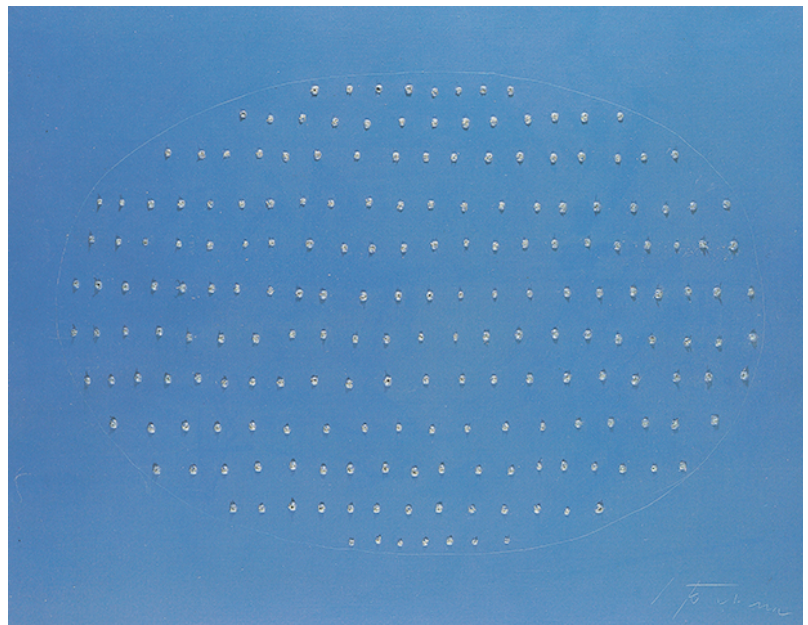


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*New Patterns of Representation
and Explanation*



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New Patterns of Representation and Explanation

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What is Medieval European Literature?

Abstract

The editors of *Interfaces* explain the scope and purpose of the new journal by mapping out the significance and possible meanings of the three key terms of the subtitle: 'literature', 'medieval', 'Europe'. The specific theme of Issue 1 is introduced: "Histories of European Literatures: New Patterns of Representation and Explanation." With respect to this theme, theoretical problems concerning teleology and the present possibilities for literary historical narratives are raised. Finally the editors state the journal's commitment to a scholarly forum which is non-profit and open-access. The bibliography refers to key critical reading which shapes the journal's approach to medieval European literatures.

It is a great pleasure for us to publish the first issue of *Interfaces. A Journal of Medieval European Literatures*, offering free availability for all. We believe that open access supports the scope of our journal which is international, multilingual and committed to global knowledge dissemination in order to engage in debates about broad comparisons, connections and long-term history.

Interfaces responds to the conviction that the reframing of the rich literature surviving from the Middle Ages within a Europe, whose boundaries are permeable and contested in the Middle Ages as now, will open up a new resource: for historical understandings of the period with emphases on books, voices, discourses and languages; for modern aesthetic and intellectual education concerned with long-term human experience and its verbal expression; and for much more nuanced dialogues between pre-modern subjectivities and twenty-first-century interests in the deep past and its preservation for the future – all across emerging technical, institutional, and linguistic platforms.

Such tenets and approaches are increasingly and productively being cultivated in specialized philological, literary and historical schol-

arship. *Interfaces* aims to become a channel for this new thinking by establishing a forum for wider scholarly conversations across European languages and beyond national canons. In equal measure, we also want to make an imprint on future scholarship by setting up signposts legitimizing research practices which play a less specialized game: rigorous, peer-reviewed textual, historical and cultural scholarship, but of an outward-looking and wide-ranging nature which fosters discussion across specialisms; research which seeks comparisons and connections, and is driven by questions that cross traditional geographical, chronological or disciplinary boundaries. In this way we hope that *Interfaces* can contribute to reshaping the study of medieval European literatures by disclosing patterns, connections and themes which have remained uncharted or unseen in existing frameworks and we thus encourage readers to engage across the full range of each published issue. The modern study of the immense medieval textual record oscillates between the extension of the impressive edifices of the canonical few and the more basic ground-level work on lesser known pieces, with much exciting material still neglected due to anonymity, marginal language, or rigid categories of genre. *Interfaces* will display, promote and put in dialogue the entire range of medieval texts in order to contribute to a wider move away from overspecialization in academic research. Such a move, we believe, will enable both fresh and larger research questions to be seen and addressed and more meaningful participation in public debate about the cultural legacy of Europe.

The subtitle of *Interfaces* points to the journal's key categories of time, space and subject. All three concepts are modern, if not in origin, certainly in their predominant usage and meaning. This modern vantage point is underlined by our cover illustrations: the field is necessarily and fruitfully being fed by present-day concerns and modern historical imagination. Like Fontana's *Concetto spaziale*, our sphere of interest is multiple, contained within a permeable boundary and committed to crossing distances between disciplines, languages and research practices and ideologies.

Literature

One of the limitations which bears heavily on literary scholarship is the term 'literature' itself. Like 'Europe' and 'medieval,' 'literature' is a powerful and evocative modern category; it both promotes some

medieval texts and, at the same time, conceals the complexity of medieval textual practices. Modern expectations of fiction or poetry (with a known author) only account for a minor part of medieval literature (even though sophisticated medieval discussions of fictionality, poetics and authorship abound; cf. Minnis and Johnson; Copeland and Sluiter; Mehtonen). The established setup of the disciplines engaged with medieval written texts (history, literature, liturgy, philosophy, philology, law, theology and more) still structures the distribution of material too rigidly when it comes to the mass of texts written, translated and copied in this period. The boundaries between edifying, critical, devotional, entertaining, practical, institutional, private, original, and derivative texts were highly fluid in the Middle Ages, although modern compartmentalizations and sensibilities still work to keep them apart. The continuum and full extent of the written texts of a given period, area or social network within medieval Europe are in need of further promotion as a fitting subject for both literary and historical scrutiny. One of the productive aspects of studying medieval literature (see also below on 'medieval') is precisely that such a long time-span with relatively few texts (but only when compared to print culture!) invites scholars to look across a wider range of discourses.

The literary study of medieval texts is itself influenced by narrower modern senses of literature as the locus of individual viewpoints and the mode of expressing ambiguity and emotions; this expectation has partly been responsible for the narrow, vernacular, poetic and fictional medieval canon. But with the growing importance of the linguistic turn and, more recently, of cultural memory studies (in which subjective and partial experience is allowed to be more constitutive of real history) literature in the very broad sense acquires new relevance. All medieval texts which have come down to us can be viewed as (written) speech acts with a purpose of persuasion, short- or long-term, and all were vying for a place in a textual and linguistic hierarchy of individual and institutional positions, poetic as well as administrative (see Karla Malette on Petrarch and Benoît Grévin on imperial rhetoric).

We obviously think and speak in modern categories, but we leave too much out of sight if we do not apply them generously or mistake our modern disciplines for more than necessary taxonomies. Consider an example, among very many: the small important treatise known as *Liber de causis* (*The Book of Causes*, c. 30 modern pages). Broadly regarded in the thirteenth century as the pinnacle of Aristo-

tle's metaphysics, it deals with profound problems of unity, diversity and the divine intellect. In the words of Alain de Libera (198), no text illustrates better "la réalité et [...] la complexité de la *translatio studiorum*" (a subject taken up in this issue by Enrico Fenzi). It is now believed to have been composed in ninth-century Baghdad (probably in the circle of al-Kindī) by an anonymous scholar drawing mainly on Neoplatonic material (Proklos). It was studied in al-Andalus in the twelfth century by Jewish and Muslim scholars and translated from Arabic into Latin by Gerhard of Cremona (d. 1187) in Toledo, went on to Paris and was used by the theologian and poet Alan of Lille (d. 1202). In the thirteenth century it became a university text, promoted by Roger Bacon (d. 1294), discussed in depth by Albert the Great (d. 1280) and Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) (who discovered its dependence on Proklos rather than Aristotle), summarized by Dante's contemporary, the political philosopher Giles of Rome (d. 1316) and frequently quoted by the learned mystic, Meister Eckhart (d. 1328), in his vernacular sermons.

In short, we are here faced with a difficult anonymous text in Latin belonging to no modern nation and to no one medieval confessional position, but one that was at many points in time during the Middle Ages at the core of learning and the quest for wisdom. Philosophical erudition, translations, commentaries, mystic texts, etc. provide more than mere background to medieval literature. For Alain of Lille and Meister Eckhart they were very much in the foreground. In the present issue the historian of philosophy, Thomas Ricklin, further explores this border zone between literature and philosophy.

Chronicles constitute another rich and distinctive group of European texts that sit uneasily between modern disciplines; until recently mostly classified as sources, chronicles are now more frequently and productively allowed literary value or relevance. This disciplinary distinction does not altogether disappear, but by suspending it, our vision includes more texts and our understanding of medieval historical narratives meets fewer obstacles (Mortensen, "Nordic"). One brief example, in which the value of cross- or non-nationalizing approaches is obvious, may be mentioned. Towards the end of the reign of Philip Augustus, around 1220, a major piece of French historical writing (c. 800 pages) of immense impact was composed in or around Paris. It is usually ignored in modern literary history, although it covers crusading history very competently and is a rich document of royal and aristocratic attitudes and narrative self-understanding. Attesting to its importance are fifty-one extant

pre-1500 manuscripts, plus further adaptations in Catalan, Galician-Portuguese and Castilian, the last of which (from the end of thirteenth century) mixes in prose versions from the French crusading epic cycle (Dominguez, "Circulation" 42-43). We speak here of the text known as the *Éracles*, an adaptation (sometimes with updates) of William of Tyre's masterful Latin chronicle of the Crusades and the kingdom of Jerusalem (composed from c. 1170 up to its abrupt end in 1184). Through the French adaptation, William of Tyre's chronicle became the main vehicle of the early crusading story world for the rest of the Middle Ages throughout Latin Europe. The *Éracles*, however, has failed to attract broader attention, no doubt because of its secondary status as literature and as a historical source, its anonymity, and its lack of modern national affiliation (it still only exists in an unsatisfactory nineteenth-century edition by Paris, cf. Issa; Handyside). However, it remains a high quality work of great contemporary significance which is most productively understood in the intersection between history, philologies, and literature.

Despite its literary inventiveness, the Middle Ages retained to a very large extent ancient taxonomies when discussing literature, even though new labels did arise. Poetics and literary theory often lag behind actual use and production, and some types of texts, e.g. liturgical texts and much of hagiography, have only recently been considered as part of literary and historical accounts. The story of *Barlaam and Ioasaph/Josafat* is still widely unknown, despite the obvious interest it offers the modern reader. Originally a life of Buddha from India, the story succeeded, through a sequence of translations both to the west and east of its place of origin, in becoming one the best known stories throughout Europe as a Christian saint's life (Cordoni; Uhlig and Foehr-Janssens). Its status as translation (into Greek, Latin, Church Slavonic, Hebrew, Arabic, Georgian, French, German, Old Norse, English and many other languages of both East and West) has barred it from being included seriously in literary studies, just as its Muslim and Christian draperies for centuries concealed its basically Buddhist teaching. It is the aim of *Interfaces* further to introduce such medieval texts into discussions that are not hindered by conceptual boundaries of the past, be they medieval or more modern, and likewise to take a critical stance towards our contemporary frames of reference, and their preoccupations.

