 371). And the poet made an "attempt and even *followed* her, . . . his letters to her were as if written in invisible ink – or, if spelled out . . . , unsayable" (371–72; emphasis added). This approach to *Gawain* via Hopkins might be read as a tentative self-portrait about Hughes himself, the composer of *Birthday Letters*.

As shamans do, so did Ted Hughes undergo a heroic and holy Quest "at will and at phenomenal intensity, and with practical results, one of the main regeneration dramas of the human psyche: the fundamental poetic event." In this sense Hughes agrees that "there is no other life for you, you must shamanize or die" (see "Regenerations" 58).

Although Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath's shared life, that is their "house was in ruins" in the ultimate dream-vision (see "The Offers" 106), the extracts, excerpts, parts, passages and poems in this oeuvre proved to be "not just fragments shored against our ruin, but songs that might fortify the spirit against ruin" as Seamus Heaney put it ("Bags") – in the style of *The Waste Land's* conclusion (430) – when commemorating his partnership with Ted Hughes while editing *The Rattle Bag* and *The School Bag*. Although after all we can consider neither Sir Gawain nor Ted Hughes, neither Ted Hughes nor Sylvia Plath as heroes or saints during such a literary lifelong learning, yet having learnt their concluded oeuvre we can see them canonised.

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Kinga Földváry

Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Piliscsaba

Medieval Heroes, Shakespearean Villains – Modern Saints?

In my essay I have chosen to investigate an area where medieval studies meet my own research interests, which focus on Shakespeare films and their attitudes to genre, fidelity and the adaptation process in general. Therefore, in what follows I will look at a recent television series, BBC's *The White Queen*, adapted from three popular historical novels by Philippa Gregory. The novels are part of Gregory's six-volume series mostly referred to as *The Cousins' War*, which deals with the period of late medieval history that can be seen as the meeting point between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, namely the Wars of the Roses, and their culmination in the reign of Richard III. This period of history is currently enjoying almost unrivalled popularity in contemporary visual culture (with the possible exception of its direct continuation, the Tudor era). The phenomenon is no doubt attributable to a number of reasons, including the recent archaeological discovery of the remains of Richard III (see "The Discovery of Richard III"), which stirred up the interest of the wider public in a historical character best known for his fictional qualities and his proverbially poor PR. Whatever the cause, it is clear that the Wars of the Roses have inspired a number of contemporary works of popular and serious fiction, both documentary and historical writings, together with cinematic and televised adaptations as well, and the fates of the warring roses of York and Lancaster continue to haunt the popular imagination.

I wish to argue, however, that contemporary filmmakers and audiences turn to the late Middle Ages with a specifically biased approach, and tend to present the era in a beautified, in a sense almost beatified way: some of the medieval heroes that Shakespeare presented as inhumanly villainous have become so much human and psychologically rounded that they end up as nearly saintly figures or martyrs of their fate, society, or even divine and magical intervention. This in turn, I believe, is attributable to our vague and rather romantic notions of what the Middle Ages were like, and what we would prefer to believe about them.

In this essay, therefore, I would like to offer an examination of a number of processes that can be observed not so much in the actual historical period but rather in its fictional representation, replacing documentary reality with a performative one. Although the work I have chosen to analyse is not directly connected to, or even associated with Shakespearean drama, I believe it is indebted to Shakespeare's view of history, albeit in an indirect manner, as it seems that the authorial team of the television series set out to deny and contrast what we know about the period from Shakespeare with what they wish to present as a more authentic representation (and what is supposed to be more entertaining for contemporary audiences). In the light of contemporary film and television adaptations, we can observe that the parallel processes of bringing the late Middle Ages closer to us include transformations of various kinds, both positive and negative, in the appearance and also in the internal personality traits of characters. As we will see below, one of these processes can be described as a beautification, making characters and settings attractive in a way that is closer to our own contemporary ideals of beauty than to medieval attitudes. Besides enhancing the external beauty of characters, we may also observe a beatification process in many instances, even going as far as sanctifying otherwise very much human (even villainous) characters, mostly Richard III in this case. However, this movement is also accompanied by a dethronement, a process of showing former heroes as victims or even villains, or simply as erring and lonely human beings. I will not deal here with the vast number of fictitious accounts that attempt to solve the mystery of young Edward V and his brother, Richard of York, better known as the Princes in the Tower (see e.g. Peters, Weir, Wilkinson, Garber, to name but a few examples), but after a brief reference to the Shakespearean representation of Richard III, the essay will focus on *The White Queen*, a serialised 2013 BBC adaptation based on three novels from Philippa Gregory's six-part *The Cousins' War* series: *The White Queen*, *The Red Queen* and *The Kingmaker's Daughter*.

The most noteworthy character of all is clearly Richard, Duke of Gloucester, the later King Richard III. In what follows, I will investigate the ways in which his figure is reborn as the epitome of innocence, kindness and an almost saint-like adherence to integrity and honesty, until his surroundings force him to act in a more assertive (that is, more cruel and ambitious) manner. At the same time, we should not forget about the feminine perspective centralised in Gregory's narratives, and therefore it is inevitable to make references to the three

most dominant female characters of the novels: Elizabeth Woodville, wife of Edward IV, narrator of *The White Queen*; Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry Tudor, narrator of *The Red Queen*; and finally, Anne Neville, wife of Richard III, narrator of *The Kingmaker's Daughter*. As we will see, there is another interesting (possibly unintended) side effect of the process of beatification that Richard's character undergoes: in Philippa Gregory's novels most female characters (not only the protagonists), once overshadowed by the male protagonists and pushed to the background of action in traditional historical narratives, now have become so much centralised that they begin to lose their attraction (and our sympathy) as well, and transfer our emotional involvement to the previously feared or despised male characters.

To begin with the most reliable accounts of what the historical Richard III may have been like, as regards both his physical appearance and his personality traits, we need to go back to contemporary chronicles, but in fact, not even there can we be absolutely certain of what is fact and what is fiction. Just to mention one example: Lin Foxhall, Head of the School of Archaeology and Ancient History at the University of Leicester, quotes the fifteenth-century cleric John Rous and his *Historia Regum Angliae* (History of the Kings of England), in which Rous states that Richard was a "noble soldier, though he was slight in body and weak in strength." Foxhall describes Rous' account as containing "some unflattering material about Richard III," but claims that "it is not entirely derogatory" and, in general, implies that she is willing to treat this account as mostly trustworthy. The very same source, Rous' *Historia*, however, is introduced in John A. Wagner's *Encyclopedia of the Wars of the Roses* as including "some of the most shocking elements of anti-Ricardian propaganda that developed after 1485" (238), and thus when the same John Rous offers us the following description: "Richard was retained within his mother's womb for two years and emerging with teeth and hair to his shoulders. He was small of stature, with a short face and unequal shoulders, the right higher and the left lower" (Hammond) – we are right to treat the description with some necessary caution. Sources after Rous generally make similar (or even stronger) references to Richard's physical deformities, and it is only since the 2012 archaeological discoveries that we can be more or less certain about how cautious we really need to be. He was apparently no crookback, as Thomas More described him (on the implications of the spinal deformities, see Knight and Lund), although there is evidence for his having suffered from scoliosis:

... a curvature of the spine that can cause one shoulder to appear slightly higher than the other, in this case the right shoulder. So there is a germ of truth behind the Tudor descriptions, but there is no evidence for the hunchback, the withered arm and the limp—they are merely inventions of those trying to blacken Richard's image. (Knight and Lund)

However, the image that most of us have burned onto our retinas is considerably more repulsive than the above-quoted description of his slight build and weak strength, much worse than asymmetrical shoulders: it is downright bestial. It is again a critical commonplace that this monstrous image comes directly from William Shakespeare's dramatic representation, which in turn is indebted to anti-Ricardian and pro-Tudor distortions of reality, following Sir Thomas More's account in his *History of Richard III*, published in various versions in the Tudor chronicles, from Richard Grafton's and Edward Hall's to Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles* as well (for more details, see Shakespeare, *Richard III* 1–21; and Shakespeare, *King Richard III* 83–97).

To see how far Shakespeare's text goes to paint this evil picture, we do not need to search for long to find descriptions of the last Plantagenet king's external and internal deformity and monstrosity. Richard, Duke of Gloucester begins the play with the (in)famous soliloquy in which he describes himself as one "not shap'd for sportive tricks, . . . rudely stamp'd, . . . curtail'd of this fair proportion, . . . Deform'd, unfinish'd, . . . lamely and unfashionable," descanting on his "own deformity" (1.1.14–27).¹ Later we also learn that his birth was "a grievous burden" to his mother, his coming "on earth to make the earth [her] hell" (4.4.167–68). The epithets given to him during the play include all sorts of unpleasant, poisonous or monstrous animals and creatures of the underworld: "foul devil" (1.2.50), "lump of foul deformity" (1.2.57), "villain" (1.2.70), "hedgehog" (1.2.104), "toad" (1.2.151; 4.4.145), and even "poisonous bunch-back'd toad" (1.3.244), "dog" (1.3.216), and a dog with a "venom tooth" (1.3.291), "elvish-mark'd, abortive, rooting hog" (1.3.228), "bottled spider" (1.3.242), just to mention a few of the names applied to him by Lady Anne, Queen Margaret and others.

As if unpleasant looks were not bad enough, Shakespeare's play also informs us that Richard was bestial in his actions, too. He is shown as not only responsible for having his own brother George executed, but also for ordering the murder of his own nephews, the Princes in

1. All references to the play pertain to The Arden Shakespeare, 2nd series.

the Tower, whose actual fate is in fact the most famous unsolved mystery of the period, as the proliferation of popular fiction with this title testifies (see above). Shakespeare also makes Richard a lady-killer in the literal sense of the word, who works with a poisonous tongue rather than any masculine attraction that may possibly enchant the ladies in the two famous wooing scenes, first with Lady Anne (Act 1 Scene 2), and then with the Dowager Queen Elizabeth (Act 4 Scene 4), whose daughter, Elizabeth of York, later married to Henry Tudor, is the apparent target of Richard's desire. What is only implied is that then he uses more traditional poisons and weapons to get rid of Lady Anne, similarly to other adversaries he finds blocking his way.

The film adaptations of Shakespeare's *Richard III*, whether made for the cinema or for television, have long followed this tradition of representing Richard as deformed, often monstrous and bestial; his hunchback and imaginative costumes usually make him resemble the bottled spider or the lame dog he is associated with in the text. Even the best known recent example, Richard Loncraine's 1995 film version, while not giving Ian McKellen's Richard a hunchback, plays up the deformity of the arm from the start – a significant point in textual interpretation, since in Act 3, Scene 4 Lord Hastings loses his life for hesitating to believe that the former Queen, Elizabeth Woodville may have bewitched the King's arm and thus caused its withering (3.4.67–76). If we have seen the arm as lame and withered from the start, this scene adds to our sense of Richard's wickedness, which uses any excuse to get rid of his former friends and accomplices when they become unpleasant or too slow to follow him down his slippery paths of sin.

If, however, we are quite clearly aware that Richard was born without any physical deformity, he is described by other characters and perceived by readers and viewers as a strong young man, the most significant element of his fateful monstrosity is absent. Therefore, if afterwards we see a transformation and a loss of ability in Richard's previously unblemished, healthy body, we notice the sudden pain that grips his sword arm (and we have seen Elizabeth Woodville wishing his strong arm to wither), the blame is clearly transferred to either the Dowager Queen, or anyone else named as Richard's enemy, but undoubtedly away from Richard himself.

This in fact is precisely what can be observed in *The White Queen*, the 2013 BBC production based on Philippa Gregory's popular historical novel series. However much we are aware of Richard's monstrous representation being biased and distorted out of all proportion, and however much we were just beginning to accept that the actual

physical features of the historical Richard must have been considerably more human than we used to think, nothing could have prepared us for the handsome, almost angelic face of the young Richard that the televised *The White Queen* presents us with (played by young Welsh actor Aneurin Barnard). Still, as we will see in what follows, this transformation is not purely meant to restore the reputation of a victim of false accusations. As Gregory's viewpoint appears to focus on the female, making women protagonists out of Shakespeare's passive background figures (the motto of the television series is "Men Go to Battle, Women Wage War"), the result is that the men, including, and especially Richard himself, are infinitely more likeable – if only for the single reason that we know so much less about their greed and lust for power than that of their wives and lovers, whose passions make them monomaniacs in their pursuit of position, power, wealth, or all of these together.

In fact, we also need to be aware of the fact that Shakespeare's famously ambiguous opening soliloquy in *Richard III*, with the double-edged "I am determined to prove a villain" (1.1.30) does the opposite of what it appears to be doing: it absolves Richard from his sins, putting the blame on God, fate, historical determination, anything but his own ambition. But in *The White Queen*, an even more extreme consequence of the more human, not at all bestial depiction is observed: Richard gets the blame for even less of his deeds than what would be supported by historical evidence. Now we do not blame his monstrous birth for his spiritual monstrosity, as was common in long-held medieval convictions, and neither does anyone else in the cast: there is no remark on his being anything but loyal and honourable. As a result, we can clearly observe how his circumstances, grievances at the hands of the Woodvilles and his own brothers, practically force him into a new role he is most reluctant to play, making him more of a Macbeth than a Shakespearean Richard we have known for so long.² In Gregory's depiction he is the innocent one whose motto is "Loyauté me lie," "Loyalty binds me" (*The Kingmaker's Daughter* 236), who is by nature the most loyal and honourable one of the York brothers, but who is pushed so far that he can see no other course of action than to claim the throne of his nephew for himself.

2. I am indebted to Gabriella Reuss for this observation, even though I believe that Gregory's and the BBC's Richard is meant to be even less of a criminal than either of the two controversial Shakespearean villains, and both versions of *The White Queen* emphasise the crimes that he has not committed (contrary to popular belief), rather than the ones that he actually does.

If Philippa Gregory's novel series chooses to relieve Richard of the role of the antagonist, the vacancy is filled by a surprising group of characters: the traditionally suppressed women, queens, mothers, daughters, widows of the royal families. In this interpretation female nature is represented as ultimately ambitious and vengeful, even when these instincts turn against themselves. This is particularly interesting when we consider that both *The Cousins' War* novel series and *The White Queen* television series represent history from women's perspective – and we may wonder whether this is the way women really see themselves in positions of power. We must not forget that Shakespeare's women are also often vengeful: in *Richard III* Margaret of Anjou is present as a terrifying voice haunting the kingdom from over the grave, crying revenge and leading all other women down the same path. At the same time, all other female figures in Shakespeare's drama are represented as victims of some sort; therefore, when they join Margaret in their chorus of wailing queens, their plight invokes pity rather than fear, and their generalised representation achieves the most human depiction possible – their chorus makes us understand that war is always destruction when seen from the women's side. In *The White Queen*, however, it is not only warfare that becomes more noble and chivalric and even pleasing to the eye, but the whole age in general appears to have undergone a noticeable facelift, and is presented as considerably more beautiful than historical evidence suggests it may have been. This process of beautification is tangible even in the novels' narratives, but it is particularly visible in the television series, where the constant warfare of the age is effectively overshadowed by the beauty of the White Queen herself, and the beauties of courtly life. The only exceptions in the films may be the scenes where traitors are executed, or cruel and calculating individuals avenge the death of their loved ones, but even these are typically seen in slow motion, as if to soften the brutality of what we are witnessing.

If we look at the (historical and literary) narrative as a whole, we can easily notice that these changes in the representation of the protagonists are inherent elements of a complex system of transformations. The process of adapting literature to the screen is in fact an amalgam of processes, based on a wide range of creative decisions made by the authorial team. One of the intentions that can be found almost without exception, although in a variety of guises, is to bring a previously existing work of art closer to the contemporary audience, to make them notice the relevance of the work itself to their own life and times. As Julie Sanders remarks, not every adaptation reverts to complex

revisions by explicit political commentary or similar means, “yet adaptation can also constitute a simpler attempt to make texts ‘relevant’ or easily comprehensible to new audiences and readerships via the processes of proximation and updating” (19). The updating in textual terms is easy to notice – even without an in-depth acquaintance with fifteenth-century English, the average reader can notice the obvious contemporaneity of the text, the fact that these conversations could easily be heard in our own times as well. In the case of the Philippa Gregory novels the linguistic updating has been done by the novelist herself, and as a result, the television series needs to do no such thing. There are also other typical processes of proximation noticeable here, which involve the visual sphere, and which are done in a more subtle way, since the series wishes to keep up at least the appearance of creating historical, costume drama. In that guise, though, the discerning eye will observe various attempts at beautification, to make a more pleasant visual impression on the viewer, and also to make certain key protagonists and their lives more beautiful in the literal and physical senses of the word.

The more superficial elements of this beautification process involve the detailed and elaborate description and presentation of clothes, jewels, ceremonies, and other trappings of wealth and power, which take on a nearly tangible, visible appearance even in the novels’ pages. Interestingly enough, in Shakespeare’s theatre (even though costumes were the most important accessories on the stage, substituting for elaborate scenery or stage design) the role of clothes was never so central, so active as here, where we are supposedly interested in the psychological depths, rather than the appearances of characters. This in turn results in a confirmed sense of the superficiality of the women these precious jewels, clothes and ceremonies are associated with, and their interest in material wealth and possessions, however much they pretend to be interested only in the happiness of their own children and the welfare of the nation. What is even more interesting is that it is not simply the perfectly manicured nails of the Queen and other ladies at the court, nor the pleasantly decorative costumes that are telltale signs of the revised ideals of beauty, but also the bits that are missing from the films: however often Philippa Gregory’s text mentions Elizabeth Woodville’s “conical headdress” (*The White Queen* 22) there is not a single occasion when we see her wearing one on screen, not even in the scenes of the first encounters between Elizabeth and Edward IV, although the “tallest headdress” (3) plays an important role throughout the scene. Neither do we witness Margaret Beaufort, who

has always wished to be a nun, wearing a wimple she clearly names as her characteristic attire. Both women, and most others around them, are seen bareheaded, the least likely of all medieval ways of dressing, since the Church traditionally interpreted hair (together with body hair) as representative of bodily energies, lust, desire, temptation – all in all, everything that counts as sinful. Conical headdresses and wimples, moreover, are more suitable for alienating contemporary audiences – we are mostly unable to see nun-like females as either beautiful or desirable – rather than helping them identify with characters on screen, and therefore they have been abandoned by the filmmakers.

But by far the most peculiar change in attitude to the characterisation of Elizabeth Woodville and her family is traceable in both the books' and the television series' embracement of the supernatural. Shakespeare's *Richard III* shows what appears to be historically mostly accurate: the accusation of witchcraft as one of the most serious threats, but no dramatic representation of any element of magic in any way, and therefore the mention of witchcraft in connection with Elizabeth Woodville makes her a victim of Richard's wicked accusations, rather than guilty of any actual charge. Philippa Gregory, on the other hand, turns the magical into one of the narrative threads of *The White Queen*, the novel dealing with Elizabeth Woodville's side of the events. Almost as if a second plotline, the story of Melusina runs through the novel – the water goddess that fell in love with and married a mortal, and passed her supernatural skills on to her female descendants. In the novel, the typographically marked distinction between the legend and the main plot creates an impression of a symbolic correlation between the two, without implying a direct connection of the supernatural abilities between legendary Melusina and the present-day Woodville women. At the same time, Gregory does imply that a number of freak weather phenomena are caused by the Woodvilles, Jacquetta of Luxembourg, Elizabeth's mother, Elizabeth herself, and also her eldest daughter, Elizabeth of York, the later Queen of England, wife of Henry Tudor. The female line is also given the "Sight," the ability to foresee the future, have forebodings of danger or death looming over the family. Interestingly, however, in the other novels of *The Cousins' War* series, no character has any evidence of the Woodvilles involvement in such acts of witchcraft, and therefore the fact that both Margaret Beaufort and the Neville sisters, Isabel and Anne, present the Queen and her family as active witches only speaks of the dangers of court gossip and gullibility, but does not put the blame on the Woodvilles themselves.

The BBC film series, however, does not even leave us in any doubt whether the supernatural abilities, the weather occurrences are simply implied, wished for, feared and thus believed by the enemies of the Woodvilles, or if the forebodings suggest any more insight into the future than what is given to other oversensitive people. The film opens with Elizabeth Woodville's visionary dream, and still in the first scenes, we witness as her mother involves her actively in a ritual that will refer to her future as Queen of England. Later on, again, we are left in no doubt as to both Jacquetta of Luxembourg's and Elizabeth Woodville's conscious and ambitious participation in supernatural activities, or indeed witchcraft, as there is no other name for it. In later parts of the series, even the young Elizabeth of York, the royal couple's eldest child is an increasingly active participant in blowing a witch's wind against Warwick's ships, then in creating a protective curtain of mist between the armies of Edward IV and his enemies, and later in bringing down an unnaturally long season of rain on the kingdom.

One may wonder at the wisdom of such a marked presence of the fantastic in a narrative that aspires to the label of historical fiction, and in which the author makes visible efforts at plausibility, even including several pages of bibliography to refer to the research she did when preparing her manuscript. In her Author's Note at the end of the volume, she even makes the clear statement that "most of the story that I tell here is fact, not fiction" (Gregory, *The White Queen* 415). The inclusion of magical incidents would undoubtedly work against these intentions, but apparently the BBC series did not suffer from unpopularity or lack of interest among the viewing public. The reasons for this may be manifold, but I believe there are at least two that need to be mentioned here. The first one (that we have already referred to above) is clearly the balance of power between Richard III (and other male characters) and the women, particularly the Woodvilles, but also Margaret Beaufort, and even Anne Neville, wife of Richard III, and the daughter of the Earl of Warwick, the Kingmaker. Making Richard III more human and less of an evil monster necessitates his replacement with another antagonist, or at least opens up the floor for speculation as to the real perpetrator of the horrid crimes unsolved ever since. And having the Woodville women dabble in magic necessarily makes them culpable, at least for using their abilities to their own advantage, rather than for any higher motives.

But, I believe, the most important reason for including such a straightforward supernatural element is the realisation that the most popular contemporary genre, both in written fiction and in screen

adaptations, is what we call fantasy – a genre mixing elements of adventure, mystery and romance, set in a recognisable human world as we know it, which in turn comes into contact with another universe where different laws apply and where mythical or legendary creatures may endow one with supernatural abilities. Set in the context of contemporary fantasy films and novels, the marked presence of the supernatural may in fact enhance the works' popularity, and we may even argue that endowing protagonists with magical skills is in fact a necessary part of the proximation and idealisation process noticeable in popular narratives today. Moreover, if we bring such comic film adaptations to mind as Matthew Vaughn's 2007 direction of Neil Gaiman's *Stardust*, in which the witch Lamia (played by Michelle Pfeiffer) and her sister witches use much needed magic for keeping themselves young and beautiful, we may find it easy to believe that the White Queen, who is constantly described as extraordinarily, almost unnaturally beautiful, would resort to her supernatural skills to keep herself in beauty (and thus in favour of the king).

Another example where the above-described intention of the visual adaptation's proximation results in an apparently conscious deviation from the novels' description, and even more from medieval reality, concerns a central event of female life: it is none other than the representation of childbirth. The period and practice of confinement, with the darkened shutters and absence of male company until the new mother is churched and thus cleansed after the birth, is consistently referred to in the novels, but there is practically no trace of it in the films. We follow Edward IV, King of England into the birth chamber right after the moment his first daughter, Elizabeth is born, and he is also present at the birth of his fifth child, born prematurely and dying not long after its birth. Such a sight – fathers in birth chambers – may be more natural for twenty-first century viewers, who are getting used to the idea of fathers being at their wives' sides during childbirth, but quite clearly unimaginable, at least in royal circles, in the second half of the fifteenth century.

Similarly, love affairs and open displays of emotions are equally played up, among them the relationship of Margaret Beaufort and Jasper Tudor – a connection that is much more implied than openly shown even in *The Red Queen*, the second novel in the series *The Cousins' War*, narrated from Margaret's viewpoint. But the most loving husband of all is, by all means, Richard himself – the one who rescues Anne Neville from his own brother's guardianship to marry her, and comforts her with the knowledge that he is going to be a good husband, since he loves

her for herself, not for her wealth and connections. And when happily married, but blessed with only one child, and a frail one for that, Anne is trying to reassure Richard that they are going to have a dozen babies, he again claims in the voice of a devoted lover: "I don't mind if we don't, as long as I have you and my own honour" ("Poison and Malmsey Wine" 00:15:37–42). Here is no trace of the Shakespearean Richard's cruel pragmatism ("I'll have her, but I will not keep her long," 1.2.234) – which was historically incorrect in any case, since Richard and Anne were married for thirteen years, from 1472 until her death in 1485. Richard's clever manoeuvre to prepare for a divorce, which Philippa Gregory's book uses to undermine Anne's belief in her husband's loyalty and true intentions, and break down their trust in each other, is also placed considerably later in the film adaptation. This modification gives the couple a series of convincingly amorous scenes together, and as a result, in the film Richard's ambition to gain power and wealth for himself is manifest only when Anne is already beside herself with grief for her sister's death. (Again, Isabel Neville is shown to die right after the birth of her second child, her first son, when in the novel she gives birth to three children, one daughter and two healthy sons, and sickens only after the birth of the second, true to the historical records.) The modifications are clearly useful for increasing suspense and the sense of interconnectedness between various events, and give greater strength to George's accusations against the Queen, the price for which is again historical accuracy (Wagner 178).

All in all, Philippa Gregory's narratives display a focalisation of the female viewpoint, with a variety of surprising consequences. On the one hand, by bringing these women closer to the reader, and also making them and their world enviably beautiful, she not only makes them more human, but also more dominant and manipulative, controlling not simply their own narratives but also that of history, the events and fate of England as a whole. This in turn reminds us of the way Shakespeare's *Richard III* displays the female voice – mostly that of the victimised, suppressed, suffering females, their presence culminating in the scene of the wailing queens (Act 4 Scene 4), which shows that the female presence in history is a constant, and viewed from their perspective, whatever happens on the throne or the battlefield, will be equally disastrous.

The result of Gregory's presentation of her female characters as dominant and manipulative is – slightly surprisingly – that the military hero of the age, Shakespeare's blackest villain, Richard III will appear almost holy, nearly a saint in words and deeds. This beatification

is indeed more than an impression in the reader or viewer, since a number of textual references support it. “You’d be totally justified and sanctified” (“The King is Dead” 00:51:03–05) are the words of Anne Neville, trying to persuade her husband, Richard, to take the throne for himself, rather than crowning his nephew, Edward V. And even at the beginning of the novel series, Richard is described as “a pious young man, thoughtful,” living “a life of duty and austere service to his people” (Gregory, *The White Queen* 112); and later as “the good boy of the family, . . . who prays devoutly so that he can be favoured by God” (194). Ironically, this saintliness is what seems to bring about his downfall, as Elizabeth Woodville finds it “hard to stomach” (202), as she says, and therefore she is unable to trust Richard to be true to his word, even when he appears intent on bridging the gap between the two of them.

What was thus once heroism in contemporary medieval history, but became blackened as villainous monstrosity in a subsequent period, is ironically reborn as saintliness in our own age – the real irony is of course that in the twenty-first century extreme religious devotion does not make for popularity, but is often interpreted as weakness (or madness, as in the rather extreme representation of Margaret Beaufort). Thus Richard of Gloucester, the gracious ruler that the Council of York seemed to have honestly mourned on the day of his death, as the 23 August, 1485 entry of the York House Books bears witness (“Rumour, Opinion, and Criticism”), or the wicked monster that Shakespeare’s play presents us, or even the pious and honourable young son of York, in each of these portraits appears as “determined” – by his birth, by his external appearance, or by his inner religious inclinations – making us wonder if we will ever understand who he really was.

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Géza Kállay

Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest

The Villain as Tragic Hero

***Macbeth* and Emmanuel Levinas' Metaphysical Reading of Shakespeare**

Ever since Irving Ribner devoted, in his *Patterns of Shakespearean Tragedy*, special attention to Macbeth as hero-villain,¹ debates have not ceased around the question how someone may be evil and a tragic hero at the same time. Can a villain have a “truly” tragic dimension? This is not only an aesthetic problem, pertaining to the dramaturgy of a play, but a moral, and thus, a philosophical one as well. In this essay I will investigate the question taking a rather unusual route: I will recall the – to my mind highly original, yet sadly neglected – reading of *Macbeth* by the French phenomenologist, Emmanuel Levinas (1906–95), who developed, as my unfolding story will show, a very special theory of ethics which might be called “ethical ontology.” At the end of my study I will also ask how a metaphysical reading such as Levinas’ may relate to present-day Shakespeare criticism.

Levinas is definitely in the phenomenological tradition of philosophy, without ever aspiring to create a theory of reading literary texts. In fact, as we shall see, his nexus to literature and to the arts in a broad sense as containing anything revelatory for *par excellence* philosophical understanding is rather controversial. It is controversial, sometimes even astonishing, in spite of a long tradition in the work of his French colleagues, highlighted by such names as Sartre, Camus, Lacan, Derrida, and even Merleau-Ponty (in his later phase, in the 1950s), who did find inspiration in the arts, and most of them specifically in literature, to inform, in one way or another, philosophical problems.

Levinas’ caution with the arts and with literature (poetry) in philosophy has a lot to do with his breaking up with the Heideggerean version of radical phenomenology (while he was a devoted student of Heidegger’s before 1933). As Hans-Georg Gadamer very succinctly puts it, the Heideggerean approach, among other things, wished to

1. The book was first published in 1960 by Methuen and Co. in London. There is a modern edition in the *Routledge Library Editions*. A recent, detailed study, also giving an overview of the history of the problem, is Charney’s *Shakespeare’s Villains* (71–88).

make us aware of the way Western philosophy turned away from the question of Being as early as in Greek thinking. To do this, Heidegger employed a philosophical method which, as Gadamer claims, is a “constitutive element/feature” (a kind of “essence,” *Wesen*) of the arts and, especially, of poetry, too. This method is to make us conscious that the event, the conversance and experience, the *Ereignis*, *Erfahrung* and *Erlebnis* of b/Being should be conceived as “the strife between disclosure and sheltering concealment” (Gadamer, “On the Truth” 154),² meaning (roughly) that the phenomena we wish to interpret open up themselves for us and hide themselves from us at the same time: nothing shows itself to us “as a whole,” “completely,” while it would be even intuitively wrong to say that everything is hidden from us. Now the above “strife” between hiding and openness should be “shown,” “exposed,” and the new, metaphysical meanings for thinking should be unfettered and disentangled from the traditional words (concepts) of Western metaphysics themselves. Levinas’ break with this tradition, making an ethical stance, an infinite duty towards the Other, the basis of his ontology, as opposed to a self-understanding of being with respect to Being, or witnessing to the self-revelation of the Truth in Being – as suggested by Heidegger – does not mean that Levinas would not use a highly metaphorical, transcendental, or – in more Anglo-Saxon terms – a highly “technical” philosophical language.

Levinas interprets human experience – the usual starting point of phenomenological analysis – in a very broad and transcendental sense: at one point, his term for the “transcendental subject” is “humanity as me” (“Ethics” 84).³ Yet he will concentrate on the moral side, the ethical dimension of the human being, making the strangeness, the

2. See also “The Artwork,” “Heidegger and the Language” in the same volume, and Gadamer, “Vom Anfang.”

3. Of course, Levinas considerably reworked the idea of transcendence, making it a significant “philosophical category”; for example, his second *magnum opus*, written towards the end of his career, *Otherwise Than Being* begins with the famous sentence: “If transcendence has meaning, it can only signify the fact that the *event of being*, the *esse*, the *essence*, passes over to what is other than being.” And in the next paragraph: “Transcendence is passing over to being’s *other*, otherwise than being. Not *to be otherwise*, but *otherwise than being*” (*Otherwise* 3, emphases in the original). These are not easily interpretable sentences, and since this paper is very far from aspiring to give an overview of Levinas’ philosophy, I resist the temptation to deal with them. But it should never be forgotten that for Levinas the Other and the duty towards the Other always remained a very concrete and “worldly” obligation, so it is not even at *loci* like the above that the level of “generality and abstraction” would exceed that “transcendental level” which treats the “subject” (me) and the Other as “representatives, examples” of humankind. Neither the subject, nor

“otherness,” the Alterity of the Other his central concern. Not because he wishes to write a “moral philosophy” in the traditional sense of “what one should do” and “what one should refrain from doing,” but because he envisages the *being* of the human being – in the transcendental sense – as an infinite duty, an infinite obligation towards the Other, whom I always encounter in a concrete situation; the Other is a living being, not a “lifeless abstraction.” Facing the Other is my absolute duty arising from my ontological stance towards the Other. This duty is an absolute condition, which makes the recognition of the Other possible, and with which, and through which the *strangeness* of the (concrete, tangible but transcendental) Other may be overcome, and, strictly following this path further, self-recognition, in the light of the Face of the Other, might come about. Moral obligation towards the Other for Levinas is not an “accompanying feature” of being human (of “human existence”) but it is its very *Wesen*, its most decisive, characteristic bent.⁴ “To be or not to be” – Levinas quotes the famous line of Hamlet in the first sentence of the concluding section of his essay “Ethics as First Philosophy,” which is regarded as one of the clearest and most succinct summaries of his philosophy (see the note in Seán Hand’s introduction to “Ethics” [75]). And he goes on: “is that the question? Is it the first and final question?” (“Ethics” 86) The answer is “no,” with the explanation: “This is the question of the meaning of being: not the ontology of the understanding of that extraordinary verb [*be*] but the ethics of its justice” (“Ethics” 86). *One* of the ways in which Levinas sums up the “ethics of the justice” of “to be” is in the same essay: “This summons [this call] to responsibility destroys the formulas of generality by which my knowledge [*savoir*] or acquaintance [*connaissance*] of the other man re-presents him to me as my fellow man. In the face of the other man I am inescapably responsible and consequently the unique and chosen one. By this freedom, humanity in me (*mois*) – that is, humanity as me – signifies, in spite of its ontological contingency of finitude and morality, the anteriority and uniqueness of the non-*interchangeable*” (“Ethics” 84).

the Other should become an abstraction if they wish to remain alive and their encounter meaningful.