Medieval

Even more obviously than ‘literature’ or ‘Europe,’ the terms ‘medieval’ and ‘Middle Ages’ are necessarily post-medieval formulations. There are many reasons for scholarly unease with the category ‘medieval:’ theoretical debates about periodization and about the increasing application of ‘medieval’ to non-European cultures, and specific anxieties both about the meaningfulness of the medieval period and about the popular image of the Middle Ages stand out. Without putting those concerns aside, indeed on the contrary, while inviting contributions which interrogate the category ‘medieval,’ *Interfaces* sets out to include within its remit a wide chronological range, from c. 500 to c. 1500. At one end, such a range deliberately blurs the line between Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, which is in any case unproductive for Byzantine Studies. At the other end, the late Middle Ages and the early Renaissance can be easily crossed in the West, and the early centuries of the Ottomans included in the East.

It is when looking at the material culture of writing that the Middle Ages takes on a coherence as the age of the manuscript codex, already introduced before the fourth century and then gaining in importance until the Gutenberg parenthesis (Pettitt), the period from c. 1450 to c. 2000 when the fixity of print was the supreme privileged carrier of texts. If so our field, the European, remains medieval a bit longer than areas further east in Asia, where print was introduced centuries earlier (but without the same dynamic effects of volume and distribution that moveable type technology had almost immediately in Europe).

If the introduction of print in Europe, with Latin script soon followed by that of Greek, and later also by Hebrew and Arabic, marks the end of our period, it is important to note that it had already been prepared for, or even forced into being, by an increase in writing in the centuries before. The exponential rise in the production of books within this period is a fundamental development across Europe during the high and late Middle Ages. As Eltjo Buringh has shown in compiling tentative statistics for survival rates of manuscripts with Latin script, the crucial dynamics of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries bear clear witness to the growing importance of written communication, and the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries display an extraordinary output, facilitated also by paper codices (especially in the fifteenth century). These last two centuries of the Western Middle Ages produced, according to the estimate, a staggering eight mil-

lion copied books, that is about four fifths of the entire accumulated output from c. 500 to c. 1500. In this regard, it is instructive to compare the figures generated for the eighth century (44,000 volumes) with those of the thirteenth (nearly 1,800,000). Although these are rough and difficult estimates, and in this case only based on Latin script books, there is little doubt that output followed the same dynamic patterns from the twelfth century on in Greek, Hebrew, and Slavonic literatures; the very steep rise constitutes a most profound change that cuts medieval literary history in basically two periods with a dividing line somewhere between c. 1100 and 1300. That the place of the written word played such a radically different role (amidst many other changes) in the early and late Middle Ages underscores the profound diversity over time across the medieval period (see Müller in this issue). Fundamental to our conceptualisations of the medieval codex copied by hand is the still very recent move of our late modernity from millions of printed books to innumerable fluid web pages. Media revolutions, now centrally including the written word, make a fuller understanding of the late medieval revolution the more crucial and enable us to see it from new angles.

From an heuristic point of view, the Middle Ages have a distinct advantage on which *Interfaces* intends to capitalize. Although we have specialisms within the period c. 500 – c. 1500, medievalists are trained to situate their work within this wide chronological span and to engage critically with debates and texts across it. Indeed, the habits of the national philologies mean that chronological breadth is more common among literary scholars than geographical breadth. The intellectual discipline of chronological range positions medievalists to make a strong contribution in moving away from overspecialization and towards collaboration and long-term history.

Europe

Since Antiquity, Northwest Eurasia has been known as 'Europe.' This concept was widely available in the Middle Ages, most obviously in Orosius's *Historiae Adversum Paganos*. Drawing on classical models, the fifth-century historiographer, a Roman from what is now Spain, writing at the behest of Augustine of Hippo, a Roman from what is now Algeria, described the contours of Asia, Africa and Europe in extensive detail.

Orosius's geographical view of Europe was capacious. The Atlantic Ocean defined a clear boundary in the West, while in the East, where Europe meets Asia, boundaries were more ambiguous. Orosius invoked the mythic Rhiphaean mountains as he sketched a Europe bounded by the River Don, extending from the Arctic Sea to the Black Sea. He situates Asia Minor between Europe and Asia, certainly not part of Europe, but not quite fully part of Asia either. In the South, the islands of the Mediterranean are ascribed neither to Europe nor Africa but to the space between.

Alongside its scope, the later circulation and translation of Orosius's text make the *Historiae* an example of and figure for the wide range of people who had a stake in Europe in the Middle Ages. The *Historiae* was the most widely circulated text of ancient history in the West throughout the Middle Ages. It was translated into languages as representative of the diversity of Europe as Old English, Arabic and Italian. The *Old English Orosius* may have been produced in the multilingual court of Alfred the Great (d. 899), with its scholars from Wales, Frankia, Saxony and Ireland, while the *Kitāb Hurūshiyūsh* was translated from a copy of the Latin text given to the Caliph of Cordoba, 'Abd al-Raḥmān (d. 961) by the Byzantine Emperor Romanos II (d. 963). In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries it was adapted and translated into French (in the aristocratic environment of the *Histoire ancienne*), Italian, and Aragonese. The Italian version was made in a civic context in Dante's Florence by Bono Giamboni (on Orosius in the Middle Ages see Mortensen, "Diffusion"; Christys; and Sahner).

Orosius's *Historiae* show us the movement of a text across time, space, beliefs, languages and social contexts, the shared Greco-Roman inheritance of Christians and Muslims, and the social networks that created these interconnections not only within Europe but between Europe and her neighbours and their neighbours. Yet, despite the availability of the idea of Europe, it was only rarely deployed in political and cultural terms in the Middle Ages. In Byzantium 'Europe' (and 'Asia') was commonly used to indicate direction when crossing the Bosphorus/Dardanelles, but only acquired any cultural reference late, as witnessed to some extent in the fifteenth-century historian Laonikos Chalkokondyles, who uses it to denote the powers west of Byzantium. When and if the term was deployed in the West, it generally denoted Latin Christendom, centred on what is now France, Germany and Northern Italy (the old Carolingian Em-

pire) and understood in exclusive, hegemonic or normative terms (Reuter; Bartlett).

These dichotomies between the capacious Europe we see by following Orosius's *Historiae*, the exclusive Europe of Latin Christendom, and the situation of Byzantium as the meeting point of Europe, Asia and – in some centuries – Africa, not only remain with us today but have become politically pressing and sensitive, particularly in the context of the expansion of the EU and migration. The accession of Greece and of countries formerly in the Soviet Bloc, the exclusion of Turkey, conflict with Russia, the issue of internal (re)colonization (from Greece to Ireland), the status of minorities and migrants, and resistance to centralization in the UK and Scandinavia all mean that Europe is a strong but deeply contested idea in contemporary discourse. Modern politics *do* inevitably inform the accounts we give of the Middle Ages and their literary and linguistic heritage; for that meeting of modern and medieval to be constructive, Europe must be negotiated with self-awareness. Thus, while *Interfaces* takes a broad view of European literary cultures and their wider connections in the Middle Ages as its object of study, it does not take Europe – whether an antique geographical term, a medieval discourse of exclusion, or a modern polity – as a self-evident frame of reference. Rather, *Interfaces* aims to explore not only the literary cultures of medieval Europe and their place in a wider world, but also the value of Europe as a framework for the study of medieval literature.

European paradigms for medieval literature open up many new vantage points. Most obviously, they offer alternatives to the potential narrowness and exceptionalism of nationalizing literary history. Recent work on multilingualism (see Kragl in this issue; Tyler), on French as a European rather than national language (see Gaunt in this issue), on Alexander the Great (Gaullier-Bougassas), the use of Slavonic in both the Catholic and Orthodox rites (Verkholantsev), the interaction of Latin, Syriac and Georgian models with Byzantine hagiography (Efthymiadis), and the itineraries of late medieval literary cultures (Wallace) attest to the productiveness of Europe. A European level of analysis can also enable medieval studies to contribute more fully to wider work on the place of pre-modern cultures in the developing field of global literature. Here examples include the opening up of the shared Greco-Roman heritage of the Latin West, Byzantium and Islam, the place of Arabic and Hebrew as languages of Europe, and the role of the Silk Route in the exchange of stories and learning in the continuous Afro-Eurasian space. In the specific

modern context of global English and the potential risk that the most canonical of medieval English texts and authors – *Beowulf* and Chaucer, most obviously – will stand in for medieval literature, the need to have richer European narratives to tell about medieval literature becomes all the more urgent.

Interfaces aims to foster methodological and theoretical innovations and reflections which build on and work between the frameworks of the national philologies. World literature is an obvious disciplinary inspiration, even if we proceed from a regional frame, drawing on both literary and historical practices. Comparative literature has been incisive in exposing shared dimensions of national literary canons while at the same time making what is distinctive apparent. Recent theorizing of entangled history, with its emphasis on interconnections, can situate comparativism within a more social framework and offer greater possibility for explanation of commonality and divergence. Critically, interconnections neither presuppose integration nor diversity within Europe, nor are they rooted in a paradigm of rigid notions of ‘otherness’ when looking across Europe, Asia and North Africa. European frameworks too invite work that steps out of overspecialised notions of expertise and work which is collaborative. Furthermore, European frameworks demand multinational and multilingual contributors and collaborators, from within and beyond Europe. Where national philologies project the modern nation into the past, *Interfaces* sees a challenge for European literary study in avoiding the simple replacement of methodological nationalism with methodological Europeanism, as is so often the case, especially and most explicitly when it is institutionalised by EU funded research. It should be made explicit that for *Interfaces* our concern with Europe does not presuppose a focus on European identity, but simply that a topic cannot be contained within the parameters of the national philologies. This might include work on a region that is either within Europe or includes part of Europe, e.g. the Baltic or the Mediterranean, or theme, such as ‘Love,’ ‘Empire’ and ‘Classical Reception,’ the subjects of future issues of this journal.

In the final analysis, it is essential that national and European approaches work together. Most medieval literary scholars are trained in and teach in institutional structures invested in the national philologies. These structures show little sign of changing. If anything, as the teaching of foreign languages (other than English) retreats and the medieval stages of literature and language receive reduced attention in general studies programmes, being shaped within a single phi-

lology is becoming more entrenched. The challenge becomes to teach the medieval literary past of a single language, often known only in translation, as participating in wider cultures, be that Europe, the Mediterranean or the Silk Route, for example. As our own world becomes quickly more global, *Interfaces* sets out to encourage dialogue between national, European, western and non-western readings of medieval literature. Addressing the European enables the study of medieval literature to contribute to the understanding of the complex layering of local, national, regional and global identities experienced in the contemporary world.

New Patterns of Representation and Explanation

Interfaces opens with a thematic issue called *Histories of Medieval European Literatures: New Patterns of Representation and Explanation*. Through this focus – and our contributors’ quite different responses to the challenge – we have set out to stimulate reflections on the basic dynamic between research object and research agenda. Standard literary history, even when it does not use the terms ‘representation’ and ‘explanation,’ operates by displaying and describing a long series of objects (representation) and establishing links or breaks between them (explanation).

An important premise for such a discussion is that by ‘Histories of Literatures’ we are not primarily thinking of all the existing single or multivolume works at hand, but rather of the practices they reflect and support: in teaching, in anthologies, in translations, in library and bookshop taxonomies etc. We embrace the recent (chastened) return to literary history which is able to recognize the epistemological, heuristic and communicative value of narratives of the past. Much has definitely been learned from the intellectual rejection of literary history (e.g. Conrady; Perkins; Gumbrecht, “Histories”) and our emphasis on histories (plural) is important; it is simultaneously open to contingency, conscious of teleology (cf. below), but ultimately constructive rather than deconstructive in its approach to the past (cf. Grabes and Sichert; excellent analysis of the epistemology of historical writing with a different terminology by Munslow, *Narrative; History*). To dismiss the relevance or feasibility of literary history is a luxury scholars already steeped in literary history can perhaps afford (at least theoretically), but this move prevents commu-

nication beyond specialists circles, whether to other scholars and students, or outwards to a wider public.