4. One would like to say instead of German *Wesen* “essence,” but it is twentieth-century philosophy in general which refrains from using this word, lest it should give rise to misunderstandings about a “something” which has been squeezed out of several particulars to contain, through abstraction, their “connecting inner spirit,” an “*eidōs*” (‘idea, form’) somehow “summarizing” what the particulars “really are.”

However, Levinas' longer passages on *Macbeth* are not in the major works which contain the detailed expositions of his ontology⁵ but rather "on his way" to this ontology, serving – to use a line from *Macbeth* – "as happy prologues to the swelling act / Of the imperial theme" (1.3.128–29). This "conjuring up" of the play first occurs in the article entitled "There is: Existence without Existence" (Hand 30–36), originally published in 1946; this article "was subsequently incorporated into the Introduction and chapter 3, section 2 of . . . *Existence and Existents*,"⁶ and is celebrated by Seán Hand as "one of the first and most abiding examples of Levinas' original thought" (Introduction to "Ethics" 75). The question of the "there is" (*il y a*) of course makes its appearance in Levinas' later writings, too. In the also early *Time and the Other*, originally published in 1947, Levinas, especially in the section "Existing without Existents" (44–51), takes over much of what he said on *there is* in his much shorter article the previous year, but here (i.e. in the section "Existing without Existents" in *Time and the Other*) he mentions *Macbeth* only in passing (and recalls "*Romeo and Juliette*" [sic!] instead [50]). However, he takes up, in the same volume, the figure of *Macbeth* in connection with dying in the section "Death and the Future" (71–73). When, in turn, in his second *magnum opus*, in *Otherwise Than Being*, he discusses the *there is*, *Macbeth* is nowhere to be found, although the fundamental ideas on the *il y a* remain the same (162–65), whereas almost thirty years before, in *Time and the Other*, he went as far as to say: "it sometimes seems to me that the whole of philosophy is only a meditation of Shakespeare" (72).

The gradual disappearance of literary examples from Levinas' philosophical writings is an interesting fact in itself, and, knowing about his steadily growing critical attitude to Heidegger, one feels tempted to speculate how Levinas' gradual abstaining from literature in his philosophical texts is related to ("the later") Heidegger's above-mentioned predilection to draw ontological conclusions from poetry, and what role Heidegger (and the French existentialists, especially Sartre) played as regards Levinas' ambivalent relationship to literary criticism. For example, in a much-debated article, "Reality and Its Shadow" (Hand 130–43), (originally from 1948) Levinas starts out with the interesting idea that "an artwork is more real than reality and

5. The two most important, major works of Levinas – who did not publish much and became influential only towards the end of his life, from the early- and mid-1980s (see Critchley 2) – are *Totality and Infinity, an Essay on Exteriority*; and the already mentioned *Otherwise than Being*.

6. Originally Levinas, *De l'existence à l'existant*.

attests to the dignity of the artistic imagination, which sets itself up as a knowledge of the absolute" (130) but – through the interpretation of the "image" (134–37) – he concludes that since art is prone to be "disengaged" (141), it is often without "initiative and responsibility," and thus it can easily become an empty game, entering a "dimension of evasion" (141): art can become the *evasion* of moral responsibility. Although there is undeniably something in this with respect to phony, or simply "bad" art (whatever that may be), it is hard not to feel shocked when one reads: "There is something wicked and egoist and cowardly in artistic enjoyment" (142). Obviously, there is something "ego-centric" in every pleasure I feel (because it is me who feels it) but care for, and responsiveness to, the Other perhaps does not, it seems to me, exclude the possibility that the Other, simultaneously with me (for example, an actor on the stage whose performance I am watching), may feel a similar pleasure to mine, including the joy he feels when I applaud him. It is also hard to agree with the implication that I would always be wicked and a coward when I feel (artistic) pleasure. Similarly, for Levinas, literary critics are scavengers of art works: they try to conceptualise their "prey," which is "a depth of reality" (130) which opens up in the artwork. Since conceptual language is a far cry from the "actual" language of poetry, the literary critic "betrays," e.g. Mallarmé through her very interpretation of Mallarmé (130). At the same time, we know that Levinas was a great admirer (among others) of Dostoyevsky, Cervantes, Shakespeare (as we have seen and we will see), and also of Proust, on whom he wrote a brilliant, if short, essay ("The Other" 160–65).⁷ Yet here I will not go into this issue; I will solely concentrate on Levinas' reading of *Macbeth* in the already mentioned "There is: Existence without Existents."

Imagine a huge manor-house somewhere in the countryside. You are totally alone; there is no other living creature around within two miles. It is night and the sky is heavily overcast: neither the moon, nor a lone star is visible. But otherwise, the weather is fine: there is no wind, rain, or storm. It is a night when – as Banquo puts it – "there's husbandry in heaven / Their candles [stars] are all out" (2.1.4–5). You are lying in bed and you cannot sleep. You open your eyes but it does not matter whether you close them or not: it is only the thickness of darkness that surrounds you. You listen, prick your ears, and

7. The number one (unduly neglected) book on Levinas and literary criticism is Eaglestone (10–34 and 98–128). There much is explained about Levinas' relationship to literature and literary criticism.

you can only hear the equally thick, merciless silence around you. There is not even a clock ticking in the house or watch on your wrist; no door is creaking, no window is rattling. You wish to fall asleep but you still cannot.

This is a reconstruction of a relatively ordinary and fairly particular situation Levinas sketches out at the beginning of the article "There is: Existence without Existents,"⁸ and I have embellished (but, I guess, I have also simplified) it to some extent: both Levinas and I have trusted your imagination which is supposed to conjure up an experience which is to serve as an illustration of what Levinas means by *nothingness*. But "illustration" is the right word only if by it we do not mean something merely "decorative," without which the whole "story" would be just as good as without it. Illustration here is to illuminate: to be able to see the darkness more sharply. One would like to say: with the illustrations, Levinas wishes to put us "into the right mood" to be able to appreciate what he wants to say about nothingness. Of course, we will have to play his game: in an ordinary situation under the same circumstances, one may perhaps switch on the light, at least light a candle, if there is no electricity, get out of bed, perhaps open a bottle of whisky, light a cigarette, start singing in the darkness to encourage himself, and later even have a good time. At least this is how I, knowing myself to the extent I know myself, might easily do. But now I suppose I cannot do anything else but remain lying in bed and give myself up to a strange kind of vigilance: witnessing to the darkness which strangles everything that surrounds me, giving myself over to it, sinking deeper and deeper, and prying (perhaps to the extent of "enjoyment") into even the farthest corners of this both literally and metaphorically dark experience. In *Macbeth*, Rosse will characterise a darkness like this as "night's predominance," when "darkness does the face of earth entomb" (2.4.8-9).

Thus, the scene described above may be said to be a kind of image, a metaphor of a meaning Levinas wishes to communicate. This "poetic reading" is all right if we do not lose sight of the concrete, very tangible and almost offensive reality the situation is supposed to conjure up in us. We have to *see* the darkness, we have to extend our hand into it, we have to feel it, and with these "in mind" "analyse" what we are going through. Consider this as a "thought"- (rather: an "emotion"-, a "feeling"-) experiment, the description of an imagined but possible experience, which starts out as a more or less ordinary image-construction;

8. Henceforth cited as "There is."

yet while we are constructing it, we transcend more and more of the particular features, and while we do not deprive the situation of its reality, we allow it to stand for, and grope into, an existential stance, a situation we have been dropped into.

This, of course, requires your willingness to participate, to play along (as you participate in a game, or in an everyday or less everyday ritual) and you can always say what Macbeth says about the “air-drawn dagger” (3.4.61) that loomed up before him: “—There’s no such thing” (2.1.47): this “lying in bed in a country-house in total darkness” is all nonsense; this is an artificially created and contrived case, already from the very beginning; indeed, at one point Macbeth calls such “images” (perhaps together with several Analytic philosophers) “strange inventions” (3.1.32), i.e. “unaccountable fabrications, fiction.” But in fact Macbeth is a good example: he denies the dagger – about which he is unable to tell whether it is a real or an imaginary one: “Is this a dagger which I see before me?” (2.1.33) – only when he has thoroughly “interpreted” it, when he has tried to make acquaintance with it. Levinas does not say so, but *Macbeth* is full of scenes in which what is dramatised is precisely whether a person allows his or her imagination to dwell on a situation or not, and what the conditions of *not being able to resist* playing along with the situation are: what is involved when you cannot but lend yourself to what is happening, what you see, hear, etc. (we may especially think, besides the “dagger-monologue,” of the banquet-scene when Banquo’s ghost appears (3.4.40–120), or the Hecate-scene, where Macbeth can see three “apparitions” (4.1.47–132). Surely, to envision, and thus “participate” in a situation like lying in total darkness, is close to reading fiction, or going to the theatre: it is not arguments that may convince you, and your sheer willingness to participate presupposes at least a minimum of some kind of an acceptance already; this latter makes any thought- (or imagination-) experiment tricky, even dangerous: if it does not work for you, it can always be claimed that it is your fault: you still have not invested yourself into the situation well enough.

Yet suppose I “enter” the situation of total darkness: what shall I experience? If everything is in total darkness around me, i.e. I cannot see anything, then everything recedes into an invisible sameness; nothing is different, so I may experience a total *in*-difference, an all-encompassing, all-pervading indeterminateness, which has no other “substance” but itself. Darkness is everywhere, but it is not a quality of the (invisible) things around me; it is a generality of utmost generality, in which ...

“everything looks the same,” but I should realize that this is not entirely right: properly speaking, there is no longer any “sameness” because there is no difference, either. I pay (phenomenological) attention, but not so much to a thing, a “separate” object, as to an atmosphere, a mood, a temper. I cannot see even myself, any part of my body, not even my little finger: I can touch it in the dark but it becomes strangely “unreal,” too: in the general impersonality and indeterminateness that surrounds me, I even lose myself, except for the fact that it is me who is experiencing all these. But if I use my memory to remember what the place – or a place – looks like when it is illuminated, I will only be more and more convinced that in the darkness I am in, I have lost touch with reality, I have been separated from almost everything I usually think I have. I become an “object,” a “thing,” as indifferent and anonymous as that which envelopes me. It turns out how much I am, ordinarily, an “I” (the person I suppose myself to be) only *with respect to* the world and Others: how much I rely on the world and the Other to *be*, to exist at all. Here is Levinas, analysing the “dark situation”:

When the forms of things are dissolved in the night, the darkness of the night, which is neither an object nor the quality of an object, invades like a presence . . . , we are not dealing with anything. But this nothing is not that of pure nothingness [i.e. it is not pure absence; it is not a totally abraded, denuded scene]. There is no longer *this* or *that*; there is not ‘something.’ But this universal absence is in turn a presence, an absolutely unavoidable presence. It is not the dialectical counterpart of absence. . . . It is immediately there. *There is*, in general, without it mattering what there is, without our being able to fix a substantive to this term. (“There is” 30)

This *there is* (*il y a* in the French original⁹) is supposed to be the “verbal index” of this acute, indeterminate, uncorrelated, anonymous

9. There is only a rough correspondence between French *il y a* and English “there is.” The translation of e.g. *Il y a un élève dans l’école* would indeed be: ‘There is a kid at school.’ But whereas in French *il* is also used in such sentences with an “impersonal subject” as *Il pleut*, in English a sentence like this is constructed not with “there is” but with “it”: “It is raining.” Similarly, in French we can say: *Il y a long temps*, which does not translate into English as: *‘There is a long time’ but ‘(it was) a long time ago.’ In Hungarian, there is no corresponding equivalent to *il y a*, or *there is*, or *it is*; for example, *It is raining* is expressed as: *Esik az eső* ‘falls/is falling the rain’; and we precisely use the

nothingness. The *il y a* is especially destined to capture the impersonality and the total indifference “found” in this horror of exposure not to non-being, for example, to death, but precisely to *being*, yet only to the bare minimum of being. For Levinas, there is no “pure nothingness”; the real horror of nothingness is not (the fear of) death but – as for example, for Kierkegaard, too¹⁰ – the possibility of *not being able to die*: a horrible, unbounded, unfinishable sameness repeating itself (a “false eternity,” something like the *Ewigkeitssuppe* (‘eternity soup’) for Hans Castorp in Thomas Mann’s *The Magic Mountain*). The deepest horror of nothingness for Levinas is the totally solitary being whose existence becomes identical with this bare minimum of being, which bare minimum is only good for the experience of this horror itself and whose existence consists in this sheer horror: it exists *in* this horror. Thus the horror is not “anxiety” in the face of death (death-as-non-being) but that I am stripped of my intimate “subjectivity,” my “power to have private existence” (“There is” 33).¹¹ Another verbal (linguistic) index of this dread is the *one* instead of the “I”: what I realize is that it is *not me* who is participating in this scene of darkness but a nameless *one*, an impersonal “personal” pronoun, a “somebody,” an “anybody,” an “everybody,” who is no longer “author” of anything. Here is Levinas again: “this impersonal, anonymous, yet inextinguishable ‘consummation’ of being, which murmurs in the depths of nothingness itself we shall designate by the term *there is* [*il y a*]. . . . [T]he night is the very experience of the *there is*” (“There is” 30).

“What is the night?” (3.4.125) – Macbeth asks his wife after the banquet-guests have left his castle in confusion. From the context it is clear that this is not meant as a philosophical question but rather to ask: “what time is it?”, but under the present circumstances, it sounds quite symbolic. It is through the *there is* of the night that Macbeth

third person form of *be*: *van* to express e.g. that *there is a child at school*: ‘egy gyerek van az iskolában.’

10. “That despair, this sickness in the self, is the sickness unto death. The despairing man is mortally ill. In an entirely different sense that can appropriately be said of any disease, we may say that the sickness has attacked the noblest part; and yet the man cannot die. Death is the last phase of the sickness, but death is continually the last. To be delivered from this sickness by death is an impossibility, for the sickness and its torment . . . and death consists in not being able to die” (*The Sickness Unto Death* 30).

11. Yet for Levinas private existence only emerges if, as an existential stance, as a basic attitude, I take up the (truly) infinite, total and unconditional obligation towards the Other; in whose Face I can see the need, the hunger just as much as the traces of infinity.

enters Levinas' discourse:¹² "it is a participation in the *there is*, in the *there is* which returns in the heart of every negation, in the *there is* that has 'no exits.' It is [i.e. the *there is*, the *il y a* is], if we may say so, the impossibility of death, the universality of existence even in its annihilation" ("There is" 33). This sounds paradoxical indeed but here, in a certain way, Levinas alludes to the paradox of nothingness known since ancient times: that "nothingness in some sense must be, must exist and persist, otherwise what is there that there is not?" And he goes on: "to kill, like to die, is to seek an escape from being, to go where freedom and negation operate. Horror is the event of being which returns in the heart of this negation, as though nothing had happened. 'And that,' says Macbeth, 'is more strange than the crime itself'" (33).

And that is more strange than the crime itself is a paraphrase of some words of Macbeth in the following longer section,¹³ spoken after he has seen Banquo's Ghost:

... murders have been perform'd / Too terrible for the ear: the
time has been, / That, when the brains were out, the man would
die, / And there an end; but now, they rise again, / With twenty
mortal murders on their crowns, / And push us from our stools.
This is more strange / Than such a murder is. (3.4.76–82, emphasis added)

Levinas reads the continual re-appearance of Banquo's Ghost as a "decisive experience of the 'no exit' from existence, its phantom return through the fissures [chinks] through which one has driven it" ("There is" 33). The Ghost for Levinas stands for the invincibility of nothingness (even for such a great warrior, slaughterer, as Macbeth): you can blow a man's brains out (which, for Levinas, is already a desperate attempt to escape non-being), then of another, and then even of another, but you cannot blow the brains of nothingness out, as Macbeth also observes. Nothingness is not a matter of human courage, or a warrior's bravado; Macbeth is totally right when he says: "What man dare, I dare" (3.4.99); with mortal enemies he is not at a loss. When Macbeth looks in horror at the Ghost of Banquo with his "gory locks" (3.4.51), Lady Macbeth wishes to excuse her husband in front of the banquet-guests, hastily agreeing that, indeed, a "strange infirmity" (3.4.85) has overcome the

12. Not exclusively: there are references in "There is" to Rimbaud, Zola, Maupassant, Racine's *Phaedra*; there is even one sentence on *Hamlet*, etc., see pp. 31–34.