Admitting the relevance of literary history in this sense, we are still faced with the connection between setting up a selection of works for scrutiny on the one hand, and asking research questions to make wider sense of them on the other. In the nationalizing philological practices of medieval literary history the selection remains defined by language (sometimes with openings to other languages, especially Latin in Western and Greek in Eastern Europe) and with an observant eye to the boundaries of the given modern state. Now that alternative, non-nationalizing points of departures are considered, the research agenda suddenly becomes very urgent: when the selection of works for representation is no longer given, the *explanandum* becomes both more open and more powerful. This is exactly what is at the heart of the deep structural problems in Czech, French, and Byzantine literary histories as diagnosed by Pavlína Rychterová, Simon Gaunt, and Panagiotis Agapitos and discussed by David Wallace in his *Afterword*: once a wider or different selection of texts appears on the horizon (in other languages, outside the modern nation, in other registers), the formulation of new structures and narratives – new explanations – has the potential to lead to innovative insights. From a different position, that of modern comparative literature, Sven Erik Larsen offers an analysis of the same dynamic, namely of the move from quite rigid national canons and the kind of comparative reasoning they foster to much more diverse interdisciplinary and multi-methodological approaches in which the horizons of texts have become global.

Another version of this dynamic is explored by Ryan Szpiech, Karla Mallette, Stephan Müller and Florian Kragl, who all attempt to dispel certain modern categorizations, genealogies or metaphors which have overemphasized the emerging new (visible in hindsight) and marginalized the contemporary medieval perspective of what the authors or works in question were trying to accomplish.

This brings us to a final key problem of any concept of literary history, whether national, cross-national, European or other: teleology. Teleology is easy to denounce in some forms (for instance nationalizing and Europeanizing in a deterministic version). But following Arthur Danto's insights (with an adjustment of his terminology in *Narration and Knowledge*), teleological narratives are not only unavoidable, they are necessary for any kind of historical understanding. Although we are always operating with multiple possible

developments seen from a certain time and place, we can only write and understand retrospectively. Sentences like ‘this was the first time love had been analysed in lyrical form,’ or ‘this would become the standard novella structure in the fourteenth century,’ or ‘this work found few readers and was forgotten until the Renaissance,’ are normal narrative sentences written with hindsight, and they are the ones that make the longer lines – in *our* direction – of literary history identifiable and understandable. Important new attitudes, features, and modes of writing may have been completely surprising, unsuspected and unexplainable when they happened (like many other historical phenomena), but *to us* – whatever our place and position in the present – they changed forever the significance of what went before them.

Historical narratives, including literary history, are teleological and they must be; they can, however, still be written without any assumption of necessary development. A distinction could be drawn between epistemological and ideological teleology, of which the latter is now usually strongly condemned (as in Hutcheon), but the two sides are obviously also connected, with an ideological position always being involved (*cf.* Habermas; Fokkema and Ibsch). Teleology should not be avoided, but it is of course crucial to reflect on the subjects and substance of change in any new narrative. It can no longer be only national characteristics tied to the national languages, nor can it be idealized literary genres (*cf.* Gumbrecht “A Sad and Weary Story” on the failure of both principles in the *Grundriss der Romanischen Literaturen*). It is in the choice of regions, materials, languages, periods, types of contexts and historical questioning (and more) that new ideas and practices of European literary history must strike a balance between epistemological and ideological teleology, obviously including reflections on the position from which we now select, categorize, evaluate, represent and explain medieval works. We are delighted to offer our readers a range of such positions from the start in our first collection of articles and are looking forward to receiving contributions which pursue the theme of literary history directly and indirectly in subsequent issues. Literary history, however conceived and practiced, is an act of teleology which insists that the past remains integral to the present, just as the present is integral to the past.

Policies and Platforms

Interfaces is a peer-reviewed, open-access journal. It does not charge either submission or publication fees nor article-processing expenses and it provides immediate access to its content, on the principles that publicly funded research should be free and widely disseminated and that making research freely available supports a greater global exchange of knowledge and fosters advance in learning. Furthermore, in order to promote the continued linguistic diversity of medieval literary study, we publish across five European scholarly languages: French, German, Italian, and Spanish as well as English. The individual volumes of *Interfaces* can be downloaded in full to encourage reading across the range of each issue.

Interfaces was initiated by the [Centre for Medieval Literature](#) (University of Southern Denmark and University of York) with a grant from the [Danish National Research Foundation](#) and is published by the University of Milan through its [digital platform for open-access journals](#). The Milan platform is based on Open Journal System (OJS), an open-source software designed and created by the [Public Knowledge Project](#) and licensed under a GNU General Public License. OJS complies with the Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH), a protocol developed by the [Open Archives Initiative](#) and used to harvest the metadata descriptions of the records in an archive. Providing standards and interoperability, the technical infrastructure of *Interfaces* fosters dissemination and searchability of the research results, as recommended by the European Commission Communication “[A Digital Agenda for Europe](#).” Moreover, the mechanisms, infrastructure, and software solutions of the University of Milan enable long-term preservation of research results in digital form, as required by the “[Commission Recommendation of 17.7.2012 on access to and preservation of scientific information](#).”

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French Literature Abroad

Towards an Alternative History of French Literature

Abstract

What would a history of medieval literature in French that is not focussed on France and Paris look like? Taking as its starting point the key role played in the development of textual culture in French by geographical regions that are either at the periphery of French-speaking areas, or alternatively completely outside them, this article offers three case studies: first of a text composed in mid-twelfth-century England; then of one from early thirteenth-century Flanders; and finally from late thirteenth-century Italy. What difference does it make if we do not read these texts, and the language in which they are written, in relation to French norms, but rather look at their cultural significance both at their point of production, and then in transmission? A picture emerges of a literary culture in French that is mobile and cosmopolitan, one that cannot be tied to the teleology of an emerging national identity, and one that is a *bricolage* of a range of influences that are moving towards France as well as being exported from it. French itself functions as a supralocal written language (even when it has specific local features) and therefore may function more like Latin than a local vernacular.

Introduction

It may seem paradoxical to devote an article to the literary history of a single vernacular in a collection devoted to exploring a European and comparative perspective. Yet if we take seriously the imperative to uncouple literary traditions from retroactive national literary historical narratives, narratives that began in the later Middle Ages but which notoriously reach their apogee in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when they tied literary traditions to nation states and national languages, one corollary is that a common language may unify different peoples across political borders, fostering a collective identity rather than fragmented local identities. What were to become the dominant European languages and their literary traditions have often been viewed as coterminous with restrictive ideas of na-

1. I realize ‘supralocal’ in English is a neologism. I coin the term by analogy with Alberto Varvaro’s remarks: “Contro una lunga tradizione di studi tesa ad individuare nei primi testi i tratti locali, e che non ha mai raggiunto risultati convincenti, occorre dunque riconoscere che le identità che, del medioevo fino ad oggi, si riconoscono e definiscono attraverso lingue letterarie sono sempre sovrlocali” (532: “Against a long tradition of scholarship devoted to identifying the local traits of our earliest texts and which has never delivered convincing results, it is now necessary to recognise that the identities that, from the Middle Ages through to today, are discernible in and defined by literary languages are always supralocal”).

2. The research presented in this article was conducted within the framework of a collaborative project involving colleagues from Cambridge University, King’s College London and University College London, funded by the UK’s Arts and Humanities Research Council.

tion, or as an instrument of cultural imperialism or hegemony, but we tend to forget that a shared language may also instantiate a shared, supralocal identity.¹

It is often acknowledged that ‘French literature’ seems eccentrically to begin outside France (whether this be defined in medieval or modern terms), and also that it is widely disseminated outside France. However, the implications of this are rarely fully examined. Often a more traditional, Franco-centric literary history prevails, according to which ‘French’ literary culture has its origin in ‘France,’ and as the Middle Ages advance emanates outwards from France, particularly Paris, to other parts of Europe, with textual production and dissemination elsewhere adduced as evidence of the pre-eminent influence of ‘French’ courtly culture from 1150–1450. This article suggests an alternative model for the history of medieval literature in French, centripetal rather than centrifugal, by focusing initially on three case studies, each of which represents a key place and epoch in the development of literature in French outside France, before returning briefly to the more traditional canon to see how literary history may look different if a more diverse geographical arena is taken into account, and also manuscript dissemination as well as textual production.²

My case studies on the one hand call into question a traditional teleology of literature in French, according to which the main role of ‘French literature’ is to play a foundational role in French culture understood as the ‘culture of France,’ a France with stable and well-defined borders. On the other hand, they also call into question what we mean by the ‘literary,’ in that medieval textual culture in French often seems more concerned with something we might loosely consider ‘history’ rather than the ‘fiction’ that dominates modern literary canons. Furthermore, this ‘history’ for which readers of French clearly had a great appetite was not first and foremost a ‘French’ history, but rather one that concerned the relation of medieval Christendom more generally to the Classical past. A final question raised by my approach, then, is: exactly what do these texts seek to represent and for whom?

England c. 1136

Modern medieval French literary studies have often privileged the twelfth century as the high point of the tradition. The glories of the

so-called twelfth-century Renaissance are thought to preface a slow decline through the so-called waning of the Middle Ages until the real Renaissance reboots high culture. Few scholars would now accept this caricature of literary history, but twelfth-century texts and authors still dominate many university syllabi. They are also the object of a disproportionate amount of attention from medievalists working in other languages looking to chart the influence of French literature on other literary traditions and of a disproportionate share of research in the field. It is well known, of course, that some of our most canonical twelfth-century texts written in French come from England in one way or another: for example the *Chanson de Roland* (at least in its canonical Oxford version), Marie de France's *Lais*, and Thomas's *Tristan*. Yet none of these texts was widely disseminated in French in the Middle Ages (even if they seem to have been better known through translations into other languages), which suggests at the very least a disjuncture between modern and medieval aesthetic judgements.

When the role of England in the emergence of French literature is acknowledged (which is not always the case), scholars turn to history to offer an explanation. Two key historical factors are evoked. First, the Norman Conquest of 1066; secondly the marriage of Eleanor of Aquitaine to Henry of Anjou in 1152 followed by Henry's succession to the throne of England in 1154. It is superfluous to rehearse the impact of 1066 and 1154 in detail. William of Normandy's victory at Hastings in 1066 allowed him to implant in England a Norman – French speaking – aristocratic elite, which meant that French was a language widely used by England's aristocratic and clerical elites throughout the rest of the Middle Ages (even if quickly they also became English speaking). This Gallicization of the culture of the English aristocracy and high clergy was no doubt accelerated, however, by the accession of Henry of Anjou to the English throne and the creation thereby of the so-called Angevin empire, since French-speaking Henry, his wife Eleanor (previously queen of France 1137–52), and then their four French-speaking sons effectively ruled lands from England's border with Scotland to the Pyrenees.