13. Later quoted by Levinas himself, see "There is" 34.

newly crowned King and she quickly adds “My Lord [Macbeth] is often thus / And hath been from his use” (3.4.53–54). This is, of course, a lie but it curiously refers back to Lady Macbeth’s words at the stage of still planning the assassination: Macbeth should be great, or acquire the art of greatness, in which ambition is to be approved of, “but without the illness should attend it” (1.4.18). The “illness” of Macbeth is rather a “sickness unto death,” the horror that *that* state of mind (“O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife” [3.2.36]) will last forever and ever, without a last day, without even the hope of death.

Another form of this nothingness, of the “horrible shadow,” the “unreal mockery” (3.4.205–206) is when Macbeth, after killing Duncan, faces an unbearable emptiness: *something* should happen as a “correlate” of the fatal deed, for example, the Sun should fall into the Earth, there should be a terrible storm . . . whatever. It is only later, that, in the narratives of Rosse and the Old Man, “hours dreadful” are reported to have taken place on the “bloody stage” of the earth (2.4.3 and 6). But – before the famous knocking on the castle-gate – there is sheer, terrible silence, and hallucination (LADY MACBETH. Did you not speak? MACBETH. When? LADY MACBETH. Now. MACBETH. As I ascended? LADY MACBETH. Ay. MACBETH. Hark! 2.2.16–20) as when after an irredeemable, horrible event *nothing* has changed to a noticeable extent; you can very well imagine that you are still “before the event,” yet you *know* it did happen, and you wish to fill the silence, the void; time has strangely “stopped”: something seems to negate that which happened but should not have happened, as if this negation were coming from nothingness itself, pervading the whole air, the whole atmosphere. Macbeth, after he has “done the deed” (2.2.14) cries out: “Methought, I heard a voice cry, ‘Sleep no more! / Macbeth does murmur Sleep’” (2.2.34–35) and *insomnia* is another form, another “symptom” of the impersonal existence captured by Levinas in the *there is*: “Insomnia is constituted by the consciousness that it will never finish – that is, that there is no longer any way of withdrawing from the vigilance to which one is held. Vigilance without end. . . . The present is welded to the past, is entirely the heritage of that past: it renews nothing. It is always the same present or the same past that endures” (*Time and The Other* 48).

Yet in Levinas’ reading, the return of Banquo’s Ghost is not simply Macbeth’s “punishment” for an “immoral act”: ontology is morality for Levinas but this should be, I think, understood not in the way that it is ontology which becomes a kind of ethics. Rather, it is morality (human responsibility and duty) which should be interpreted on an absolute

(in the sense of “free,” “unbounded,” “unfettered”) ontological plane. Thus, the sheer denial of nothingness is in vain: it will keep haunting us, as the Ghost of Banquo haunts Macbeth, not because we have killed anyone, and not even because, as especially Protestant theologies like to put it, “we are all sinners”: nothingness is a substantial and indestructible experience, something like a “fact” of human life we cannot evade, which is there in the *there is* and in thousands of other forms, and we can only reckon with it; it cannot be really “known” – it is only to be acknowledged. “This return of presence in negation – Levinas sums up, somewhat categorically for the ear of a Shakespeare-critic, his verdict on Shakespearean tragedy in ‘There is: Existence without Essence’ – this impossibility of escaping from an anonymous and incorruptible existence constitute the final depths of Shakespearean tragedy. The fatality of the tragedy of antiquity becomes the fatality of irremissible being” (“There is” 33).

The description (the “characterisation”) of *nothingness* is, of course, only a tiny part of Levinas’ philosophy but we have seen how many aspects he distinguishes between: nothingness is *darkness, insomnia, solitude, indifference, indeterminateness, the il y a, the faceless one, unfinishable sameness, unboundedness, false eternity, the inability to die, lack of privacy, lack of happening, a haunting ghost*.

Several questions arise, of which I would like to raise three, without even attempting to answer them in a satisfactory manner, yet being convinced that they do have relevance for Shakespeare-criticism.

The first is: apart from a convention prevailing in philosophy today, is the language Levinas uses illuminating, if one is interested in the problem of nothingness (and being)? Or should the problem of nothingness get out of our philosophical agenda, and if it should not, is there any other kind of language to talk about it? One of the reasons a more rigorous, more logic-, or natural science-based philosophy will find such an approach objectionable is that, for example, the above list, collecting the “features” of nothingness – apart from the question whether I have listed them well or not – seems to be arbitrary: one or two fewer or more do not seem to matter much. Or should we say that concerning such “phenomena” as nothingness we cannot but be arbitrary? And we are back to the question whether such endeavours as the “project of understanding nothingness” should be sponsored at all.

The second: what kind of a text is the text of Levinas as regards (the text of) Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*? His text is clearly not an “analysis” of *Macbeth*, especially not its thorough interpretation. I think we

cannot howl down anyone who suggests that here *some* aspects of *Macbeth* serve as illustrations for some ideas Levinas has about nothingness. Is Shakespeare quoted because Levinas supposes that the authority of Shakespeare will lend more seriousness to his findings? Or is Shakespeare quoted because “he said everything so well,” his poetic-dramatic formulations are so apt, relevant and felicitous that they can succinctly sum up, in a few words, even what long paragraphs cannot? In other words: is Shakespeare indispensable or not for Levinas’ purposes? Does literature heuristically contribute to philosophy? Does literature (some extracts from a drama) have epistemological, or even metaphysical, ontological, and, so importantly for Levinas’ thinking, moral value and relevance?

Finally, the third: if we grant legitimacy to Levinas’ way of reading *Macbeth*, and we even accept that what he says about the play is just as enriching, re-interpretative and invigorating for philosophy, as it is highly informative, revealing and helpful for literary critics (including Shakespeare scholars) what he says about *nothingness* and philosophy, then how should we position him among philosophers and how should we judge him with respect to Shakespeare-criticism? If we embrace that this is a highly original reading of both the problem of nothingness and of *Macbeth*, may we say that this is a *metaphysical reading of literature*, which does not only deserve “legitimacy” but more should be seen of such a reading in contemporary literary interpretation because it shows the relationship between a kind of moral obligation and villainy, as well as tragedy, in a new light?

I am inclined to say “yes” to the very last question.

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Boldizsár Fejérvári

Eötvös József College, ELTE, Budapest

Chatterton's Middle Ages

The Power Economics of the Chatterton vs. Walpole Affair

One of the most notorious 18th-century literary clashes was the one between the then practically unknown “bold, presumptuous decoy duck” (Meyerstein 253), the adolescent Thomas Chatterton, and Horace Walpole, the established “polit[e] dilettante” (253) and self-styled antiquarian. Still, up until 1777–78, when George Catcott blamed Walpole for causing Chatterton’s alleged suicide, the affair remained by and large latent (Wasserman 460–61). So much so that Walpole might not even have seriously considered the potential role he had allegedly played in the young impostor’s tragedy before that public accusation.¹ Yet, this “human problem . . . was . . . to vex and tease him to within five years of his death” (Meyerstein 256).

In my paper, I attempt an explanation of why and how the various parties involved in the affair and its aftermath could interpret their respective participation so differently. I will demonstrate that the dynamics of the events follow a pattern well known from the realm of psychology and economy, a scheme that has in recent decades gained substantial significance in world politics as well. That pattern is what is usually referred to as “excessive retaliation” (Fon and Parisi 142), a negative spiral process that often culminates in some type of irremediable damage. What is of particular interest is the fact that the chain of events would not end for many more decades following Chatterton’s and, indeed, Walpole’s death; an evaluation of the after-effects will form the final section of my paper.

1. The Affair Itself

On the basis of Isaac Reed’s account of a conversation with Horace Walpole in February 1777, Earl J. Wasserman summarizes the stages of the controversy tersely and comprehensively from Walpole’s

1. Apparently, Walpole had not even known about Chatterton’s death until several months after, 23 April 1771 (Wanlass 117).

perspective. In the narrative that follows, I will supplement Wasserman's viewpoint with direct evidence from *The Complete Works of Thomas Chatterton* (Taylor and Hoover) and Meyerstein's definitive biography of the poet. The series of events, then, followed roughly the below order.

To begin with, a "Parcell" was sent to Walpole's bookseller with a poem and a letter from Chatterton (Wasserman 461). That letter was dispatched on 25 March 1769, exactly three weeks after Chatterton had contributed "Ethelgar: A Saxon Poem" to the *Town and Country Magazine* (Taylor and Hoover 253).² In the parcel was to be found Chatterton's concoction "The Ryse of Peyncteyinge, yn Englande, wroten bie T. Rowleie. 1469 for Mastre Canynge" (Taylor and Hoover 259–62). Having "studied this potential patron carefully" (953), Chatterton wrote the following:

Being versed a little in antiquitys, I have met with several Curious Manuscripts among which the following may be of Service to you, in any future Edition of your truly entertaining Anecdotes of Painting – In correcting the Mistakes (if any) in the Notes you will greatly oblige
Your most humble Servant etc.

Walpole responded in "surely one of the most courteous acknowledgements ever penned" (Meyerstein 257; Taylor and Hoover 955) within a mere 3 days, on 28 March 1769. In his reply (Taylor and Hoover 262–63), Walpole first expresses his gratitude for Chatterton's communication. Second, he writes that it might not be his task to correct his correspondent, but rather the other way round. Third, he shares his guess that his anecdotes would not see a new edition soon, but he would be glad to peruse Rowley's texts in other ways. Fourth, he asks for further transcripts of Rowley, as he would not "borrow and detain" Chatterton's manuscripts (262).³ If they have not been printed yet, he "shoud not be sorry to print them, or at least a specimen of them" (262). Fifth, he admits that in "The Abbot John's verses" on Richard I,⁴ he cannot understand all the words; moreover, he is in

2. This poem is presented in Chatterton's characteristic prose "translation" and is clearly indebted to Macpherson's Ossianic style.

3. A radical turn can be discerned in his soon demanding the "originals" of the Rowleyan texts, evidently explained by his growing suspicion with regard to their authenticity.

4. In one of his several footnote explanations to "The Ryse," Chatterton gave an illustration of the majesty of medieval poetry, attributed to a fictitious abbot, "the fyrste Englyshe Paynctere yn Oyles" (Rowley's text) and "the

the dark as to the exact period when that “Second Abbate of Seyncte Austyns Mynsterre” (Taylor and Hoover 261) lived. He adds that Rowley’s report suggests that “it was long before John ab Eyck’s discovery of oil-painting” and thus seems to confirm “what I had guessed, and have hinted in my Anecdotes, that oil-painting was known here much earlier than that Discovery or revival” (Taylor and Hoover 263).⁵ Walpole ends his letter with a most polite formula: “I will not trouble you with more questions now, Sir; but flatter myself from the humanity and politeness you have already shown me, that you will sometimes give me leave to consult you” (Taylor and Hoover 263).

Meyerstein remarks that Walpole’s letter, as well as his promptness in replying, “must have filled the recipient with a delirious joy that he seldom knew” (258). Chatterton duly sent another letter on 30 March, with “some further Anecdotes and Specimens of Poetry” (Taylor and Hoover 263). This clearly reveals his consciousness of the choice of topic; not only did he spot Walpole’s antiquarian interest, but he also noted that there was a link to Bristol and St. Mary Redcliffe in Walpole’s *Anecdotes* published in 1762 (Ingram 161).

But here comes the tragicomic reversal of this rather short plot. This second medley of prose texts and Rowleyan poetry Walpole probably did not read at all, having consulted Thomas Gray and William Mason in the meantime about the first instalment. His friends “were quick to certify that the Rowleys were modern forgeries” (Kaplan 112). Gray and Mason had formerly been “devotees of Macpherson” (112) and would now know better than to be taken in by Chatterton’s imposture.⁶

Although the greater part of Chatterton’s letter dated 30 March is missing and Walpole’s response to it written soon afterwards is also unavailable, in his report given to Reed, Walpole claimed that Chatterton told him the following: “that he lived at Bristol was of Parents in low Circumstances one of whom only was living and that she had with difficulty . . . been enabled to put him Clerk to an Attorney” (Wasserman 461). From another *post festa* letter of Walpole’s (from 1779), it also transpires that Chatterton despised this hard-won position and

greatest Poet of the Age” (Chatterton’s note). The verses included gave a vivid description of Richard Lionheart, see Appendix below (319–20).

5. A comic twist of causality is clearly discernible here: Walpole thought Rowley’s texts confirmed his theories and phantasmagorias, whereas they answered to his conjectures so well precisely *because* Chatterton had tailored them so.

6. Meyerstein remarks that Gray would quite certainly “discern traces of his own *Elegy in Elinoure and Juga*” (261).

wanted to pursue “more elegant studies,” requesting Walpole’s help in finding some post for him, where he might run the course of “his natural bent” (Meyerstein 261).

Walpole later recollected the following to have been the gist of his reply:

I undeceived him about my being a person of any interest and urged; that in duty and gratitude to his mother, who had straitened herself to breed him up to a profession, he ought to labor in it, that in her old age he might absolve his filial debt; and I told him, that when he should have made a fortune he might unbend himself with the studies consonant to his inclinations. I told him also, that I had communicated his transcripts to better judges, and that they were by no means satisfied with the authenticity of his supposed MSS. (Meyerstein 262)

For Walpole, that would be the end of the story; but on 8 April 1769, Chatterton responded once more. Since it is seething with adolescent indignation while providing a string of apparent disclaimers as to the originality of the assumed manuscripts, his letter is worth reprinting in full, from Taylor and Hoover (271), *pace* Meyerstein (263).

I am not able to dispute with a person of your literary character. I have transcribed Rowley’s poems, &c. &c. from a transcript in the possession of a gentleman who is assured of their authenticity. St. Austin’s minster was in Bristol. In speaking of painters in Bristol, I mean glass-stainers. The MSS. have long been in the hands of the present possessor, which is all I know of them.

From this, insofar as Chatterton corrects his earlier statements under the guise of mere specification, it can be gleaned that in addition to advising that Chatterton take up a serious profession and abandon his youthful adventures in the world of poetry, Walpole also pointed out some factual errors in the Rowley text. Albeit he would later repeatedly state that he did so in the mildest manner imaginable, Chatterton’s fit of pique suggests that there was some venom in what he actually wrote. No wonder, for Walpole’s own vanity must also have been hurt by this hoax. It is due to that pride that he was blind even to the intended sarcasm of the first sentence in Chatterton’s letter. While the thrust seems to be directed against a literary forger himself (on account of *The Castle of Otranto*), Walpole interpreted the upbeat of

the letter thus: "He . . . said he could not contest with a person of my learning" (Meyerstein 263). Chatterton's feeble attempts to style his obvious mistakes as misunderstanding reveal the inexperienced liar, one for whom Walpole's dismissal would prove decisive.

Six days later, on 14 April, Chatterton sent a short letter to Walpole, claiming back the texts he had sent him, since "Mr. Barrett, a very able antiquary, who is now writing The history of Bristol, has desired it of me" (Taylor and Hoover 273–74). There were two other, unsent versions of this letter, both of them longer and more complicated than the one eventually sent.⁷ They also exposed more of Chatterton's pride and indignation, so it was probably William Barrett who somewhat toned the final version down. The appellation to Barrett, "a very able antiquary," was Chatterton's insertion, though. The letter posted restated that the manuscripts were authentic, and in a post-script, Chatterton divulged once more his eagerness to have the texts printed: "If you will publish them yourself, they are at your service" (Taylor and Hoover 274).

No response came.⁸ Walpole later recalled that he was about to leave for Paris on a six-week trip then, and he simply forgot to write back (Meyerstein 266). But evidence shows that that trip did not take place until mid-August, so not only did he receive Chatterton's above letter, but also the next, dated 24 July 1769, prior to his departure (Meyerstein 266–67). The latter communication reads as follows:

I cannot reconcile your behaviour to me, with the notions I once entertained of you. I think myself injured, sir; and, did not you know my circumstances, you would not dare to treat me thus. I have sent twice for a copy of the MS.: – No answer from you. An explanation or excuse for your silence would oblige. (Taylor and Hoover 340; Meyerstein 267)

Chatterton's documents were probably wrapped up and sent back after 11 October, when Walpole had returned from France (Meyerstein 267).⁹ And that was the end of the affair proper, until the case was

7. The first draft is extant in Chatterton's, the second in Barrett's hand; for their full text, see Taylor and Hoover 272–73.