The extent of the Francophone literary culture generated by and for the elite social strata of England is considerable: Ruth Dean's catalogue of Anglo-Norman texts includes 986 items. But institutional and national biases have shaped modern apprehension of this material. Whereas 'Anglo-Norman Studies' were a thriving sub-discipline in many UK universities (in English as well as in French depart-

ments) throughout the twentieth century, Francophone publications on texts other than the *Roland*, Marie de France and Thomas' *Tristan* were and are limited. Anglo-Norman literature was thus often implicitly regarded as an English affair. The first decade of the twenty-first century has seen the transformation and complete revitalisation of this field, thanks to the pioneering work of scholars such as Ardis Butterfield, David Trotter, and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne. Thus, the much-expanded on-line *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* (a project led by David Trotter) now provides an unrivalled research resource that greatly improves our knowledge of the lexis of texts in French produced in the British Isles; Jocelyn Wogan-Brown, in the introduction to the collection *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain*, published in 2009, has redefined and rebaptised Anglo-Norman as the "French of England," drawing attention in particular to the variety, ubiquity and longevity of French in England; and Ardis Butterfield has influentially shown in her 2009 book *The Familiar Enemy* the extent to which later medieval English identity is bound up not only with England's relation to France, but even more significantly with a pervasive and deeply embedded dialogue with French literary texts. It is striking, however, that much of this important work remains largely (though not exclusively) focused on the multilingualism of Insular culture, and on Insular cultural history; it is also noteworthy that this vibrant new field is dominated by English-speaking scholars and scholars of English literature.³ What then takes centre stage is England's relation to France, with 'French culture' identified in the period immediately following 1066 primarily with Normandy, then from the 1160s onwards with a rarely defined 'France,' but seen primarily within the context of relations between the English and French monarchies.⁴ Wogan-Browne quite rightly points out that "we need a new post-national vocabulary – and that is not easy to find" (*Language and Culture in Medieval Britain* 9). One issue here may be the assumption that when what we call the French language is used, this necessarily connotes primarily a relation to France. This may be the case, but when it is considered that French was used widely throughout Europe – in Flanders, Italy, the Eastern Mediterranean and elsewhere – as a language of trade and culture, there is a strong case for considering the networks for which French was a conduit in the British Isles as more complex than the focus on an English–French axis sometimes implies.

If quantities of surviving manuscripts and texts are anything to go by, England plays a significant role in the development of Franco-

3. The overwhelming majority of contributors to Wogan-Browne's *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain: The French of England* are working in English and while there are a few contributions from scholars working in French Studies, there are none from France itself. The same is true other collected volumes on related topics, such as Kleinheinz and Busby.

4. See in particular the essays in Wogan-Browne, but for some different perspectives see also the essays in Tyler.

phone literary culture. Indeed, a sustained Francophone textual culture in England precedes the emergence of a sustained vernacular written culture in France itself. For instance, the preliminary statistical surveys based on the vast *Translations médiévales* collaborative project that surveys medieval translations into French indicate that a high proportion of both translations and surviving manuscripts of translations into French (which at this stage means translations from Latin) from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries comes from England (see Galdérisi, I 560–62; also Careri, Ruby and Short XXXIII–XXXV). Furthermore, many of these translations are broadly speaking devotional or learned, and may emanate from religious communities rather than courtly settings. It is instructive to consider this data alongside insights from palaeography, codicology and philology, according to which the emerging script for writing French in twelfth-century England (for which there is no sustained continental precedent) was influenced and shaped by the scripts used to write Old English and Insular Latin.⁵

5. Consider the Insular manuscripts in Careri, Ruby and Short's catalogue of twelfth-century manuscripts with texts in French, particularly numbers 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 21, 25, 26 and so on. See also their comments, XLVII–LV.

In his ground-breaking study *French: From Dialect to Standard*, Anthony Lodge writes: “In the *langue d’oil*, if we disregard the French used in England after the Norman conquest [...], the vernacular begins to be used extensively in literary manuscripts from the middle of the twelfth century” (113). Lodge is opposing the *langue d’oil* here to the *langue d’oc*, and seeking to explain the co-existence of a range of *scriptae* (a *scripta* being “a conventional supra-dialectical writing system,” 114) for continental French (notably Norman, central French, Picard) before the triumph of Parisian French in the late thirteenth century. To what extent, however, is it helpful “to disregard the French used in England”? And given the scattered nature of the manuscript evidence for continental French in the twelfth century can we really be sure that “the vernacular begins to be used extensively in literary manuscripts from the middle of the twelfth century”? The fact is that we may know of a lot of texts, but as Careri, Ruby and Short demonstrate in their *Livres et écritures*, surviving manuscripts are thin on the ground. This means we have to be cautious, without further research, about drawing any conclusions regarding the emergence, relation and chronological sequence of different *scriptae* for writing French in the twelfth century. All the same, Serge Lusignan has demonstrated for a slightly later period (the early and mid thirteenth century) that what he calls an Anglo-Norman *scripta* was at times consciously adopted in Picardy and Flanders (“A chacun son français”). For Lusignan, the territories on either side of the

English Channel may have been politically diffuse, but they were tightly bound together economically. They have two *langues véhiculaires*: Latin and French. French, he writes, “s’y manifestait sous trois formes régionales ou *scriptae*: l’anglo-normand, le picard et accessoirement le français central” (“A chacun son français” 119: “has three regional forms or *scriptae*: Anglo-Norman, Picard, and peripherally central French”). As Lusignan’s equation here of “regional form” and *scripta* suggests, a *scripta* may derive from a local dialect, but it is a written convention and thereby mobile, so potentially at least supralocal. Lusignan is no doubt being deliberately provocative here in relation to the precedence that some scholarship has traditionally accorded central French from the outset when he suggests it is only *accessoirement a scripta*, but he thereby usefully challenges received wisdom about centre and periphery. In the zone in which he is interested ‘Central French’ is indeed peripheral. Thus when the cross-channel links between religious institutions in England and Normandy and the bidirectional cross-channel movement of *scriptae* and texts are set alongside the sheer quantity of surviving early manuscripts in French from England, a picture emerges of a written textual culture in French beginning in a so-called peripheral zone, one where it is not the mother tongue of the overwhelming majority of the population, and then moving towards the area usually taken to be its centre, but in a form strongly marked by the graphic systems of other languages (*i.e.* Latin and English).

The text on which I focus here, Geoffrey Gaimar’s *Estoire des Engleis* (composed in Lincolnshire c. 1136–37, cited from Ian Short’s edition), is every bit as foundational for Francophone textual culture as the Oxford *Roland*, Marie de France’s *Lais*, or Thomas’s *Tristan*, yet it has received only a fraction of the scholarly attention. The *Estoire* is the earliest surviving example of French vernacular historiography. Although Gaimar uses a variety of different sources (of which more shortly), his 6532-line poem of octosyllabic rhyming couplets is a loose adaptation of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which makes him also the earliest known translator of English into French. His account runs from the earliest Saxon and Danish invasions in the late fifth century through to the death of William Rufus. I will return to the text’s epilogues, but there is more than a hint there (6528–32) and in the *Estoire*’s opening lines (1–16) that the surviving text was originally the second half of a diptych, the first of which almost certainly had Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia Regum Britanniae* (c. 1136) as its source. In all four surviving manuscripts, which are of insular prov-

enance, the *Estoire* is preceded by Wace's *Brut*, also drawn from Geoffrey, and the reason why the first part of Gaimar's history did not survive may well be that it was routinely displaced by Wace's better known account of the same historical sweep: Troy, Rome, Arthurian Britain.

There is not a great deal of critical literature on Gaimar's *Estoire* and virtually none in French. Francophone opinion seems to have been content with Gaston Paris's judgement of Gaimar as "à peu près dénué de valeur littéraire" (cited by Short, *Geffrei Gaimar* lii: "more or less devoid of literary value"). Yet Gaimar's racy account of English history exploits pace and dramatic poise to considerable effect, it is linguistically inventive, and it strikingly breaks new ground in terms of using a Romance vernacular to write history. Furthermore, Gaimar may have been influential in shaping how subsequent writers would use the octosyllabic rhyming couplet for secular narrative (Wace for example) and his work has erotic and chivalric elements that precociously anticipate subsequent verse romance. Ian Short has done much to set out the merits and interest of Gaimar's *Estoire*, but as he points out (*Geffrei Gaimar* liii) if historians have seen the text's merits as a source, all too often it is referred to only in passing and usually either in negative terms by literary scholars, who also (in my view) have a tendency to pigeon-hole Gaimar as a stooge of the Norman regime. Thus Laura Ashe, in her study of *Fiction and History in England, 1066–1200*, mentions Gaimar only in passing and sticks with examples from the modern canon in English, French, and Latin. Her main evaluation of Gaimar is that his "*Estoire des Engleis* (1130s) and the *Lai d'Haveloc* (c. 1200 derived from Gaimar) are monuments to the Normans' appropriation of England, and the characteristics of insular narrative" (20).

To read the *Estoire* exclusively in relation to the Conquest and within the framework of insular narrative is not, however, entirely satisfactory. True Gaimar's narrative climaxes with the Conquest, and true his view of the first two Norman kings is unequivocally positive: William I is "le meindre rei e le meillur / ke Engleis eüssent a seignur" (5139–40: "he was the best king and the best overlord that the English had ever had"),⁶ while William Rufus is represented as a powerful, larger-than-life figure acclaimed by English and Normans alike (5778), also a proto-courtly lord, renowned for his hospitality and prowess. Furthermore, Gaimar's sense of right and wrong in relation to the Conquest is terse and schematic: "Engleis cump[r]erent lur ultrages" (5342: "the English paid dearly for their outrageous be-

6. Translations of quotations from Gaimar are from Short's edition.

haviour”). Yet when the Conquest is set in the broader context of Gaimar’s account of English history, it is clear that the Normans are but the latest in a long line of *gent de ultramarine* (5266) to have invaded England and then become assimilated.

The fact that so many waves of invading Saxons and Danes become assimilated into the English aristocratic elite renders any sense of purely English identity, as opposed to Saxon, Danish or Norman identity, difficult to discern. Thus if the Danes are initially represented as a *päene gente* (2160) and frequently cast in an antagonistic relation to the English, an antagonism that is often reinforced formally through prosody and rhyme, and if it is remarked that the English dislike the Danes for their rapaciousness and cruelty (e.g. 2968–69, 4523–36, 4766–68, 4777–78), this antagonism is just as frequently swept aside and troubled. Consider the case of Rægnald Everwic, “un rei demi daneis” (3507), with an English mother (3508). As this altogether typical case indicates, marriage practices among the social elite of medieval Europe sought to unite warring factions, or potential allies, often across long distances. Rægnald’s ethnic hybridity was thus the rule rather than the exception and this naturally means that the cultural (or indeed linguistic) identity of high-ranking men is invariably complex.

The most striking case of the *Estoire’s* representation of a Dane complicating any straightforward opposition between the *Engleis* and the *Daneis* is Cnut. The English, the *Estoire* tells us, flocked to Cnut’s support when he invaded (4188–89). Cnut, king of England from 1016 to 1035 as well as king of Denmark, Norway and parts of Sweden, gets a wholly good press from Gaimar as a “good king” (4683–84). The portrayal of Cnut’s attempted reconciliation with Edmond Ironside, following his capture of half the kingdom, is particularly positive. He addresses Edmund thus:

... Eadmund, un poi atent!
 Jo sui Daneis, e tu Engleis,
 E nos peres furent dous reis:
 L’un tint la terre, e l’autre l’out,
 Chescon en fist ço ke li plout.
 Tant com l’urent en pouisté,
 Chescons en fist sa volonté
 E bien sachez loi[n]gtenement
 L’urent Deneis nostre parent:
 Prés de mil anz l’out Dane aince[i]s

Ke unc i entrast Certiz li reis.
 Certiz, ço fu vostre ancïen,
 E li reis Danes fu le mien.
 Daneis le tint en chef de Deu,
 Mordret donat Certiz son feu:
 Il ne tient unkes chevalment,
 De lui vindrent vostre parent.
 Pur ço vus di, si nel savez:
 Si vus od mei [vus] combatez,
 L[i] un de nus ad greignur tort,
 Ne savom liquels en ert mort.
 Pur ço vus vol un offre fere
 E ne m'en voil de rien retrere:
 Partum la terre dreit en dous,
 L'une partie en aiez vus,
 L'autre partie me remaigne!
 Ne jo ne vus ne se complaigne!
 Puis conquerom cele partie
 Dunt jo ne vus n[en] avom mie!
 [E] sicom nus la conqueroms,
 Entre nus dous la departoms,
 E saium dous freres en lai!
 Jo jurrai vus, vus jurez moi,
 De tenir tel fraternité
 Com de une mere fussum né,
 Cum si fussum ambedui frere
 E d'un pere e d'une mere;
 Si eit ostages entre nus,
 E crëez mei, jo crerai vus! (4308–46)

(Edmund, wait a moment. I am a Dane and you are English; both of our fathers were kings, both ruled over the country, and each was master in the land. As long as it was in their power to do so, each did exactly as he saw fit. Our Danish ancestors, I'll have you know, have been ruling here for a very long time. Almost a thousand years before king Cerdic came to the throne, Danr was king. Cerdic was your ancestor, and king Danr was mine. A Dane held the land in the chief from God. It was Mordred who granted Cerdic his fief; he never held in chief, and your family descended from him. In case

you don't already know, I'll tell you that if you fight me, one of us is going to be in the wrong more than the other, though we don't know which one of us will die as a result. This is why I am willing to make you an offer [of peace] – one that I will not seek to back down from: let us divide the kingdom exactly in two, with one part going to you and the other remaining with me, in such a way that neither I nor you will have any cause for complaint. Thereafter let us conquer that part of the kingdom that neither you nor I have possession of. As we conquer it, so let's divide it between us. Let you and me be brothers by adoption! I shall swear a solemn oath to you, and you to me, that we will have the same sort of fraternal relations as if we had been born of the same mother, and as if were two brothers of the same father and the same mother. Let there be exchange of sureties between us: trust me and I shall trust you!)

The terms of this pact were not subsequently honoured because of underhand machinations in Edmund's camp – then his death – but the pact is sealed with a kiss and Edward implicitly accepts Cnut's argument that the two men have more in common than divides them as descendants from the same Royal Danish stock (“nostre parent” in 4316 implicitly refers to both men), with a shared history of interrelations going back centuries. Cnut's contention that whereas English royalty owes its sovereignty to a man (Mordred), Danish royalty received its authority from God belies the text's earlier labelling of the Danes as pagans, but implicitly gives Cnut the greater right to rule. The Realpolitik of the two men agreeing to join together to share the parts of the kingdom neither controls is also instructive as to the solidarity of the ‘English’ in the face of Danish invaders, and as in near contemporary *chansons de geste*, ideas of right and wrong (*tort*, 4327) are subsumed to questions of power and domination: if you are right you win; you lose if wrong.

Ian Short remarks that “one of the most unexpected aspects of Gaimar's attitude to English history is in his treatment of the Danes” (*Geffrei Gaimar* xliii) and this precisely because they appear in a positive light. This has implications for how the text represents ‘English’ identity. Even more significantly, the same process of the blurring of boundaries between the English and their antagonists occurs with the Normans. Not coincidentally the beginning of this process (both in the *Estoire* and in reality) involves Cnut in that he marries Emma of Normandy, daughter and sister of the Duke of Normandy, who

7. Elizabeth Tyler has recently highlighted the importance of royal and aristocratic women in the fostering of polyglot literary culture in medieval England before the Conquest: see her “Crossing Conquests,” and particularly 177–83 on Emma’s pivotal role, and that of her daughter, Gunnhild.

8. For an illuminating account of the ‘networked’ nature of Norman England, see Bates, particularly 128–59.

had previously been married to Ethelred the Unready, mother of Edward the Confessor, king of England 1042–66. Though the Norman involvement in England starts earlier (see for example line 5037), it was through Emma that it intensified.⁷ If the Normans prior to the Conquest, like the Danes before them, are *la gent de ultramarine*, the frequency with which William the Conqueror crosses the Channel subsequently is dizzying (5353–58), and his ability (at least in Gaimar’s account) to unite *franceis* and *engleis* striking (5484). William, in other words, is above all a cross-channel, cosmopolitan leader. It is equally noteworthy that Gaimar oscillates between referring to the new ruling class as Normans and referring to them as French. Since their being ‘French’ clearly gives no sense of their being associated with, or subject to, the French crown, ‘French’ here simply means “from the other side of the channel.” If this is then put together with the frequent references to the presence of Flemings (usually mercenaries) in England (5160, 5185, 5423, 5428, 6283), the political map of late eleventh- and early twelfth-century England Gaimar is implicitly drawing is not reducible simply to an English-Norman axis in the immediate post-conquest era. The position of England, rather, is determined by a longer history of networks established by contact across the channel *and* the North Sea, with a good portion of the coast on the other side of the channel being French-speaking, though not politically French.⁸

For Gaimar allegiance to a good king transcends ethnic or linguistic divisions. He most admires kings – Cnut, William I, William II – with a substantial power base on either side of the channel. William Rufus’s courtly court is exemplary in this respect. In Gaimar’s account, England has at this stage a cosmopolitan court at its symbolic centre where magnates from many different places gather, including from France (as opposed to Normandy), where William is extending his power base with the enthusiastic help of English lords (5909–10), or from Flanders. Gaimar’s playful attention to the squabbling of courtiers at William’s coronation court notes the origins of the different factions, but their specific identity seems less important than the courtly scenario that underlines William’s pre-eminence: Welsh ‘kings’ vie for his favour at his court, and for the privilege of taking up the subservient position of sword bearer. One lord, Hugh of Chester, balks at this, however, and after some courtly bantering, is asked to bear the golden royal staff instead (6015–20). This courtly feinting leads to Hugh swearing fealty (6033), which in turn leads to the granting of North Wales (6043), but the dominant image of

this passage is the spectacle of William's court as a place in which powerful men from Normandy and the British Isles vie with each other for positions of domestic subservience in the king's entourage. This scene would not be out of place in an Arthurian romance. Tellingly within a hundred lines we are told of another of William's courtiers, Malcolm king of Scotland (6119), who is involved in William's affairs on both sides of the channel, while Gaimar also underlines the connectedness of William to the Kingdom of Jerusalem (6207) through his fractious brother Robert. If Gaimar glosses over the unpleasantness of their family squabble, a picture nonetheless emerges of an England embedded in a complex set of networks stretching in all directions, even to the distant Eastern Mediterranean. The purely 'Anglo-Norman' axis of relations between England and Normandy, or even England and France, is but part of this more complex set of networks.

What role does language play in this? In his lengthy epilogue, Gaimar stresses the multilingual nature of his sources:⁹

9. On this epilogue, see Short, "Gaimar's Epilogue." There is a second, shorter and more conventional, epilogue that only occurs in one of the four manuscripts; see Short, *Geffrei Gaimar* 354–55.

Ceste estorie fist translater
 Dame Custance la gentil.
 Gaimar i mist marz e avril
 E [après] tuz les dusze mais
 Ainz k'il oust translaté des reis.
 Il purchaça maint esamplaire,
 Livres engleis e par gramaire
 E en romanz e en latin,
 Ainz k'en p[e]üst traire a la fin.
 Si sa dame ne i aidast,
 Ja a nul jor ne l'achevast.
 Ele eveiad a Helmeslac
 Pur le livre Walter Espac.
 Robert li quens de Gloücestre
 Fist translater icele geste
 Solum les livres as Waleis
 K'il aveient des bretons reis.
 Walter Espec la demandat,
 Li quens Robert li enveiat,
 Puis la prestat Walter Espec
 A Raül le fiz Gilebert.
 Dame Custance l'enpruntat
 De son seignur k'el mult amat.

Geffrai Geimar cel livre escri[s]t
 [E] les transsa[n]dances i mist
 Ke li Waleis ourent leissé,
 K[ë] il aveit ainz purchacé –
 U fust a dreit u fust a tort –
 Le bon livre dë Oxford
 Ki fust Walter l'arcedaien,
 Sin amendat son livre bien;
 E de l'estorie di Wincestre
 Fust amende[e] ceste geste,
 De Wassingburc un livre engleis
 U il trovad escrit des reis
 E de tuz les emper[e]ürs
 Ki de Rome furent seignurs.
 E de Engleterre ourent treü,
 Des reis ki d'els ourent tenu,
 De lur vies e de lur plaiz,
 Des aventures e des faiz,
 Coment chescuns maintint la terre,
 Quel amat pes e liquel guere.
 De tut le plus pout ci trover
 Ki en cest livre volt esgarder. (6436–80)

(The noble lady Constance had this history adapted into French. Gaimar took March and April and a whole twelve months before finishing this adaptation of [the history of] the kings [of Britain]. He obtained a large number of copies of books – English books, by dint of learned reading, and books both in the French vernacular and Latin – before finally managing to bring his work to a conclusion. If his lady had not helped him, he would never have completed it. She sent to Helmsley for Walter Espec's book. Robert earl of Gloucester had had this historical narrative translated in accordance with the books belonging to the Welsh that they had in their possession on the subject of the kings of Britain. Walter Espec requested this historical narrative, earl Robert sent it to him, and then Walter Espec lent it to Ralf fitz Gilbert; lady Constance borrowed it from her husband, whom she loved dearly. Geoffrey Gaimar made a written copy of the book and added it to the supplementary material that the Welsh had omitted, for he had previously obtained,

be it rightfully or wrongfully, the good book of Oxford that belonged to archdeacon Walter, and with this he made considerable improvements to his own book. And this historical narrative was improved by also by reference to the Winchester History, [that is,] a certain English book at Washingtonborough, in which he found a written account of the kings [of Britain] and of all the Emperors who had dominion over Rome and tribute from England, and of the kings who had held lands of these emperors, of their lives and their affairs, what happened to them and what deeds they performed, how each one governed the land, which one loved peace and which one war. Anyone willing to look in this [Washingtonborough] book will be able to find there all this and more.)

The context in which Gaimar writes is portrayed as one in which books written in English, French, Latin, and Welsh are circulating among cultivated patrons eager to learn about English history, and a writer such as Gaimar is clearly expected to use sources in all four languages. But these languages differ in nature: whereas English and Welsh are local, indigenous languages, tied to specific regions and delimited communities, French and Latin are neither indigenous, nor specific to the British Isles. Indeed, these languages enable textual mobility and *translation* in the physical sense of the term. It is interesting, then, that although the Welsh and English sources Gaimar uses are key to his endeavour, particularly the *l'estorie de Wincestre* (6467: almost certainly the Winchester *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*), these sources are also represented as in need of supplementation (6459–61). I have retained Short's translation, but this masks a number of problems. First, in his translation of lines 6442–43, he introduces the term 'French vernacular' for clarity in order to translate *romanz*, which is indeed the standard word for 'French' of the period. But the syntax actually subordinates both *romanz* and *latin* in line 6433 to *par gramaire* in line 6432. In other words, both *romanz* and *latin* are types of *gramaire*, which is usually a synonym for Latin. This seems to imply that French should be regarded as *equivalent to*, or at least in the same class of languages, as Latin. Secondly, Short's translation specifies that *cest livre* in line 6480 is to be understood as "this [Washingtonborough] book." Yet syntactically it is equally possible that Gaimar refers here to his own book, particularly given the presence of the spatial marker *ci* in line 6479, which Short translates as "there," but more obviously means "here."