8. In this, incidentally, Chatterton also resembled Walpole. He was a rather rhapsodic correspondent, as the irregularity of his letters to John Baker in early 1770 demonstrates (Kaplan 106–08 and elsewhere).

9. In a note written on Chatterton's letter, Walpole said that the "MSS. were sent back the 4th of August" (Taylor and Hoover 340). Whichever date is correct, it is immaterial to the subsequent course of events.

reopened, following Chatterton's death. But that will be the object of a subsequent section.

2. Motives of Communication

From a psychological point of view, two types of motives will be distinguished in the Chatterton vs. Walpole affair. The one concerns the reasons why both men should write; moreover, why they should write in another, fictitious writer's persona. The other, why their interactions followed the course they eventually ran. It will be in the latter realm that the characteristic dynamic processes known from the economic systems of revenge and retaliation will be instrumental.

In a letter dated 9 March 1765 to the Rev. Mr. Cole (Sabor 64–65), Walpole explained why he had started writing *The Castle of Otranto* by referring, on the one hand, to his being fed up with political issues and, on the other, to his escapist admiration for the Gothic world, which amounted almost to an obsession. Waking up from a dream, he saw before himself the main elements that would constitute the novella and sat down to write almost without thinking.

He revealed why he had presented his work as a translation from an obscure original in the preface to the second edition (1765) of *The Castle of Otranto* (Frank 65–70), where he mentions his lack of confidence and apologizes (in a rather ambivalent manner) for his “excusable” deception. From these lines the image of a quite vain man also emerges, who would rather wait with the confession until and “unless better judges should pronounce that he might own it without a blush” (Frank 65). These details, as communicated by the preface, must have been known to Chatterton. As we shall see, precisely these reasons led him to send his texts to Walpole, in whom he saw a potential patron.

In his second preface, Walpole also writes about “the novelty of the attempt,” the innovation in both the form and the content of the novella, which has since been hailed as the first full-fledged work in the Gothic mode (Frank 65). In this, his intuition was to prove valid. So much so that it has been argued that the difference between assessing Chatterton's and Macpherson's works (as forgeries), and Walpole's and Mackenzie's (as innovations), derives largely from this fact: “the first two were considered forgeries because they were received as such by their contemporary audience, while the last two became a type . . . and were thus exempt from accusations of falsehood, although some of their methods, notably that of the framing narrative, were

very similar” (Ott 301, following Margaret Russett’s argumentation). Ironically, Walpole would be a significant member of that “contemporary audience” which condemned Chatterton.

Though there is little direct evidence for Chatterton’s motives in creating Rowley and writing in his behalf, we may assume that his reasons partly overlapped with those of Walpole. Esther Parker Ellinger went as far as to diagnose an “inferiority complex” so advanced that, in addition to assuming Rowley’s persona, Chatterton would be led to suppress his real name in almost all his public writing, even in his “modern” works (quoted in Meyerstein 324). Louise J. Kaplan provides a subtler explanation, but she also argues that Chatterton’s family background (notably, the lack of a powerful and reliable father) was decisive in the development of his “diffidence,” akin to that described by Walpole in the second preface (Sabor 62).

Reading the second preface to *The Castle of Otranto* probably led Chatterton to the notion that Walpole is some kind of a soul mate, a psychological alter-ego of sorts (Ingram 162). He shared his desire to please, to begin with. Chatterton had previously written Rowleyan works explicitly for the sake of William Barrett’s *History and Antiquities of the City of Bristol*, which would not be published until 1789.¹⁰ And this time, “The Ryse of Peyncteyinge” targeted Walpole right where Chatterton thought (correctly) to hit on a soft spot: medieval architecture. Chatterton also being familiar with the ludicrous success of Macpherson, we may glean his secondary, but even more important aim in addressing Walpole: the wish to turn Rowley to his own financial benefit, that is, to make Walpole his generous patron.¹¹

In the two-level communication of first composing for a specific purpose or out of a particular motive and then publishing that composition either officially, as did Walpole, or communicating it to a supposed confidant, as Chatterton chose to do, the above parallels can be delineated, giving a clear and evident backdrop to the junior party’s motives and the eventual course of events. At the outset, the

10. Quite characteristic of Barrett’s “professionalism” is the fact that he included a number of Chatterton’s forgeries, though they had long been proved inauthentic beyond reasonable doubt.

11. Louise J. Kaplan argues comprehensively and convincingly that Chatterton constructed the Canynge–Rowley relationship as a type for his desire to find his own personal “Canynge”: a wealthy and erudite person of intelligence, who would generously fund him, the poor, self-educated poet (13–120). Once turned down by his primary target, Walpole, he would not only give up this quest but also abandon Thomas Rowley for the best part of his subsequent career (110–16).

two persons entering the communication were each other's equals. Walpole knew nothing of Chatterton's age, social background, or family issues, while Chatterton was happy to pose as an ever so modest but well-prepared man of culture. It was at the second stage of their interaction that their differences emerged, and Chatterton inevitably became the underdog, losing out in all respects of the affair.

3. The Showdown

At the beginning of the affair, Walpole – no doubt busy with other undertakings and, hence, somewhat careless – quickly became indebted to Chatterton, whom he did not know at all. In their first exchange of letters, up to the sending of the second package of Rowleyan documents, Meyerstein sees a “poet assailing Walpole as a connoisseur but using every opportunity to force his own poetry to the forefront” and an “uncritical dilettante grateful to a country correspondent, and asking for more” (260). While calling Walpole a dilettante in this context is by all means justified, in this particular instance, others might have reacted similarly. It is in the aftermath of the affair that the special features of power games come to the forefront.

When Walpole was persuaded by his friends Gray and Mason that Rowley's texts were mere forgery, he had immediately to re-evaluate the situation. Meyerstein questions the trustworthiness of his account from ten years after, when he confessed the following: “At first I concluded that somebody having met with my *Anecdotes of Painting* had a mind to laugh at me” (260); it is quite probable that Walpole's vanity and self-esteem were seriously hurt. Even more so when he learnt – from the reports of his friends in Bristol as well as from Chatterton's correspondence – who his informant had been all the way through.

For in his letter of 30 March, Chatterton made a series of self-defeating errors, presumably out of his adolescent pride which had, in turn, been injured by Walpole's late refusal. He confessed four facts: that (i) he was “the son of a poor widow”; (ii) he worked as an “apprentice to an attorney”; (iii) he was interested in “elegant studies”; and (iv) he was more or less explicitly asking for patronage (Meyerstein 261). This we know from the mutilated fragments of the letter itself and from Walpole's report; the two coincide in all crucial details, so we have little reason to suppose that Walpole misconstrued anything. There is just one interesting addition in Walpole's assessment: he describes one work – probably *Elinour and Juga* – sent with the package

as “an absolute modern pastoral in dialogue, thinly sprinkled with old words” (Meyerstein 261). All of a sudden, Walpole poses as one with a keen eye for small linguistic and medievalist detail.¹² Had he demonstrated such incisiveness a few weeks before, he would never have fallen to the forgery in “The Ryse,” a text whose fake Middle English is even weaker than that of *Elinour and Juga*.

I term Chatterton’s mistakes in communication strategic errors because they not only turned the Walpole affair into a battle but immediately conceded victory to Walpole. From then on, Walpole had the upper hand; he became fully aware of Chatterton’s meagre background and sloppy tactics. Still, it might not seem to have been necessary for him to react with such vengeance as he did. In the following, I will demonstrate that his response was not motivated by autotelic vindictiveness but by the dynamics of economic exchanges related to game theory. Though it is fortunately no longer needed to clear Walpole’s name of the condemnation of the Romantics, the motives of his actions and reactions, I believe, have not yet been explained to satisfaction. In what follows, I will provide two perspectives, the psychological and the economic, to account for the proceedings in the affair.

4. Psychological Perspectives

The motives behind the actions and reactions between Chatterton and Walpole are clear enough and can be formulated within the framework Maria van Noort has suggested. Assuming that “the need to retaliate [is] innate as well as culturally defined” (160), van Noort argues that revenge and retaliation – two terms that are used synonymously in her essay¹³ – may serve four different purposes, “from normal to pathological” (163): (i) “[r]estoration of self-esteem . . . getting even and rearranging a power balance”; (ii) self-defence against psychological injuries; (iii) “[s]urvival”; and (iv) “[m]agical act of reparation,” i.e. undoing or annulling the originating action. While cases (iii) and (iv) are inapplicable to Walpole’s behaviour, since in this case he showed

12. It must have lastingly hurt his self-esteem that he was “taken in” by such an obvious fake (Smith 213). Seeking compensation is the most natural reaction in such a situation.

13. Van Noort sees the main difference between revenge and retaliation in their respective degree of deliberateness: “revenge is more intentional than retaliation, and includes planning and thinking about getting back in a justified way” (164). In these terms, Walpole’s reactions gradually shifted from retaliation towards revenge over the months that passed by.

no pathological deviation, points (i) and (ii) are instrumental in locating the scheme within which the interactions took place.

For the last time, we need to go back to the point of origin in the controversy. To begin with, Chatterton takes the initiative, to which Walpole reacts with an exaggerated humility and gratefulness. The initially equal situation seems to shift in Chatterton's favour. By admitting that he does not understand all of Rowley's words, Walpole exposes himself and makes himself second to his correspondent. One might expect that the balance could easily be set right once the forgery is discovered, but this is not the psychological law of such interactions. Walpole simply cannot go back to zero in self-esteem, having humbled himself so openly and irrevocably in the first letter, especially because he might fear Chatterton will run around, showing everyone the letter attesting Walpole's gullibility, and turning him into a laughing stock. Thus it is instrumental that the two parties fight it out and Walpole regain his self-respect by systematically destroying the defensive lines of the sixteen-year-old. This is the motive set down in point (i) of van Noort's system.

On the other hand, Walpole's communication, which may not have been very careful or cautious initially, became more circumspect as he grew more and more aware of the precarious situation his first, enthusiastic response put him in. In order to forestall further damage without annihilating his opponent, he tried to respond in a firm but tactful manner, at least by his own standards (Meyerstein 262). This would serve purpose (ii), that is, self-protection from all further harm (guilt, responsibility, or public humiliation).

Nevertheless, in this particular situation, reconciling motives (i) and (ii) was nearly impossible. After all, (i) demands a degree of aggression necessary to reassert one's position at the expense of the opposing party, while (ii) requires a more careful and defensive stance in terms of establishing solid but less aggressive protection. According to the dominant view at around 1800, Walpole failed to settle the controversy adequately and aggravated Chatterton's position. However, it seems to have been forgotten that, at least initially, Chatterton acted as the more aggressive party, and Walpole was therefore entitled to proportionate self-defence. In order to assess how far he managed to exact commensurate retribution, we need to broaden our psychological perspective towards economic systems of revenge and retaliation.

5. Economic Perspectives

In economic theory, the exchanges between Chatterton and Walpole might constitute excessive retaliation. This term has its origin in Fon and Parisi's basic tenet: "No single principle or judgment is as widely and universally accepted as the reciprocity principle, in both its positive and negative versions" (142). The negative side (less evolutionarily developed than the positive, co-operative aspects) is essential in "retributive justice" (143). The basis for both kinds of reciprocity, according to Fon and Parisi, is "an innate sense of fairness" (143) in humans. The question in connection with the Walpole affair is how "fair" one may deem his retaliatory reaction to Chatterton's "historical hoaxes" (Kaplan 105).

As a point of departure, one has to accept, upon "experimental evidence," that "humans are predisposed towards negative reciprocity . . . even when it is privately suboptimal to carry out punishment" (Fon and Parisi 144).¹⁴ In dealing with the varieties of such negative reciprocity, various models of "unregulated revenge" can be delineated, "under which parties [i.e. Chatterton] benefit from unilaterally attacking others and where individuals [i.e. Walpole] benefit from retaliation when suffering wrongdoings from others" (144). In terms of retaliatory justice, Fon and Parisi distinguish the kind-for-kind and the measure-for-measure types. While the former only restricts the vindictive action by means of what type of punishment is vindicated, the latter (the Biblical "an eye for an eye" principle) also its extent (160 and elsewhere). The other main difference lies in the fact that while the proportionality of kind-for-kind retaliation can only be tested afterwards, measure-for-measure punishments are essentially of the *ex ante* type, administered with special care paid to the justification of their extent (148 and elsewhere).

Excessive retaliation is only possible in the former, more rudimentary type of punishment. After the victim carries out an in-kind reaction in response to the wrong they have suffered, the proportionality of that reaction can be tested. "In case of excessive retaliation," Fon and Parisi argue,

14. Fon and Parisi also note that such is the ethics of, among other things, the Old Testament, and this is why New Testament ethics based on forgiveness and mercy are generally seen superior to the "suboptimal" practices of just retribution (143).

the party suffering excessive retaliation can seek relief and impose further harm on the overreacting retaliator. Norms of proportional retribution render excessive retaliation a wrong in and of itself and justify action by the victim of retaliation to reestablish the balance of reciprocal harm with its retaliator. (149)

Excessive retaliation is thus described as a destructive force that is costly both for the assailant and the retaliator. The ultimate question in this context is how proportionate Walpole's response was. He himself said that his letter to Chatterton was "written with as much kindness and tenderness as if he had been his guardian" (Meyerstein 262). But several elements contradict this account. First of all, one of the potential, if not likely, reasons why this letter has been lost is that "Chatterton destroyed it in a fury" (Meyerstein 262). Even if we assume that Chatterton the teenager would overreact anyway, he might not have taken such radical measures had the letter, indeed, been written with the care Walpole claimed. Secondly, the embittered tone of Chatterton's letter of 8 April also undermines Walpole's creditability. Thirdly, the psychological dynamism behind the action and reaction would by and in itself raise the suspicion that Walpole, who felt he had been insulted and interpreted Chatterton's advances as a threat to his dignity and renown, would, or even could not be content with a simple "getting even," that is, with setting the balance back to zero. In the simplest everyday interactions even, the scale must needs swing back towards the other extreme before settling in a renewed equilibrium. And Walpole might still feel hurt "at having been taken in by Macpherson's Ossian poems in 1761" (Porter 46), which would conclusively explain his vengefulness.

And if all that had not been sufficient, Chatterton single-handedly decided the battle in Walpole's favour by committing two more psychological errors. First, in response to Walpole's suspicion that the manuscripts might be forged, he took an overly defensive stance. He retreated by two steps, saying that he only sent the transcripts of originals "in the possession of a gentleman"¹⁵ and that the "painters" Rowley apparently refers to should be understood as "glass-stainers" (Meyerstein 263). Second, he bared his neck to all further attacks *ad hominem* by revealing his own soft spots – young age and poverty:

15. His attitude is self-defeating once more: if, after all, they had been mere copies, why would he later reclaim them with such fierce vigour as he did?

Though I am but sixteen years of age, I have lived long enough to see that poverty attends literature. I am obliged to you, sir, for your advice, and will go a little beyond it, by destroying all my useless lumber of literature, and never using my pen again but in the law. (Taylor and Hoover 271)

Chatterton would eventually recognize the flaws of his strategy; he confided to George Catcott that he felt “he was despised by Walpole from the moment he made known his dependent situation, and bitterly regretted that he had not concealed it from his obsequious correspondent” (Meyerstein 270). But the harm had been done and there was no way back. Under these circumstances, Chatterton angrily demanded the documents back in the letters quoted above (14 April, 24 July). The papers were eventually returned without another word from Horace Walpole. And that could have been the end of the story, except that in the excessive retaliation scenario, one more stage is usually required. Having been defeated, Chatterton could no longer strike back against Walpole, who had reached the dominant position. But another generation (and Walpole’s contemporary enemies) would soon step in on the young poet’s behalf.

6. Completion of the Economic Cycle of Retribution

In Fon and Parisi’s model, the typical cycle of kind-for-kind retribution consists of three stages: *aggression*, *(excessive) retaliation*, and *getting even* (149). In some cases, the first two stages may be sufficient, but more often than not, the aggressor may find that the retaliation has been out of proportion and, therefore, seek compensation. In the Chatterton–Walpole affair, one may easily feel that Walpole’s reaction to Chatterton’s hoax, which had probably not been intended as a mockery of the self-styled antiquarian, was unjustified in its extent. By suggesting that Chatterton go back to his trade and make a living in order not to disappoint his mother and prove an ungrateful sod, Walpole apparently abused his power position and wrote in such a patronizing tone which would clash harmfully with Chatterton’s adolescent pride. We have seen the motives of that reaction and may stress once again that the whole issue might have seemed to Walpole but a trifle. Either way, he would later refer to it in a consistently trivial manner. Whether or not his vengeance was *objectively* disproportionate or not, those taking Chatterton’s side, especially after his death, would certainly

deem it so, and this *subjective* judgment is sufficient to launch the third stage, that of getting even.

Fon and Parisi distinguish two scenarios within this model. In the *M(ore)L(ess)M(ore)* game, the more aggressive party attacks first, while the less aggressive party is the retaliator. In the *L(ess)M(ore)L(ess)* game, the situation is reversed, and the less aggressive party takes the first action (150–55). In the Chatterton–Walpole communication, an *MLM* situation can be posited, as Chatterton’s letters revealed a far greater zeal and commitment than those sent by Walpole, from the very first parcel of 25 March onwards.¹⁶ Incidentally, the *MLM/LML* system reveals nothing about the respective parties’ power; in this particular case, it is evident that from early April, that is, the eventual disclosure of Chatterton’s identity, Walpole’s power supremacy (in financial and social terms as well as experience) was excessive. But his communication was – perhaps precisely for this reason – more laid back, overall, than Chatterton’s, even if we take the force of his retaliation into consideration. It is therefore justified that we opt for the *MLM* model.

There is, however, one irregularity in the correspondence. In a regulated *MLM* retaliation game, the aggressor party knows from the outset that, in the case of excessive retaliation, they will have another shot at setting the balance right, in the *getting even phase*. Such a device Chatterton did not have at his disposal, since the whole power game acted itself out in an unregulated environment. On the one side were Chatterton and his rather limited “allies” (Barrett and, perhaps, Catcott), while on the other, Walpole and the “establishment”: Gray, Mason, and others. No impartial referee would administer Chatterton’s ever so justifiable right to reset the equilibrium. All he could do was to reclaim the transcripts/manuscripts, and even this request of his was only fulfilled after a substantial delay. In Fon and Parisi’s system, Chatterton came off with an excessive cost (psychological harm), while Walpole suffered hardly any damage, either in public reputation or in the psychology of self-esteem.¹⁷ It is peculiar that Walpole, in addition

16. Perhaps the best support for this view is the comparison of the three versions of Chatterton’s letter finally sent on 14 April: the first two reveal such venom that would merit a contemporary characterization of Chatterton as “choleric beyond description” (Meyerstein 265). The final version is the mildest of the three, which reveals Barrett’s editing and persuasive skills.

17. Part of the cause of his remaining by and large intact by the affair was the felicitous suppression of his letter dated 28 March, whose publication would have exposed him fully to ridicule (Wanlass 122).

to his initial objective advantages, was empowered by none else than his opponent to such an extraordinary degree.

Ironically, it was only after his death that Chatterton received effective strategic help from his belated allies. The first item in the *getting even stage* is a notorious disparaging poem addressed to Walpole:

Walpole! I thought not I should ever see
So mean a Heart as thine has proved to be;
Thou, who in Luxury nurs'd behold'st with Scorn
The Boy, who Friendless, Penniless, Forlorn,
Asks thy high Favour,—thou mayst call me Cheat—
Say, didst thou ne'er indulge in such Deceit?
Who wrote Otranto? But I will not chide,
Scorn I will repay with Scorn, & Pride with Pride.
Still, Walpole, still, thy Prosy Chapters write,
And twaddling Letters to some Fair indite,
Laud all above thee,—Fawn and Cringe to those
Who, for thy Fame, were better Friends than Foes
Still spurn the incautious Fool who dares— —

Had I the Gifts of Wealth & Lux'ry shar'd
Not poor & Mean—Walpole! thou hadst not dared
Thus to insult. But I shall live & Stand
By Rowley's side—when *Thou* art dead & damned
Thomas Chatterton
(Dix 102; Meyerstein 271; Taylor and Hoover 341)

Until Nick Groom demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that those lines cannot be Chatterton's, they were evidently read as his. On Meyerstein's authority, it was taken for granted that the manuscript that surfaced in 1906 (and was reprinted in Ingram 172) is in Chatterton's "autograph" (Meyerstein 271) and should be interpreted accordingly.¹⁸ Louise J. Kaplan, for instance, reads it as "one of the first

18. While in his 2002 book on literary forgery, Nick Groom merely suggested that these lines, "first published by John Dix . . . are also likely to be forged" (*The Forger's Shadow* 157), in his note a year later he brings in persuasive circumstantial evidence to push that likelihood towards certainty. Groom's argumentation in *The Forger's Shadow* will be relevant in the assessment of literary "mythograph[y]" (157) regarding Chatterton's life and assumed suicide – namely, it is also a proven fact that his couplet, taken as proof for his premeditated suicide ("Have mercy, Heaven! when here I cease to live, / And this last act of wretchedness forgive!"), was concocted by John Dix.

clear literary statements of the end of the magnificent world of Sir William Canynge" (115). If this had been so, we would have a paradoxical situation in which Chatterton exerted a posthumous *getting even* well over half a century after his own death. Namely, the poem did not appear before John Dix's "suppositious biography" (Groom, "Case" 279) in 1837.

Nevertheless, Nick Groom's arguments convincingly demonstrate that such a getting even was due to a forger – not unlikely Dix himself, who "perpetrated a number of frauds and forgeries" elsewhere, too ("Case" 279) – rather than the poet. Nick Groom's tenets run as follows: (i) the manuscript is "both signed and initialled," which is a typical case of "overcompensating" in counterfeits; (ii) the handwriting is not that of Chatterton; (iii) the punctuation is much heavier than usual in Chatterton;¹⁹ (iv) the text is dated in a way uncharacteristic of the assumed author (by the year number alone); and (v) a "convenient postscript" contextualizes the poem ("Case" 279).

The "history" of the poem is also dubious, and probably a concoction of John Dix's, for Chatterton's sister had given all his extant manuscripts to Herbert Croft, who published them in *Love and Madness* in 1780 (Groom, "Case" 279). But Croft did not mention this item at all. And even if she had delivered them to Philip George, her later employer, as John Dix would have us believe, they would probably have been published in 1803 the latest, by Southey and Cottle, for "Walpole was just the sort of literary aristocrat that the young Romantics deplored, especially in his dealings with Chatterton" (Groom, "Case" 279). It is also a fact that Chatterton's "published references to Walpole . . . lack the force of [t]his poem" (Wanlass 131). Add to this Kaplan's incisive remark that Chatterton's sister, who was quite talkative when it came to her brother's life, compositions, and motives, "was silent" "on the lines to Walpole" (115–16) – in the light of Groom's findings, we see all too clearly why.

With regard to the theory of retaliation, this circumstance has a special significance. It seems Dix felt the need to implement the *getting even stage* in what he considered a despicably unfair treatment of a personal conflict. One substantial motive is provided by Groom himself; as quoted above, the Romantics (and not only their first generation) bore a grudge against Walpole and the reactionary mentality he

19. This fact was noted by Meyerstein, who even used it to show that "this copy was not hastily put to paper" (271, emphasis in the original). Kaplan went as far as to use the poem to trigger a series of rhetorical questions, ruminating on how far Chatterton confessed being identical with Rowley (115).

became an emblem of in their eyes (279). Another, equally important element is Fon and Parisi's "innate sense of fairness" in humans (143), which would trigger the vindication of a youth unfairly sent to his demise. And last, but definitely not least, such a piece of theretofore unpublished satirical poetry would raise the appeal of Dix's biography.

To blame Walpole for Chatterton's subsequent death is no longer tenable. More than a year had elapsed from Chatterton's last letter to Walpole until his alleged suicide, and it seems Chatterton paid much less attention to his failure in the affair than his Romantic successors would have preferred. He more or less discontinued the Rowley saga and turned towards contemporary satire. Had he lived, Walpole might be hailed as an important stepping-stone on the way of his personal development, even contributing to Chatterton's coming of age. But this is all conjecture and the only fact that remains is that Walpole himself was among the first to attempt to set the balance of the power game right; in a shrewd apology (*A Letter to the Editor of the Miscellanies of Thomas Chatterton*, 1779), he wrote the following:

I heartily wish . . . that I had been the dupe of all the poor young man had written to me, for who would not have his understanding imposed on to save a fellow being from the utmost wretchedness, despair and suicide—and a poor young man not yet eighteen—and of such miraculous talents. (Wanlass 130)

But this was evidently too little, too late. The *getting even* stage of the *MLM* retaliation game was, instead, supplied by Walpole's critical, or downright hostile, contemporaries and the new generations determining the general atmosphere of the first half of the 19th century, among them the Romantics and John Dix. Laetitia Matilda Hawkins, a contemporary witness of Walpole's later career, for instance, remarked that he "began to go down in public favour from the time when he resented the imposition of Chatterton" (Wanlass 113).

Of the contemporary criticisms of Walpole's alleged role in Chatterton's fate, perhaps Edward Rushton's *Neglected Genius* (1787) will suffice as an epitome.²⁰ Paul Magnuson notes that Rushton acutely

20. Of *Neglected Genius: Or, Tributary Stanzas to the Memory of the Unfortunate Chatterton*, two versions exist; Paul Magnuson analyzes extensively the former, longer and more explicit version, showing it convincingly to have substantially influenced Coleridge's "Monody." A more thorough close reading of those texts will be essential for our survey of Chatterton's Romantic reception.

“interrogates Walpole for belittling Chatterton’s forgeries when his *Castle of Otranto* was a forgery”:

Say, Walpole, Honourable Sage!
What Right hadst thou to brand the Page?
Why reprobate the great Design?
Was not Otranto’s Forgery thine?
But, tell me, what wouldst thou have thought,
Had some rude Soul, with Venom fraught,
For that Offence attack’d thy Name, and cry’d
Beware the Felon’s Fate, All Forgeries are ally’d. (Magnuson)²¹

Suspiciously, the above argument resurfaces in the “Lines to Walpole.” And while it is totally unrealistic that Chatterton himself should have conceded having been a forger, something he was reluctant to reveal even to his mother and sister (Groom, “Case” 279), it is quite evident that his champions should refer to this glaring anomaly in connection with Walpole’s own “excusable” fraudulence.

Rushton’s words are echoed in Coleridge’s statements, which I take for one of the clearest formulations of the general Romantic view on the issue. Coleridge, in my view, emblematically brought the *MLM* game to a full circle in sarcastic declarations like this one: “O ye, who honour the name of MAN, rejoice that this Walpole is called a LORD!” (Groom, “Love and Madness” 23).²² As Michael Wiley argues, he

understood that Walpole’s comments on Chatterton exposed sociopolitical power relations (with an establishment figure oppressing a man without social, economic, or political strength) as fully as they articulated aesthetic relations. (801; cf. Magnuson)

That insight places the *MLM* game in the context of social relations and politics. Wiley goes on to demonstrate that in the early 19th century, a forger was often seen “as a political as well as a literary rebel” (801). On the basis of such revolutionary associations, Coleridge made explicit his stance on Chatterton’s paradoxical, often anachronistic

21. The final reference is to Walpole’s notorious statement: “All of the house of forgery are relations” (Wiley 801).

22. I shall use Coleridge’s example to represent a web of influences and anxieties in the Romantic period, a thorough investigation of which, more with Chatterton than Walpole in the centre, should be the topic of another paper. For a first, though lengthy list of prominent Romantic poets and thinkers that were influenced by the affair and Chatterton himself, see Fejérvári 280.

traditions in the advertisement of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, “professedly written in imitation of the style, as well as of the spirit of the elder poets” (Wiley 799). This seems almost total rehabilitation – a resetting of the balance – except that Coleridge *professedly* uses an alien register and earnestly confesses this, solicitously avoiding even the shadow of forging anything. Chatterton’s method of composition, nonetheless, is thus raised to a fully legitimate and established Romantic standard.

7. Epilogue: Reverberations

The sagacious reader will note that no equilibrium can be noted in Walpole’s 19th-century assessment. Fon and Parisi’s *MLM* model gives no final explanation to what was to happen during the 1800s in the posthumous Chatterton vs. Walpole affair. The reason is simple: the economic theory of *excessive retaliation* only accounts for situations controlled *ex post*, ideally by an unbiased, disinterested third party. But neither Walpole’s contemporaries, nor the 19th-century Romantics can be characterized as such.

An objective settling of the account was, therefore, impossible before positivist literary historiography became prevalent in the early 20th century. While John H. Ingram’s *The True Chatterton* was still quite partisan in favour of its title hero, E. H. W. Meyerstein’s *Life of Thomas Chatterton* finally cleared Walpole’s name of the unfair accusations as well as provided a plausible psychological background for Chatterton’s side of the story.

In terms of the power game between the parties, Fon and Parisi’s comparison is quite telling. To begin with, neither “the *MLM* game nor the *LML* game is efficient, as the total payoffs for these games . . . are less than the total payoff under social optimum” (155). This is evidently the case in the Chatterton–Walpole affair, as the former lost out in the short run, and the latter, while not gaining any immediate profit, real or virtual, clearly came off as defeated in the posthumous assessment of the affair.

Equally correct is the other conclusion that Fon and Parisi draw; namely, that “there is a more-aggressive-party advantage” (155) in both models. If we modify the formula to M_1LM_2 , where M_1 stands for Chatterton and M_2 for his later apologists (Rushton, Coleridge, and most 19th-century observers), we see that the aggression level of M_2 far exceeded that of M_1 , and so the negative spiral of vengeful

retribution not only continued but even intensified for many decades after Chatterton's (and Walpole's) death. It is only with the advent of sufficiently disinterested 20th-century evaluations that one could hope for a "fixed retaliation" and "measure-for-measure" scenario (Fon and Parisi 156ff.) that would eventually reset the equilibrium and enable an objective assessment of the power games that played themselves out in Chatterton and Walpole's interactions.

Fortunately, this scheme has now gained prevalence, and the whole series of events can be analyzed within the framework that my paper has put forth.

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Appendix: The Fake Middle Ages of the Real Chatterton

In the final section of my paper, I reprint excerpts from the two main text batches that Chatterton sent to Horace Walpole. They reveal the rather early stages of Chatterton's development of Rowleyan English. Chatterton's "explanatory notes," "glosses," and "addenda," which were originally presented as footnotes, are here printed in italics between square brackets.

The Ryse of Peyncteynge, yn Englande

wroten bie T. Rowleie [*T. Rowleie was a Secular Priest of St. John's, in this City. his Merit as a Biographer, Historiographer is great, as a Poet still greater: some of his Pieces would do honor to Pope; and the Person*

under whose Patronage they may appear to the World, will lay the Englishman, the Antiquary, and the Poet, under an eternal Obligation –] 1469 for Mastre Canynge [The Founder of that noble Gothic Pile, Saint Mary Redclift Church in this City: the Mecenaz of his time: one who could happily blend The Poet, the Painter, the Priest, and the Christian – perfect in each: a Friend to all in distress, an honor to Bristol, and a Glory to the Church.]