Thus, despite all the local and authoritative Latin sources, if you want to know *de tut le plus* in this instance you need a book in French in that you need to read Gaimar's *Estoire*. It is interesting, then, given the *Estoire's* status as the earliest surviving French history book, that Gaimar suggests that historical writing in French is already in circulation; he also goes on to spar with a figure called Davit, whose work is implicitly also in French, but whose account of history Gaimar finds wanting, though he "sings" well of courtly intrigue (6483–32).

Given the status Gaimar assumes for French here, the purely insular circulation of the *Estoire* is striking. This cannot, however, be attributed to a lack of interest in his subject matter. Indeed, the success of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia* (almost certainly Gaimar's *livre de Oxeford*), and of Wace's *Brut* (with which the *Estoire* is systematically associated in transmission), shows the popularity of this material outside England. Thus, despite the eminent geographical translatability of French (in Lusignan's terms, its status as a high status *langue véhiculaire*),¹⁰ perhaps there is something eminently *untranslatable* about Gaimar's particular use of it. This is not simply to do with the unmistakable 'Anglo-Norman' phonological features found throughout the text (see Short, *Geffrei Gaimar* xxxii–xxxvii), which do not in and of themselves render the text incomprehensible to continental readers, nor would they preclude the transposition of the text into a more Continental form of French, which happens with other Anglo-Norman texts.

Interestingly, many passages of the *Estoire* seem clearly addressed to readers who also know English. Thus in the portion of the epilogue quoted above there are several instances of English proper nouns rhyming with French words in such a way that the phonology of either the English or the French word must be distorted in order to make a pure rhyme (Gloücestre and Wincestre with *geste*; Oxeford/ *tort*). This is a technique also used by Wace, but a good deal less frequently. It is not clear that rhymes such as these tell us anything about how the words were actually pronounced in a reading of the text, since the intention may have been to produce eye-rhymes, the spelling of the words may be modified in transmission, and all our surviving manuscripts postdate the composition of the text considerably. On the other hand, the high frequency of English proper nouns and the accuracy with which they are recorded in the *Estoire* suggests that it is the phonology of the French word that is implicitly modified by rhyming with an English word. In many instances of multilingual rhyming, a variety of parts of speech, not just proper

10. Lusignan concludes his "A chacun son français" with the observation that the *forme lettrée* or *scolarisée* of much Anglo-Norman and Picard French means it is functionally more akin to Latin than to spoken French.

nouns, do not make sense without the voicing or modification of consonants that in some instances would destroy the phonic purity of the rhyme, and in others seems potentially to introduce an English word into French: Edefrid/ *saisi* (1147–48); *retint* / *edeling* (1727–28); *suth* / *vertu* (2115–16); Everwices / *païs* (2859–60). Elsewhere Gaimar uses unambiguously English words, and if, again as in Wace, some of these might have had some continental currency thanks precisely to Arthurian literature or indeed to the circulation of Wace's texts (for example *uthlages* 2612 and elsewhere; *wesheil* and *drincheil* 3809), others either have a quaintly 'franglais' flavour (e.g. *welcumé* 3679 and 3689), or are arcane and/ or technical, therefore probably not intelligible to readers from the continent with no knowledge of English (e.g. *buzecharles* "shipman" in 5486; *esterman* "steersman" in 5832).

Gaimar's use of French is therefore at one and the same time local and particularised, *and yet* it also plays on the status of French as a mobile, supralocal European language, like Latin. As a writer he is not in any way dependent on French models, nor is he apparently concerned to reproduce the language of native French speakers from France. One important corollary, however, of Gaimar's French being directed at a Francophone readership with a good knowledge of English is the sharper focus this gives less on the mobility of texts in French *per se* (since this text does not appear to have been particularly mobile) than on the importance for his readers of knowing French in order to partake in certain types of supralocal, pan-European cultural and political networks, networks from which monolingual English or Welsh readers would by definition have been excluded. The local 'English' reader of French is thus situated in a broader and cosmopolitan cultural and political context simply by virtue of his or her knowledge of French, even if the text s/he is reading is primarily of local interest.

Flanders c. 1210 and Acre c. 1260

I began the previous section by noting the focus in modern accounts of French literary history on twelfth-century texts. In fact the manuscript traditions of the texts that receive most scholarly attention are often relatively sparse (for example the *Chanson de Roland*, Marie de France, the first four Arthurian romances of Chrétien de Troyes, verse Tristan romances). Indeed, apart from devotional texts, the two

twelfth-century texts in French with the most significant manuscript dissemination from the early thirteenth century onwards – both in France and elsewhere – are the *Roman d'Alexandre* and the *Roman de Troie*, both texts with an orientation that might be described as broadly 'historical.' When each of these texts is read in isolation, their particular articulation of 'history' might seem rather different to that of Gaimar's *Estoire*. Yet as with Gaimar's *Estoire*, we have plenty of evidence that in reception at least (and possibly in conception too), this narrative material is subsumed to a broader drive, that manifests itself with different ideological agendas in different parts of Europe, to produce a continuous history of Occidental culture running from Biblical history, through ancient history particularly as cathected through the Trojan myth, then often through Arthurian history, and finally to the (medieval) present day.

One of the most successful texts in French (in terms of dissemination) to respond to this historicizing agenda is known to modern scholarship as the *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César*.¹¹ Composed in Flanders between 1208 and 1213, which is to say a region that was not then politically part of France (though this was about to change), and in which the ruling classes at least seem to have used both French and Flemish routinely, the *Histoire* is typical of much medieval textual production in that it is less an original composition than a collection of disparate adaptations of material from different sources. These include Genesis and Medieval Latin or Old French accounts of the stories of Thebes, Troy, Aeneas, Alexander the Great and Roman history. The *Histoire* thereby offers a vast 'universal' history that effectively narrates the foundation of Europe, with particular attention to the seminal Trojan myth, for which it was an important vehicle of transmission in many parts of medieval Europe. Indeed, it is interesting that at various points in this collage of material from different sources, the term 'Europe' seems to be used not simply to designate a geographical continent (though clearly this is one of its meanings), but also a cultural entity, conflating Occidental Christendom with the 'European,' and thereby making the *Histoire* a key early text for the emergence of a properly 'European' identity.¹²

Furthermore, although the *Histoire* remained incomplete, stopping with the story of Julius Caesar, it nonetheless enjoyed significant dissemination between the early thirteenth and late fifteenth centuries: 80+ surviving manuscripts make it one of the most widely known texts composed in Old French. In transmission it was sometimes associated with *Li Fait des Romains* and it is the compo-

11. Only about 40% of this text has been edited. For editions of the sections devoted to Genesis, Thebes, Assyria, Greeks and Amazons, Troy and Alexander, see Coker Joslin; de Visser-van Terwisga; Jung, 358–430; Gaullier-Bougassas. Apart from these editions, the main work on the *Histoire*'s manuscript tradition is Meyer, but see also Oltrogge for an important account of the tradition's cycles of illustrations; also more recently, Traschler; and Zinelli, "«je qui li livre escrive»." The following account draws on all these sources.

12. In addition to the example cited below from Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF), fonds français 20125, 148v–49r, see Coker Joslin § xxxiii (102) and Gaullier-Bougassas 316, where reference is made to "les bones gens d'Europe" in the closing paragraph of the Alexander section as transmitted in Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (ÖNB), 2576.

sition in 1213–14 of this text, which picks up more or less where the *Histoire* leaves off, that may account for the *Histoire*'s incompleteness. Furthermore, the *Histoire*'s eccentric (in every sense of the term) manuscript transmission makes it a particularly interesting instance of the supralocal use of French: composed outside France, the earliest manuscript witnesses of this text, dating from the mid-thirteenth century, are from Acre (in the Kingdom of Jerusalem) and from Northern France. There is then some transmission later in the century of this so-called first redaction in Italy and Northern France, deriving from the Levantine tradition, but later medieval versions from France demonstrably all derive from a copy of a substantially revised version made in Naples before 1340 (London, British Library, Royal 20 D 1), taken to France as a gift for the French king some time before 1380, and written in a form of French with palpable linguistic traces of its Italian origin. This revised version is a substantively different text: it no longer includes Biblical material, and incorporates a much-expanded new Troy section. The *Histoire ancienne* therefore demonstrates that the centrifugal model of textual transmission that is often assumed for major French literary texts, whereby texts are composed 'in France' and then move outwards, is often quite erroneous. Indeed, the transmission of the *Histoire* is if anything centripetal with respect to France itself: the text seems to have skirted around France, only to return from further afield in a different form before gaining a more sustained readership in France.¹³

13. For further details see the website of the *Medieval Francophone Literary Culture outside France* project.

The standard work on the emergence of vernacular history as a mode of writing is Gabrielle Spiegel's 1993 *Romancing the Past* (though see also Croizy-Naquet's 1999 study). Spiegel's pioneering work focuses on a group of texts in French that emerge mainly from Flanders in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries; these include the *Histoire*. She is not concerned with earlier historiographical texts written in French verse in England (such as Gaimar's *Estoire*) because her interest is in exploring the relation between the development of prose in French and the writing of vernacular history. Crucially, Spiegel shows that the corpus of texts from Flanders she examines was written for, and promoted by, the chivalric nobility on the porous, unstable borders of France, not royalty as had sometimes previously been assumed. She compellingly locates in this corpus of texts "the rise of vernacular prose historiography" and central to this is what she sees as a move to create a clearer distinction between 'history' on the one hand, and "the fictions" of "prior romances" on the other (107–09). For Spiegel, the adoption of prose was key to this.

Spiegel's conclusions have been widely accepted by both historians and literary scholars, but there are a number of problems here that are worth revisiting. Thus, despite her initially nuanced consideration of the cultural geography of Flanders, the texts under discussion become subsumed in her account to "French historiography," and to a narrative that culminates in "royal history." Yet this is to simplify their complex transmission through space and time and her argument fails to account adequately for the popularity of a text in French like the *Histoire* in Italy and the Eastern Mediterranean, distant from the historical context on the borders of Flanders and France in which she situates them. Finally, many of the stylistic features and rhetorical moves concerning historical veracity that Spiegel regards as indices of the 'historical' nature of these texts, are also ubiquitous in texts she, along with many literary critics, regards as more properly 'fictional' or 'literary.' Indeed codicological, linguistic and stylistic analysis suggests that to apply the main epistemological and/ or generic categories that modern scholarship has used to separate 'literary' or 'fictional' texts from 'history' in medieval vernacular traditions begs the question.¹⁴

14. For some initial reflections, see Gaunt, "Genres;" and for comparative linguistic and stylistic analysis see Marnette. On the question of prose from a more literary perspective, see the brief but nuanced remarks of Baumgartner.

Given the *Histoire's* transmission history, its historiography should be viewed as supralocal in scope rather than specifically 'French.' It is, however, nonetheless striking that what 'France' is becomes a matter of concern in this text, and thereby implicitly also a matter of concern to its geographically disparate readership. I shall comment briefly on two passages, the first taken from the text's lengthy verse prologue, the second a passage from the Aeneas section on the origins of France and of the king's of France.