Peyncteynge ynn Englande, haveth of ould tyme bin yn use; for saiethe the Roman Wryters, The Brytonnes dyd depycte themselves, yn sondrie wyse, of the fourmes of the Sonne and Moone, wythe the hearbe Woade: albeytte I doubtte theie were no skylled Carvellers. The Romans be accounted of al, Men of cunnynge Wytte yn Peyncteynge and Carvellynge; aunter theie mote inhylde, theyre rare devyces ynto the Mynds of the Brytonnes; albeytte atte the commeynge of Hengeyst, nete appeares to wytteness yt. the Kystes are rudelie ycorven, and for the moste parte houge hepes of Stones. Hengeste dyd brynge ynto thys Reaulme Herehaughtrie, whyche dydde brynge Peyncteynge. Hengeste bare an Asce [*A Ship supported by a Idol –] ahrered bie an Afgod. Horsa, anne Horse sauleaunte, whyche eftsoones hys Broder eke bore. Cerdyke, a Sheld adryfene [*an imbossed Shield; being rudely carved with Flowers, Leaves, Serpents, and whatever suited the imagination of the Carver –] Cuthwar a Shelde afægrod [*a Shield painted in the same Taste as the Carving of the last –]: whose Ensamples, were followed bie the Hyndlettes of hys Troupe, thys emproved the gentle Art of Peyncteynge. Herehaughtrie was yn esteem amongste them, take yee these Saxon Acheuementes. Heofnas [*Azure a Plate; which is the Signification of æcced-fet –] un æcced-fet was ybore of Leof – an Abthane of Somertonne – Ocyre aadod [*Or Pomeisy – aad in Saxon was little green Cakes: offered to the Afgods or Idols –] – ybore bie Elawolf of Mercia. Blac border adronct an Stowe athellice [*Sable within a Border Undee; a Town Walled and crenelled Proper.*] – the auntaunte Armourie of Bristowe – a Scelde agrefen [*a Shield carved with Crosses.*] – was the armourie of Ælle Lord of Brystowe Castle – Crosses in maynte Nombere was ybore, albeyt Chiefes and oder Partytionnes was unknowen, untill the nynthe Centurie. Nor was peyncteynge of Sheeldes, theire onlie Emploie. Walles maie bee seene, whereyn ys auntaunte Saxonne Peynteynge; and the Carvellynge maie be seene yn Imageries atte Keyneshame; Puckil Chyrche: and the Castle albeyt largerre thanne Life, theie be of feetyve Hondiewarke. Affleredus was a Peyncter of the Eighth Centurie, hys dresse bee ynne Menne, a longe*****

alban braced wythe twayne of azure Gyrdles; labells of redde Clothe onne his Arme and flatted Beaver uponne the Heade. Nexte Aylward in tenthe Centurie ycorven longe Paramentes; wythoute, of redde uponne Purple, wyth Goulde beltes and dukalle Couronnes beinge Rems of floreated Goulde – Afflem a Peyncer lived ynne the reygne of Edmonde; whanne, as Storie saiethe was fyrst broughte ynto Englande, the couneynge Mysterie of steineyng Glasse, of wch. he was a notable Perfourmer; of his Warke, maie bee seene atte Ashebyrne, as eke at the Mynster Chauncele of Seyncte Bede, whych doethe reperesente Seyncte Warburge to whoes Honoure the Mynsterre whylome han bin dedycated. Of his Lyfe be fulle maint accountes. Goeynge to partes of the Londe hee was taken bie the Danes, and carryed to Denmarque, there to bee forslagen bie Shotte of Arrowe. Inkarde a soldyer of the Danes was to slea hym; onne the Nete before the Feeste of Deathe hee founde Afflem to bee hys Broder. Affrighte chaynede uppe hys Soule. Gastnesse dwelled yn his Breaste. Oscarre the great Dane gave hest hee shulde bee forslagene, with the commeynge Sunne; no Teares colde availe. the morne cladde yn robes of ghasstness was come; whan the Danique Kyng behested Oscarre, to araie hys Knyghtes eftsoones, for Warre: Afflem was put yn theyre flyeynge Battailles, sawe his Countrie ensconced wythe Foemen, hadde hys Wyfe ande Chyldrenne brogten Capteeves to hys Shyppe, ande was deieyng wythe Sorrowe; whanne the loude blautaunte Wynde hurled the Battayle agaynste an Heck: Forfraughte wythe embolleyng Waves, he sawe his Broder Wyfe and Chyldrenne synke to Deathe: himselfe was throwen, onne a Banke ynne the Isle of Wyghte, to lyve hys Lyfe forgard to all Emmoise. thus moche for Afflem. Johne Seconde Abbate of Seyncte Austyns Mynsterre was the fyrste Englyshe Paynctere yn Oyles: of hym have I sayde yn oder Places relateyng to his Poesies he dyd wryte a Boke of the Proportione of Ymageries [*This John was the greatest Poet of the Age, in which he lived; he understood the learned Languages. take a Specimen of his Poetry, On King Richard 1st.*

*Harte of Lyone! shake thie Sworde,
 Bare thie mortheyng steinede honde:
 Quace whole Armies to the Queede,
 Worke thie Wylle yn burlie bronde.
 Barons here on bankers-browded,
 Fyghte yn Furres gaynste the Cale;
 Whilest thou ynne thonderyng Armes,
 Warriketh whole Cyttyes bale.*

*Harte of Lyon! Sound the Berne!
 Sounde ytte ynto inner Londes,
 Feare flies sportinge ynne the Cleembe,
 Inne thie Banner Terror standes –]*

whereynne he saieth, the Saxonnes dydde throwe a mengleture over theyre Coloures to chevie them from the Weder. Nowe methynkethe steinede Glasse mote nede no syke a casinge; butte Oile alleyne. botte albeytte ne Peyncteynge of the Saxonnes bee in Oyle, botte Water; or as whylome called Eae. – Chatelion a Frenshmane learned Oyle Payncteynge of Abbat Johne – Carvellynge ynne hys daies, gedered newe beauties, botte mostelie was wasted in smalle and dribbelet Pieces; the ymageries beeynge alle cladde ynne longe Paramentes: whan the Glorie of a Carveller shulde bee in ungarmented Imagerie, therebie showinge the semblamente to Kynde. Roberte of Glowster lissed notte his Spryghte toe Warre ne Leorneynge; botte was the Sonne, under whose Raies, the flowrettes of the Fieldes shotte ynto Lyfe: Gille a Brogtonne was kyndelie norriced bie himme whoe depycted notable yn Eae. Henrie a Thonton was a geason Depyctor of Countenances, he payncted the Walles of Master Canynges hys Howse, where bee the Councelmenne atte Dynnere; a moste daintie ande feetyve pereformance nowe ycrasede beeynge done ynne M.CC.I. – Henrie a Londre was a curyous broderer, of Scarfes ynne Sylver ande Golde, and Selkes, diverse of hue. Childeberte Weste was of Countenances: botte above alle was the Peyncter, Johne de Bohunn whose Works maie be seene yn Westmynster Halle. Of Carvellers [*I have the Lives of several eminent Carvers Painters &c. of Antiquity but as they all relate to Bristol may not be of Service in a General Historie if they may be acceptable to you they are at your Service*] and oder Peyncters I shall saie hereaftere Fyrst Englyschynges from the Latynne as to wytte: Peyncteynge improveth the Mynde and smootheth the rowghe Face of oure Spryghtes –. (Taylor and Hoover 259–62)

Stanzas by “Ecca byshoppe of Hereforde . . . whom I [Rowley] thus englyshe”

Whan azure Skie ys veylde yn Robes of Nyghte;
 Whanne glemmynge dewedrops stounde [*astonish*] the Faytours
 [*Travellers*] Eyne;
 Whanne flying Cloudes betinged with roddie Lyghte
 Doth on the Brindlynge Wolfe and Wood bore shine

Whanne Even Star fayre Herehaughte of nyght
 Spreds the dercke douskie Sheene alonge the Mees [*Meed*]
 The wreethynge Neders [*A Serpent or Adder, used here perhaps
 as a Glow-worm*] sends a glumie [*dim, gloomy*] Lyghte
 And houlets wynges from Levyn blasted [*Blasted by Lightning*]
 Trees
 Arise mie Spryghte and seke the distant dele
 And there to echoing Tonges thie raptured Joies ytele

Whanne Sprynge came dauncynge onne a flowrette bedde,
 Dighte ynne greene Raimente of a chaungynge kynde:
 The leaves of Hawthorne boddeynge on hys hedde,
 Ande whyte Prymrosen cowreynges to the Wynde:
 Thanne dyd the Shepster [*Shepherd*] hys longe Albanne [*a large
 loose white Robe*] spredde,
 Uponne the greenie Bancke and daunced arounde:
 Whilest the so eft Flowretts nodded onne his hedde,
 And hys fayre Lambes besprenged [*scattered*] onne the Ground,
 Anethe hys Fote the brookelette ranne alonge,
 Whyche strolled rounde the Vale, to here hys joyous Songe –.
 (Taylor and Hoover 264–65)

Stanza by “Elmar Byshoppe of Selseie”

Nowe; maie all Helle open to golpe thee downe,
 Whylste azure merke [*Darkness*] immenged [*Mingled*] wythe the
 daie,
 Shewe lyghte on darkned Peynes to be moe: roune [*terrific*];
 O maiest thou die lyving deathes for aie,
 Maie Floodes of Solfirre beare thie Sprighte: anoune, [*ever and
 anon often*]
 Synkeynge to Dephths of Woe; maie Levynnebrondes, [*Thunder-
 bolts*]
 Tremble upon thie Payne devoted Crowne,
 And senge thie alle yn vayne employnges hondes,
 Maie alle the Woes that Godis Wrathe canne sende,
 Uponne thie heade alyghte and there theyre Furie spende –.
 (Taylor and Hoover 264–65)

The Warre

Of Warres glumm [*gloomy*] Pleasaunce doe I chaunte mie Laie;
Trouthe Tips the Poyntelle [*Pen*] Wysdomme skemps [*marks*]
the Lyne:

Whylste hoare Experiaunce telleth what toe saie;
And forwyned [*blasted burnt*] Hosbandrie wythe blearie Eyne,
Stondeth and woebements: [*laments*] the trecklynge Bryne,
Rounnynge adone hys Cheekes whyche doethe shewe,
Lyke hys unfrutefulle Fieldes, longe Straungers to the Ploughe –

Saie, Glowster [*Roberte Consul of Gloster*] whanne besprenged
[*scattered*] on everich Syde,

The Gentle, Hyndlette, and the Vylleyn, felle:

Whanne smetheynge [*smoking*] Sange [*Bloud*] dyd flowe lyke to
a Tyde,

And Sprytes were damned for the lacke of Knelle:

Diddest thou kenne ne lykeness toe an Helle,

Where all were misdeedes doeynge lycke unwise,

Where Hope unbarred and Deathe eftsoones dyd shote theyre
Eies –

Ye Shepster Swaynes [*Shepherds*] who the Ribibble [*Fiddle*]
kenne;

Ende the thyghte [*compact, orderly, tight*] Daunce ne loke up-
onne the Spere;

In Ugsommnesse [*Terror*] Warre moste bee dyghte toe Menne;

Unseliness [*Unhappiness*] attendeth Honourewere, [*the Place of
residence of Honor*]

Quaffe your swote [*swote*] Vernage [*Vintage, Wine, Cyder*] and
atreeted [*extracted from Corn*] Beere.

(Taylor and Hoover 267)²³

23. The last, fragmentary stanza is roughly translated by Donald S. Taylor as follows: “You shepherds who know (or hear) the fiddle (of War?), cease the orderly dance (of War), nor look upon the spear; War can only be terrible for men: unhappiness always attends deeds of Honour; (so) drink your sweet cider and corn-beer (rather than go to war)” (Taylor and Hoover 958).

Júlia Bácskai-Atkári
University of Potsdam

Narratives of the Medieval in Walter Scott's Ballads

This paper examines the narrative macrostructure of Sir Walter Scott's ballads and aims at showing that they are not merely imitations of medieval ballads but the genre itself serves as a central topic in these texts. There are various ways for an author to achieve this kind of effect; one is embedding, whereby the minstrel presenting the ballad is depicted in a frame story: this is frequently employed by Scott and can be observed to a lesser extent in *The Lady of the Lake* and most elaborately in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. Another way is to engage in theoretical argumentations defending the genre of the ballad, as in the introduction to the first canto of *Marmion*. In either case, the medieval genre of the ballad is seen both as an opportunity for the author to express himself and as a (literary) problem.

Among other features, such narrative structures have a significant impact on how heroes are portrayed in Scott's ballads: crucially, the hero is not directly accessible for the readers but is transmitted via two agents. However, by providing an authentic context within which the text appears to be natural, Scott also provides an interpretative framework that facilitates the reader's understanding the hero's character and actions.

1. Romantic Verse Narratives and Medieval Ballads

Scott's interest in the ballad is strongly related to a general raised interest in medieval genres and the medieval in general that can be perceived in the early nineteenth century; in fact, Scott's success can largely be attributed to the fact that he satisfied the needs of his audience in this respect (see Alexander 30–33).

Verse narratives were very popular in English literature between 1798 and 1830, resulting in rather different texts produced by various authors (see Fischer 2–3). The term "romantic verse narrative" denotes a certain literary tendency more than a well-defined or well-definable genre; this tendency involved a strong impact of three major genres: the

epic, the romance and the ballad (Fischer 12–13). All of these genres involve spoken (or sung) recital in their archetypical setups (Fischer 15–35) and hence the relationship between the poet and the audience is immediate. Several gestures recalling this archetypical situation are preserved in the written forms as well; in these cases the reader is frequently supposed to imagine that what is read is actually sung.

Apart from the narrative situation, the relationship between the hero (or heroes) of the text and the participants of the narrative situation (that is, the poet and the audience) also has to be examined. Again, I will restrict myself to certain characteristics that are relevant for understanding some distinctive features of Scott's ballads.

In the epic, the "poet narrates to a like-minded reading or listening public" which is either a national public or "one where everyone shares similar views of the world and which is united by a single all-embracing interest"; accordingly, the content is characterised by an "all-embracing interest and, in the widest sense of the word, heroic theme to which the public in question can relate, in the guise of a story" (Fischer 24).

In the romance, the "narrator addresses an audience (a public) that sometimes is, but does not have to be, limited to a particular social class or nationality" (Fischer 30). The intended public is one "looking for high-quality entertainment" and "was only initially a particular social or national group" but "later included the lower classes who listened to minstrels" (Fischer 31). Content-wise, the romance is characterised by entertaining topics, "with a preference for love, adventure, the miraculous and the exotic and the world of the knights and the court," which are also commonly referred to as "romantic" themes; however, the interest is not merely regional and there is a "marked emphasis on the 'private' aspect" (Fischer 31).

Finally, in the ballad it is either "the people" who "sing for their own entertainment" or a designated "soloist or main singer, who does not however differ socially from them, and who, even if he is a professional singer, never leaves the folk sphere" (Fischer 34). The intended public involves listeners or readers "who are looking for literature of a less demanding kind" (Fischer 35). As far as content is concerned, it can typically be characterised by a dramatic description "of an unusual, real or invented occurrence" and "historical, heroic (at an individual level), romantic, sensational or farcical themes"; in addition, there is "often local interest, and there are often motifs based on popular beliefs" (Fischer 35).

Considering all this, it should be obvious that the three genres can strongly be associated with a certain relatedness of the poet, the

audience and the heroes: the text is supposed to be about a hero who is in some respect crucially relevant both for the poet and for the audience. One of the most important questions is, hence, how a nineteenth-century author may achieve this effect if the medieval topic and the figure of a medieval hero are to be maintained. Note that this is a point where many romantic verse narratives differ from Scott's ballads: several authors, including Byron, concentrated on contemporary topics rather than trying to imitate medieval genres.

When discussing Scott's ballads, it has to be stressed that though this particular genre heavily builds on the original ballad genre (as discussed above), it does not adhere strictly to the conventions thereof and amalgamates several characteristics of the romance or the epic as well. In fact, the success of Scott's ballads also lies in his ability to revive the romance and hence to bring novelty into contemporary epic poetry, as opposed to the rather conventional ballads written at the time, that is, around 1804 and 1805 (see Fischer 87–88). One of the central concerns of Scott was to focus on the story and to provide an entertaining narrative that is easy to read (Fischer 89–90). In other words, despite the fact that his ballads are obviously in a strong intertextual relationship with the three conventional genres mentioned above, the main issue in the texts is not an abstract literary discussion but providing an interesting story.

The strong focus on the story (and hence on the hero) again raises the question of how the medieval is transmitted to a rather different audience. In what follows I will briefly describe two ways that are markedly present in Scott's oeuvre.

2. Embedded Heroes and Minstrels

The main function of the narrator is to provide a bridge between the hero and the audience. Given that the medieval world and the early nineteenth-century readership are inevitably far away from each other in time, a sole narrator is unable to be close to both of them at the same time, provided that the narrator himself is not equipped with supernatural features, which is clearly not the case in Scott's ballads. Hence a logical way of overcoming this apparent difficulty is to double the narrator: one narrator writes the text that the audience reads and the other recites the story at a different time, that is, at a time that is close to the one in which the events take place. Naturally, this doubling has to be marked in the text; otherwise the desired effect of bringing the two time layers together cannot be achieved.