As far as we can tell, the earliest version of the *Histoire ancienne* had a verse prologue of almost 300 lines and many of its main narrative units were punctuated by moralising verse segments that gloss the action, sometimes precisely, sometimes rather loosely. Only one surviving manuscript contain all these verse segments, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF), fonds français 20125, this being one of the important Levantine witnesses, while one other manuscript, Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (ÖNB), 2578, a key early Italian manuscript, contains the verse prologue and many of the other verse segments.¹⁵ Spiegel remarks that "Later manuscripts of the *Histoire ancienne* progressively suppress both the verse moralizations and the interpellations to the audience," arguing also that the purpose "is textually to efface authorial presence," thereby enhancing an effect of historical "objectivity" (108–09). Spiegel's survey of

15. On the crucially important BNF f.fr. 20125 see particularly Folda, 429–33; Oltrogge, 302–07; Rodriguez Porto; and Zinelli, "Les histories franceses," 9–13. Oltrogge disputes the Levantine provenance of this manuscript, a position that is accepted by de Visser-van Terwisga. But the arguments in favour of the manuscript being from Acre advanced by Folda and Zinelli are compelling. On the verse segments see Szkilnik and Blumenfeld-Kosinski.

the absence or presence of the verse passages, however, is confined to manuscripts in Paris (see 110–11), and it is therefore partial and not a little misleading. Furthermore, as she herself realises, some manuscripts retain the text of the verse moralisations, but copying them as prose, or alternatively they prosify them fully. The verse moralizations are indeed eliminated in some branches of the manuscript tradition, but we are not as yet in a position to be sure that this process is ‘progressive’ and the survival of the verse moralizations is certainly more widespread than Spiegel suggests, probably characteristic of the text’s earliest transmission in Acre, Italy and Northern France/Flanders. The contentions that the author’s presence is felt more in the verse portions and that interpellations to the audience are progressively eliminated also require further investigation using a broader range of manuscripts.

The verse prologue is the main source of information as to the text’s Flemish origin, since it identifies Roger, castellan of Lille (c. 1190–c. 1230) as its patron (262–63). The first half of the prologue is a disquisition on fallen humanity and the vanity of wealth. This segues into a summary of the *Histoire*’s contents and it is from this that we can infer that the text was originally supposed to bring universal history up to the present day. What, then, is the position of ‘France’ in this account of history?

De ceus qui la loi Deu tenoient
 E lui e ses ovres amoient
 Ce covendra plenierement
 Dire sanz nul delaiement.
 E puis après, sans demorance,
 Qui premerains fu rois de France
 Fais crestieins, coment ot non;
 E de sa generation,
 Quel furent, coment estorerent
 Les riches glises qu’il funderent.
 Après sera dit en comun
 Coment li Wandele, Got e Hun
 France pelfirent e guasterent,
 E les iglises desrouberent.
 E des Normans vos iert retrait
 E lor conquete e lor fait,
 Coment destruirent Germanie,
 Couloigne e France la guarnie,

Angou, Poitou, Borgoigne tote;
 De ce ne rest il nule doute
 Que Flandres, Waucres n'envaïssent
 E mout de maus ne lor feïssent.
 Des quels gens Flandres fu puplee
 Vos iert l'estoire bien contee,
 Com se proverent, quel il furent,
 Com il firent que fere durent. (221–46, ed. Coker Joslin)

(It will be entirely fitting to tell all and without delay about those who upheld God's religion and loved his works. About who was the first king of France, his Christian deeds and what he was called; and his descendants, who they were, how they conducted themselves, and about the fine churches they founded. After this it will be relayed to all how the Vandals, Goths and Huns pilfered France, devastated it and plundered the churches. And then you will be told about the Normans, their conquests and deeds, how they destroyed Germany, Cologne and prosperous France, Anjou, Poitou, all Burgundy; and let there be no doubt that Flanders was not attacked by these vile people, or harmed. You will be told the story of what people populated Flanders, how they were tested, who there were, and what they did in order to survive so long.)

As this suggests, though the text remained unfinished, the original intention was a universal history serving the political interests of the Count of Flanders. The plucky Flemish, in this historically dubious account, according to which the Normans laid Germany to waste, somehow resist, or are bypassed by, the invading Vandals, Goths and Huns, whereas the French have their lands decimated. Furthermore, the lengthy moralization with which the prologue opens might well lead readers to infer moral failings on the part of the more recent French, initially good Christians, and founders of great churches, but then prey to successive waves of destruction, first from the East, then from the Normans. But what then is meant by 'France' in this passage? Any reader with the modern Hexagon in mind might assume that Anjou, Poitou and Burgundy are invoked here as part of France. But Anjou at this point was still disputed between the Plantagenets and the Capetians, as anyone writing in Flanders for a patron in the *mouvance* of the fractious count of Flanders would surely have known, and Burgundy was largely at this stage part of the Empire, not subject to the king of France. 'France' is invoked here, but its con-

tours and extent are simultaneously called into question. The text is circumscribing France as much as defining it.

Later in the text, the origins of France and of her kings are explicitly raised again. The portion of the text I quote here – from the Aeneas section – is unedited. I cite it from Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, fonds français 20125, 148v–49r, thus one of only two manuscripts to contain the verse prologue:

Ce dient li plusor qu'Eneas ot un frere. Friga fu només. qui avec Eneas ne s'en ala mie. Ains remest en Frige, cest en la terre de Troies, et o lui sa maisnee. Mais quant il vit qu'il n'i poroit arrester, qu'il ne li convenist estre desous autrui signori, et il s'en parti et o lui grans gens toz de sa contree et de sa ligne, et lor femes et lor enfans. Et si se mistrent en mer [...] Entre tant morut Friga. Et il firent roi d'un fill sien fiz, Fransios ot a non [...] Cis Fransios erra tant par mer qu'il vint en Europe, et la issi il a terre. Si porprist le regne entre le Rin & la Dunoe, ou adonc n'avoit habité ne mes nulle humaine creature. Seignors, cil puplerent cele terre, quar d'aus vint et issi mout grans pueple. Et de ces dient li pluisor que li Fransois issirent, et orent non Fransois por lor roi qui estoit preus et hardis et Fransion ot a non en lor premerain language. Et tels i a qui aferment et dient qu'il vindrent premerainement d'une isle qui Scanzia est apelee, dont li Got issirent, quar en cele isle a une terre qui iest encore France apelee. Et si mostrent cil qui ce dient tel raison encore que celle terre est auques voisine au regne qui fu au roi Latin qui fu pere a la royne Laivine que Eneas ot a feme. Et Eneas noma les Latins fransois por ce qu'il pres li estoient et ensaié. De ceaus dient il ensi que Franse fu puplee. E peut bien estre qu'adonques en celui tans i ariverent et vindrent et des uns et des autres. Mais n'est mie certe choze li quel en orent des adonc la seignorie. Mais des celui tans fu ele puplee.

(Some say that Aeneas had a brother, who was called Friga, who did not leave with Aeneas, rather he remained in Frige, which is the land around Troy, with his household. But when he realised it would not suit him to live subjected to another, he left, taking with him many people from his family lands, their wives and children. They took to sea [...] after a while Friga died and they made one of his sons, whose name was

Fransio, king [...] this Fransio wandered the seas until he came to Europe and there he landed. He seized the realm between the Rhine and the Danube where no people had previously lived. My lords, they populated this land, for many great peoples came forth and issued from them. And some say the French issued from them and that they are called French because of their king, who was worthy and bold, and called Fransio in their original language. And there are others who affirm and say that they came first from an island that is called Scandinavia, from which the Goths came. For in this island there is a land still called France. And those who say this adduce another reason: that this land was close by the kingdom of the Latin king who was the father of queen Lavinia, Aeneas' wife. And Aeneas called the Latins French, because they were nearby and subjected. Some say this is how they populated France. And this may be so, because in those days people came and went. But it is not certain which people exactly were in control from that point onwards. Yet [France] was populated from this point onwards.)

This passage offers competing accounts of the origin of France; one which locates 'France' originally in the land of the Franks (between the Rhine and the Danube) portraying the 'French' as descendants of a minor branch of Trojan royalty; then another in which the 'French' come from Scandinavia, land of the Goths, believed by many to be an island in the Middle Ages, yet also here represented as near the Latin kingdom that Aeneas seized through marriage. The geography of the relation between "Scandinavia" and the "regne qui fu au roi latin" here is fuzzy (and frankly fanciful); the implication that the French might in fact have originally been Goths is also at odds with the account of the Gothic invasions in the prologue. Perhaps all we can know for sure here is that nothing is certain ("n'est mie certe chose" says the narrator regarding the question of lordship in the period under discussion). Two chapters later the reader is offered yet another account of the origins of France and the French (149r–50r), one in which they descend from yet another group of migrating Trojans, who found a kingdom that is destroyed by Romans, as a result of which they fetch up in Germany, whence they take over France, then called Gaule. They are called *Fransois* by emperor Valentinian because "c'est ausi com hardis e crueus" (149v: "this means bold and cruel"). The cumulative effect of these conflicting accounts

is an image of the French as bedraggled refugees of uncertain provenance. Or are they perhaps an eclectic group of people held together by a common goal of conquest and/ or defence (rather like the Franks in the Crusading States where we know this text circulated)? As the *Histoire* succinctly puts it: people at that time came and went. To my knowledge the only scholar to have discussed this passage is Jacques Monfrin, who writes: “Les deux excursus sur l’origine des Francs [...] s’inscrivent dans l’histoire des destinées des émigrés de Troie; mais, mal coordonné l’un à l’autre, ils trahissent le malaise qu’ont toujours eu les historiens médiévaux à combiner sur ce sujet des traditions inconciliables” (208: “the two excurses on the origin of the Franks [...] relate to the story of the fate of Trojan emigrés, but they are badly coordinated with each other, and they thereby betray the discomfort medieval historians always had when combining incompatible narratives about this”). Be that as it may, France emerges here, in a text in French of early thirteenth-century Flemish provenance, and one that circulates extensively in the years following its composition in the Eastern Mediterranean and in Italy, more as a vague idea than as a geographically specific place or political entity, which is somewhat striking given this is precisely what it was clearly in the process of becoming. This view of ‘France’ in a text in French might also give pause for thought as to what the use of the language actually connoted.

It is, of course, important to bear in mind that the usual term for designating the language that we now call French was not “fransois,” but rather *romans*, as is amply clear from the prologue to the *Histoire*: “S’il veult, en romans dou latin / Li cuic si traire lonc la letre” (266–67: “if he [Roger of Lille] wishes, I intend to translate literally from Latin into romance”). As Serge Lusignan’s recent work has shown, *fransois* almost certainly does not become the standard term for designating French until later in the thirteenth century (see particularly *Essai*, 84–97). We might also consider the claim earlier in the prologue that the story to be told here, “the highest of works” (107), has never before been “en nos langue traite” (109: “translated/ told into/ in our language”). The context of this line (which makes the text’s Flemish provenance and original audience clear) explicitly uncouples “our language” from “France.” It may also be significant that it does so using a linguistic form (which is also present in the other manuscript witness of this line) that is only used in the Northernmost regions of the French linguistic area, the standard French feminine singular form of the possessive adjective being *nostrre*.¹⁶ If we

16. See Pope, 328 (§ 853); Northern features are characteristic of outremer French.

17. Most notably, and perhaps not coincidentally, since it is the same part of speech, the uninflected possessive adjective *lor*, of which there are several examples in the passage from the Aeneas section quoted above. On this linguistic point, see Minervini 176–77.

put this together with linguistic traits elsewhere in the text as it is recorded in BNF f.fr. 20125 that suggest a Levantine origin,¹⁷ we might conclude that the French of the *Histoire*, at least as recorded in this manuscript, represents a deliberate supralocal koinization of the language, one intended to be at home wherever it travels.