A standard way of doing this is via embedding: there is a frame story that establishes some general facts about the narrator of the embedded story. The frame story does not have to be well developed; in fact, it does not have to be narrative at all. In *The Lady of the Lake*, for instance, the introductory three stanzas serve to indicate that the rest of the text is going to be narrated by “the Harp of the North,” who is addressed by the narrator of the frame text:

Harp of the North! that mouldering long hast hung
On the witch-elm that shades Saint Fillan’s spring,
And down the fitful breeze thy numbers flung,
Till envious ivy did around thee cling,
Muffling with verdant ringlet every string, –
O Minstrel Harp, still must thine accents sleep?
Mid rustling leaves and fountains murmuring,
Still must thy sweeter sounds their silence keep,
Nor bid a warrior smile, nor teach a maid to weep? (1.1–9)

The narrator here addresses the Harp, which is not only the means but also the active agent of producing songs. The next stanza makes it clear that the harp was used on ancient festive days and the period that is described here is a prototypical medieval setting:

Not thus, in ancient days of Caledon,
Was thy voice mute amid the festal crowd,
When lay of hopeless love, or glory won,
Aroused the fearful, or subdued the proud.
At each according pause was heard aloud
Thine ardent symphony sublime and high!
Fair dames and crested chiefs attention bowed;
For still the burden of thy minstrelsy
Was Knighthood’s dauntless deed, and Beauty’s matchless eye.
(1.10–18)

Hence the Harp was used to sing romances about knights and medieval beauties, as these are typical topics associated with this medieval genre. Apart from the topic, the original audience of the Harp was strikingly similar to the characters depicted in the lay, as suggested by the terms “crested chiefs” and “fair dames.” The next (and last) stanza of the introduction indicates that the narrator wishes to play on the Harp, thereby recalling an ancient song and a matching topic:

O wake once more! how rude soe'er the hand
That ventures o'er thy magic maze to stray;
O wake once more! though scarce my skill command
Some feeble echoing of thine earlier lay:
Though harsh and faint, and soon to die away,
And all unworthy of thy nobler strain,
Yet if one heart throb higher at its sway,
The wizard note has not been touched in vain.
Then silent be no more! Enchantress, wake again! (1.19–27)

By using the ancient Harp, the narrator takes on the role of a likewise ancient poet, who is going to recite the rest of the text; the frame story returns only at the very end of the work, when the narrator puts down the Harp and says goodbye to it. It is clear that he is competent enough to use the Harp and hence to evoke the figure of a minstrel; however, it is also evident that he is the son of a markedly different period and though it is not made explicit how far he is close to the reading audience, the fact that he sees the medieval as a past period that has to be explored constitutes a shared experience with the readers. In sum, he is an appropriate mediator between the medieval world (in fact, late medieval) and his audience.

Still, disregarding the frame text, which consists of three stanzas in the introduction and three stanzas at the end, the embedding is not visible throughout the narrated text, which focuses on the heroes accordingly. This is not entirely true in the case of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, which has a more intricate narrative structure. Here the frame story is much more elaborated and the figure of the minstrel is crucial. Consider the beginning of the Introduction:

The way was long, the wind was cold,
The Minstrel was infirm and old;
His withered cheek, and tresses gray,
Seem'd to have known a better day;
The harp, his sole remaining joy,
Was carried by an orphan boy.
The last of all the Bards was he,
Who sung of Border chivalry;
For, welladay! their date was fled,
His tuneful brethren all were dead;
And he, neglected and oppress'd,
Wish'd to be with them, and at rest. (Introduction 1–12)

The minstrel is the last of his kind and hence his status is quite special: any song that he performs is also one of the last traces of old-time minstrelsy. The dramatic change in his situation is also described in the Introduction:

No more, on prancing palfrey borne,
He caroll'd, light as lark at morn;
No longer courted and caress'd,
High placed in hall, a welcome guest,
He pour'd, to lord and lady gay,
The unpremeditated lay:
Old times were changed, old manners gone;
A stranger filled the Stuarts' throne;
The bigots of the iron time
Had call'd his harmless art a crime.
A wandering Harper, scorn'd and poor,
He begg'd his bread from door to door.
And timed, to please a peasant's ear,
The harp, a king had loved to hear. (Introduction 13–26)

Again, just as in *The Lady of the Lake*, the original audience is like-minded: they are close to the characters in the lay itself (and also to the minstrel). The change affecting the audience is the same that caused the minstrel to be the last of his kind: old customs became obsolete and partially also viewed as a criminal act, hence any performance of the minstrel is either necessarily degraded or, if he chooses to perform a lay in the old fashion, a rebellious act.

In this respect, the lay that will be performed by the minstrel throughout the text is claimed to be anachronistic to some degree in the text itself, too; hence, the external narrator further alienates this text from himself via embedding (cf. Cronin 97–98). The other main reason why the minstrel is crucial is that, according to the text, one major function of poetry is remembrance and the recording of the past (cf. Nicholson 137–38) and the last minstrel is the only one who is able to remember aptly since he is the only one who still has direct access to many of the events he relates.

The introduction describes the arrival of the minstrel at the court of the Duchess (Anne, the heiress of Buccleuch), where he is greeted warmly and is asked to perform a lay. The narrative situation hence recalls the old times that were claimed to be lost at the very beginning of the text. Besides the setup being reminiscent, there is also a direct

connection between the Duchess and the heroes of the lay: the minstrel narrates the story of her ancestors and it is also pointed out in the Introduction that he considers both the father (Earl Francis) and the grandfather (Earl Walter) as true heroes:

When kindness had his wants supplied,
And the old man was gratified,
Began to rise his minstrel pride:
And he began to talk anon,
Of good Earl Francis, dead and gone,
And of Earl Walter, rest him God!
A braver ne'er to battle rode;
And how full many a tale he knew,
Of the old warriors of Buccleuch:
And, would the noble Duchess deign
To listen to an old man's strain,
Though stiff his hand, his voice though weak,
He thought even yet, the sooth to speak,
That, if she loved the harp to hear,
He could make music to her ear. (Introduction 45-59)

The connection between the Duchess and the characters depicted in the lay (the Lady of Branksome Hall, her daughter Margaret, and Lord Cranstoun, who finally marries Margaret) is referred to during narration as well, for instance in Canto IV:

Hearken, Ladye, to the tale,
How thy sires won fair Eskdale. (4.10.5-6)

The connection between the Duchess and the heroes is hence pre-given: they are the ancestors of the Duchess, and the immediate predecessors, that is, the father and the grandfather, are also similar to true medieval heroes in their character.

In this way, the Duchess is similar to the minstrel: both of them are inevitably related to a former period, in which the lay was still an authentic form of performance. Given this similarity, it is no wonder that the minstrel starts singing his lay as if he were still in the good old times, as described at the end of the Introduction:

In varying cadence, soft or strong,
He swept the sounding chords along:

The present scene, the future lot,
His toils, his wants, were all forgot:
Cold diffidence, and age's frost,
In the full tide of song were lost;
Each blank, in faithless memory void,
The poet's glowing thought supplied;
And while his harp responsive rung,
'Twas thus the Latest Minstrel sung. (Introduction 91-100)

It has to be stressed that the situation is only reminiscent of the old-fashioned setting: in order to perform in an authentic way, the minstrel has to forget about all the conditions that are different from and alien to the old ones, and one of these is actually "the present scene."

Both the minstrel and the Duchess (and her retinue) are in an intermediate position with respect to the reading audience and the heroes depicted in the lay. The minstrel, being the last one, is aware of the fact that the circumstances have changed and he tailors his narrative accordingly: that is, the various events and characters are described in a way that is understandable also for an audience that no longer has access to them. On the other hand, the Duchess is similar to the (nineteenth-century) reading audience in that she is not a medieval figure, in spite of the semi-medieval setting that surrounds her: hence the readers can more easily identify with the listening audience, since both are relatively inexperienced in the world of original lays. The role of the minstrel in this respect is that of a teacher, as also demonstrated by the following excerpt (Canto IV):

I know right well, that, in their lay,
Full many minstrels sing and say,
Such combat should be made on horse,
On foaming steed, in full career,
With brand to aid, when as the spear
Should shiver in the course:
But he, the jovial Harper, taught
Me, yet a youth, how it was fought,
In guise which now I say;
He knew each ordinance and clause
Of Black Lord Archibald's battle-laws,
In the old Douglas' day.
He brook'd not, he, that scoffing tongue
Should tax his minstrelsy with wrong,

Or call his song untrue:
For this, when they the goblet plied,
And such rude taunt had chaf'd his pride,
The Bard of Reull he slew. (4.34.1-18)

The minstrel clearly wishes to provide an adequate description of the way the battle was fought, with special attention paid to the equipment of the participants. Moreover, he differentiates himself from “full many minstrels” who would provide a more fancy, yet untrue, representation: he refers to his own master as a source of authenticity.

As far as the external narrator is concerned, there is very little to know: his role is merely functional in the sense that he provides all the necessary pieces of information about the minstrel and the setting but he does not step forward as a person. Most of the descriptions are found in the Introduction, at the end of the individual cantos and at the very ending of the text. It is not known, however, how the external narrator has access to these pieces of information: he serves to ensure that the embedded narrative situation is close to being authentic. The Introduction creates the impression that the lay is probably the last one as well: it is performed by the last minstrel, who is “infirm and old,” minstrelsy itself is persecuted and the setting in which this lay can be sung is scarcely found any more. This creates a certain tension in the text, which is reinforced by certain parts that reveal more of the minstrel’s person; it is only the very ending of the text that confirms a safe life for the minstrel: he is given a small house near the castle of the Duchess, where he can spend his old days in peace. In addition, we also learn that, especially during summer, the minstrel kept on singing the old tales to travellers who stopped at his hut:

Then would he sing achievements high,
And circumstance of chivalry,
Till the rapt traveller would stay,
Forgetful of the closing day;
And noble youths, the strain to hear,
Forsook the hunting of the deer;
And Yarrow, as he rolled along,
Bore burden to the Minstrel’s song. (6.580-87)

Hence the minstrel is, in the end, not entirely separated from the world he spends his old days in, which makes it plausible that people should know about him and how he got to the palace of the Duchess.

The focus on the minstrel's person has a crucial impact on how the hero of the lay is represented: in a sense, the figure of the minstrel becomes more important than the hero. It is of course far from being questionable that the story given in the lay itself is entertaining and full of action. The central hero himself, Lord Cranstoun, is also fit for the role: he is an excellent warrior, a noble knight and a true lover. Moreover, he is also central in terms of connecting the various characters and relationships. He was a member of the party that killed the Lady of Branksome's husband and hence he is opposed to the Lady and her family in a typical feudal conflict; however, he is also the lover of the Lady's daughter, Margaret. This setup is quite typical in medieval romances and also in romantic works imitating medieval ones: the (feudal) interests of the family and the personal interests of the lovers are in conflict. The Lady tries to use sorcery in order to separate the lovers, and William of Deloraine is her help in achieving this goal. When Cranstoun wounds Deloraine in single combat, he bids the goblin (Cranstoun's page) to take Deloraine back to the Lady. Moreover, he finally takes on the form of the still wounded Deloraine to fight for the Lady's son against the English and – being successful – he wins back the Lady's son and is hence allowed to marry Margaret. In sum, it can be said that he is not only equipped with excellent capacities but also knows how to use them well and is hence active in solving the conflicts he is inevitably involved in.

The narration of the hero's story is still in a way overshadowed by the minstrel's figure, even though the minstrel only occasionally calls some attention to his personal concerns (such as at the beginning of Canto IV, where he laments the loss of his son). It is mostly the endings of the cantos that draw back the attention to the actual narrative situation and hence to the minstrel's person. In addition, as was mentioned before, the fate of the minstrel is uncertain till the very end of the text and the tension stemming from this is maintained throughout. On the other hand, the narrative itself is relatively scattered: though the central figure is indeed Cranstoun, he does not emerge as a dominant character as far as narration is concerned: there is ample attention paid to other characters and Cranstoun himself is not present in many of the scenes.

In this way, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* has a typical medieval hero, but the focus is not so much on this hero but rather on the medieval world and on how this world can be narrated.

3. Romantic Theory and Medieval Genres

The scattered interest mentioned in connection with the hero in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* is not accidental; Scott himself states in the preface that the poem “is intended to illustrate the customs and manners, which anciently prevailed on the Borders of England and Scotland” (*The Lay of the Last Minstrel* 7). This indicates that, as far as Scott’s contemporary audience is concerned, the chief interest is not so much in a particular medieval hero but rather in the chivalric world as such. The reason behind this is that the reading audience has no direct connection to the depicted world, unlike the Duchess of the frame story. Scott essentially states that the chivalric world is alien to modern readers when he says that the “inhabitants, living in a state partly pastoral and partly warlike, and combining habits of constant depredation with the influence of a rude spirit of chivalry, were often engaged in scenes highly susceptible of poetical ornament” (*The Lay of the Last Minstrel* 7). Accordingly, he chose to employ a relatively archaic kind of versification, which corresponds to the chivalric world he aims at presenting.

More importantly, the overarching aim of presenting the chivalric world has direct influence on how the embedded narrative is formed: it deliberately contains elements that are claimed to be suitable for a chivalric topic. The mediating role of the minstrel is pointed out by Scott himself when he says that “the Poem was put into the mouth of an ancient Minstrel, the last of the race, who, as he is supposed to have survived the Revolution, might have caught somewhat of the refinement of modern poetry, without losing the simplicity of his original model” (*The Lay of the Last Minstrel* 7) – the immediate position is hence also present in the actual poetic characteristics of the text. It is worth mentioning that the date of the story itself is also intermediate in a way, since it is set at the middle of the 16th century, hence in a period that is, strictly speaking, not medieval but quite close to it.

It should be obvious that the main concern is in many respects not the particular story and hero as such, but the imitation of the medieval genre. This also explains why the minstrel’s figure is of particular importance: apart from justifying certain traits of the text, the authentic narrative situation is also part of the medieval genre.

Despite the general interest in the medieval and in medieval genres, it must be noted that the imitation of the medieval genre(s) still requires some justification, as can be perceived in Scott’s argumentation

in the preface to *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*: his reasoning implies that the readers may find the style and the form too crude and he argues that this is so because the topic requires matching style and form.

A similar argumentation can be traced in *Marmion*, in the Introduction to Canto I, hence in the poetic text itself:

But thou, my friend, canst fitly tell,
(For few have read romance so well,)
How still the legendary lay
O'er poet's bosom holds its sway;
How on the ancient minstrel strain
Time lays his palsied hand in vain;
And how our hearts at doughty deeds
By warriors wrought in steely weeds,
Still throb for fear and pity's sake;
As when the Champion of the Lake
Enters Morgana's fated house,
Or in the Chapel Perilous,
Despising spells and demons' force,
Holds converse with the unburied corse;
Or when, Dame Ganore's grace to move,
(Alas! that lawless was their love!)
He sought proud Tarquin in his den,
And freed full sixty knights; or when,
A sinful man, and unconfess'd,
He took the Sangreal's holy quest,
And, slumbering, saw the vision high,
He might not view with waking eye.
(Introduction to Canto I 269–90)

Essentially, the narrator here presents a small catalogue of chivalric heroes and claims that these stories and the lays produced by ancient minstrels still have their effect on the modern reader. In other words, it seems that as far as the topic is concerned, the medieval hero is still attractive enough for poets to consider. In fact, the greatest poets themselves endeavoured to write about such themes themselves:

The mightiest chiefs of British song
Scorn'd not such legends to prolong:
They gleam through Spenser's elfin dream,
And mix in Milton's heavenly theme;

And Dryden, in immortal strain,
Had raised the Table Round again,
But that a ribald King and Court
Bade him toil on, to make them sport;
Demanded for their niggard pay,
Fit for their souls, a looser lay,
Licentious satire, song, and play;
The world defrauded of the high design,
Profaned the God-given strength, and marr'd the lofty line.
(Introduction to Canto I 291–303)

The reason why chivalric topics count as anachronistic is hence primarily historical in nature: there was a change in English poetry that meant the end of chivalric and medieval topics – crucially, this change is claimed to have been induced by external forces (that is, the monarch and the court demanded a different kind of poetry), which, in addition to the fact that great poets also embraced the topic once, indicates that there are no poetry-internal reasons to dismiss these topics.

Based on these arguments, the narrator concludes that modern poets, such as him and the addressee, may also venture to write similar texts:

Well has thy fair achievement shown,
A worthy meed may thus be won;
Ytene's oaks—beneath whose shade
Their theme the merry minstrels made,
Of Ascapart, and Bevis bold,
And that Red King, who, while of old,
Through Boldrewood the chase he led,
By his loved huntsman's arrow bled—
Ytene's oaks have heard again
Renew'd such legendary strain;
For thou hast sung, how He of Gaul,
That Amadis so famed in hall,
For Oriana, foil'd in fight
The Necromancer's felon might;
And well in modern verse hast wove
Partenopex's mystic love;
Hear, then, attentive to my lay,
A knightly tale of Albion's elder day.
(Introduction to Canto I 330–47)

The theme is necessarily bound to a former period and, due to the gap mentioned above, the modern poet has to justify his choice when writing in the old style and/or about old themes.

Naturally, there are several other questions that could be examined in connection with the heroes depicted in Scott's ballads, but the main concern of the present essay was to examine how the problem of narrating the stories of such heroes is present – explicitly or implicitly – in these texts. Given that it is to a large extent about the revival of a former (and neglected) poetic tradition, any poet who ventures to write about chivalric heroes in the way the old minstrels did has to face the fact that poetic diction in such cases is no longer straightforward. On the one hand, this means that there is at least some theoretical justification needed to ensure that the reading public appreciates the text. On the other hand, evoking the old tradition may be completed by the introduction of a mediating, authentic agent, in order to evoke the ancient narrative situation as well. Since these features are markedly present in the texts, the focus will shift from the heroes to the problem of narrating about these heroes and about the medieval as such, resulting in necessarily complex structures.

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