Italy c. 1270

“Lengue franceise cort parmi le monde,” so writes Martin da Canale, author of the *Estoire de Venise* (ed. Limentani 1). If we put this remark together with the *Histoire*’s claim to be using *nos lengue*, the most salient feature of the proprietorship of French in the Middle Ages is precisely that it belongs to no one, or perhaps more accurately to any Francophone Christian, as the vernacular language that transcends borders, linguistic and otherwise. One of the most important regions for the production and transmission of texts in French is Italy, particularly Northern Italy, the most celebrated and successful example being Marco Polo and Rustichello da Pisa’s *Le Devisement du Monde*, composed in Genoa in 1298, better known in the Anglophone world as Marco Polo’s *Travels*. Italian readers of French seem to have had a particular taste for Arthurian romance in the form of the prose *Tristan*, but also for texts with an historical bent: *chansons de geste* (of which there is a significant Northern Italian tradition), the *Histoire ancienne*, and the matter of Troy. Thus Italy plays a significant role in the manuscript tradition of Benoît de Sainte-Maure’s *Roman de Troie* and three of the five *mises en prose* of this seminal text for later medieval culture were produced in Italy, almost certainly by writers of French who were native speakers of Italian. A good deal of this so-called ‘Franco-Italian’ material is under-researched; some is as yet unedited.¹⁸

This is true of my final case study, the second *mise en prose* of the *Roman de Troie*. This text was produced in Italy around 1270 and survives in only three manuscripts, close to each other (and to the supposed date of composition) in terms of provenance and date:

- Grenoble, Bibliothèque Municipale, 861: copied in Padua, 1298
- Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 196: copied in Verona, 1323
- Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, N.a.Fr. 9603: copied in Genoa, c. 1300

18. On the use of French by Marco Polo and Rustichello da Pisa, see Gaunt, *Marco Polo*. For an overview of Franco-Italian literature, see Günter and Holtus. Other important studies include Busby 596–635 and Delcorno Branca. On the transmission of the *Roman de Troie* in Italy, see Jung.

That two of these manuscripts come from the Veneto, with the third closely associated with it, is significant. While there is a rich Latin historiographical tradition in the Veneto in the thirteenth century, Venetan vernacular textual culture, including historiography, is at this point and as far as we know, in Occitan or French. The choice of French as a vehicle for historical narrative in the Veneto, as Laura Morreale and others have argued in relation to Martin da Canale's *Estoire de Venise* (1267), almost certainly signals an affiliation with the Crusader States of the Eastern Mediterranean as much as it does an affiliation to the French aristocracy.¹⁹ There is little scholarship on the second *mise en prose* of the *Roman de Troie*, which has mainly elicited interest either from those interested in the manuscript tradition of the *Roman de Troie*, or from those interested in its subsequent Italian *volgarizzamento*.²⁰ What exactly is it? How are we to evaluate its language and style? Finally, for whom was this new version of the Troy story intended?

The first thing to note is that this text works closely with its source, following its plotlines, but rewriting it often profoundly on a stylistic level. Below follows the opening page from Grenoble, Bibliothèque Municipale, 861 (see Plate 1), which is the manuscript on which my discussion will focus, together with a translation of material from its opening paragraphs equivalent to roughly the first 100 lines of Benoît de Sainte-Maure's poem. I reproduce the rubrics in red, and in blue textual material that has a direct correspondence in the verse romance.

This book speaks of the siege and the destruction of Troy. And of why Troy was destroyed and confounded. Rubrica, Rubrica. Solomon the most wise teaches us and exhorts us in his book that one should not hide one's wisdom. Rather one should teach and convey it to others honourably and in order to obtain and have a fine reputation. Thus did our ancestors behave. And if those who invented the seven arts had been silent, men would live now like beasts. Indeed, they would not know wisdom from folly, and they would not care for each other, for they would neither have nor observe reason. But because they did teach and convey their knowledge to others, their names are recorded and remembered over the ages. And if they had not done so, their wisdom and knowledge would now be lost, without profit. And because one must always learn and teach, I want to work on putting a

19. See Morreale xii. On literary culture in the Veneto more generally, see Folena.

20. See Carlesso and Chesney; also Jung 485–98. The second *mise en prose* of the *Roman de Troie* is translated into Italian by Binduccio.



Plate 1: Grenoble, Bibliothèque Municipale, 861, f. 1
(Roman de Troie, en prose, Bibliothèque Municipale de Grenoble, cote Ms. 263 Rés. Cliché BMG.)

story/ history into Romance so that those who do not know Latin might understand and enjoy it. For the story/ history is noble and concerns great deeds. It is about how Troy was destroyed and confounded, concerning which the truth is little known.

Here [the book] speaks of how Homer, the clerk, dealt with the siege and destruction of Troy. Homer was a very wise clerk, as the story/ history tells us. This Homer wrote about the origins of the war up to the destruction of Troy. And why Troy was destroyed and her people disinherited. But because Homer was not born until 100 years after Troy was destroyed and her people disinherited, his book was not always considered truthful. Indeed, he had not seen any of this. And when Homer had written his book and it was taken to the city of Athens, and read by the wise clerks, they rightfully condemned it, for he had the gods doing battle with the Trojans. Likewise he had goddesses fighting with mortal men, which was considered great folly. But because Homer was a wise clerk, his book was considered authoritative and circulated.

How Cornelius, found the true story/ history of Troy, which a Trojan wrote in Greek in Troy itself. And how Cornelius translated it into Latin. Sallust lived at that time, shortly after Rome's foundation. Sallust was from a very noble family, and he was bold, most worthy and a very wise clerk. Sallust had a nephew called Cornelius, who was very wise and knowledgeable, and learned. Cornelius was at school in Athens. One day Cornelius was searching around in his cupboard for one of his books. And in so doing, the history/ story that Darius wrote in Greek during the siege of Troy came into his hands. Darius was a Trojan. He was in the city and saw and observed everything that happened.

The first thing to note is that either Grenoble 861's source was sloppy, or alternatively that it is a sloppy copy of its source. Banal scribal errors are not infrequent and on the first page alone there are two glaring misunderstandings or bowdlerisations of words: "en na hotrices" for "en l'autorité" (as in Douce 196) and "demonois les diez" for "les damedeus" (both at the end of the second paragraph). Yet the prosifier works attentively with the detail of Benoît's text. In the passage translated here, he retains c. 70% of his source fairly literally,

and this means that *c.* 70% of his own text consists of approximate quotation in that it is adapted directly from Benoît, keeping many of his formulations. He loses some of the nuances of Benoît's text, but he cuts far less than the prosifier of the first *mise en prose* (made incidentally in Morea), whose text is shorter, more moralising and less interested in the figure of Benoît and his claimed sources. Furthermore, he goes to some lengths to dismantle Benoît's octosyllabic rhyming couplets, for example:²¹

21. Benoît cited from ed. Constans.

- Qu'ensi firent li ancessor (6) > Car ensi firent les nos ansesors (+ 2 syllables)
- Mais la verté est poi oïe (44) > de quoi la verite est poi seue (+ 1 syllable)

This formal make-over goes hand in hand with a more thoroughgoing stylistic and ideological reworking.

For example, the second *mise en prose* makes frequent use of formulae that evoke *li conte*, "the tale," and *l'estoire*, the "story" or "history," both as source of the narrative material and as guarantor of its authority:

- Mes a tant laisse hore li *conte* a parler de Medea qe plus ne dit hore por sivre la droite matire (Grenoble 861, 7r)
- Or dit li contes qe Hercules s'aparoilla molt ... (Grenoble 861, 7v)

Furthermore, whereas Benoît evokes *l'estoire* and the authority of his supposed sources Darius and Dictis, here Benoît himself becomes another author figure, cited as part of a chain of transmission that begins with Darius and culminates in the text we are reading (emphasis added):

- Si vos laisse hore nostre conte a parler de Jason si outrement q'il ne parole plus en nulle part, por ce que Daire ne s'escrist plus. *Meismement Beneoit, qi le livre trelaica, le nos tesmoigne ausi.* Mes nos vos conterons de la plus grant heure [Douce 196: *histoire*] qi james fust ni doie estre secuit [Douce 196: *escrite*]. (Grenoble 861, 7r)
- *Benoic qe cestui livre escrist, et trelaita de latin & le mist en romans, ne vost laissier a retraire nulle rienz de ce qe Daire dist, car Daire savoit tot ce q'il dist por fine verite por ce q'il l'avoit tot ce veu a ces els, ou par verite hoi conter. Mes por ce Daire volt faire sa hovre conplie & pleniére vost il escrire la forme e la contenance de ciascun de princes qi vindrent au siege de*

Troie. (Grenoble, 861, 19r)

- En ceste partie dit li contes, et *Beneoite qi l'estoire treslaita nes le tesmoigne*, qe cele nuit passa en tel mainiere come je vos ai ai dit. (Grenoble, 861, 82v–83r)

If the first paragraph of the text retains the first person of its source (“me voill ge travailler d’une estoire metre en romanz”), as Jung points out (486), elsewhere Benoît’s first person is systematically transposed to the third person, then linked to Darius’s name, for example:

Ne puis tot dire n’aconter, (= first-person)
 Qu’enuiz sereit de l’escouter
 Co que chascuns fist endroit sei (12337–39)

Daire qe ceste estoire escrit, ne vost pas (= third-person)
 metre en escrit ce qu’iascun fist d’armes endroit soi, por ce que l’estoire seroit trop desmesuree. (Grenoble 861, 51v)

It is telling here that in one at least of the two author portraits in Grenoble 861, the identity of the author depicted – Darius or Benoît – is unclear, reinforcing the idea that Benoît is now an ancient author and authority, like Darius and Dictis. Thus on f. 19r, the rubric identifies the author as Darius, but the text beside the author portrait identifies him as Benoît (see Plate 2).

An example of the ideological reworking the text undergoes is the misogynistic rewriting of the Troilus and Crysede episode, which, as Jung points out (487), is grounded in a misreading or misunderstanding of the first-person verb form *criem* “I fear” as the noun *crime*. Benoît’s declaration, sometimes taken as an apology to Eleanor of Aquitaine for telling a story that might cause offence to women, that “De cest veir criem g’estre blamsmez” (13457: “I fear that I will be blamed for speaking the truth”) is transformed into the remark that “De cestui crime estoit la damoisele Blesida durement blasmee” (17r: “Cressida was harshly blamed for this crime”). Interestingly, manucula against this passage in both Grenoble 861 and Douce 196 indicate not only that contemporary readers found this passage particularly significant, but also that the two manuscripts are related (see Plate 3).

What are we to make of the language of this text? The most common term used to describe the French of Italy is hybrid, which is to say that French and Italian forms are mixed, sometimes to the extent

Plate 2: Grenoble, Bibliothèque Municipale, 861, 19r, detail. Note too the instructions to the artist in Italian. (*Roman de Troie*, en prose, Bibliothèque Municipale de Grenoble, cote Ms.263 Rés. Cliché BMG.)



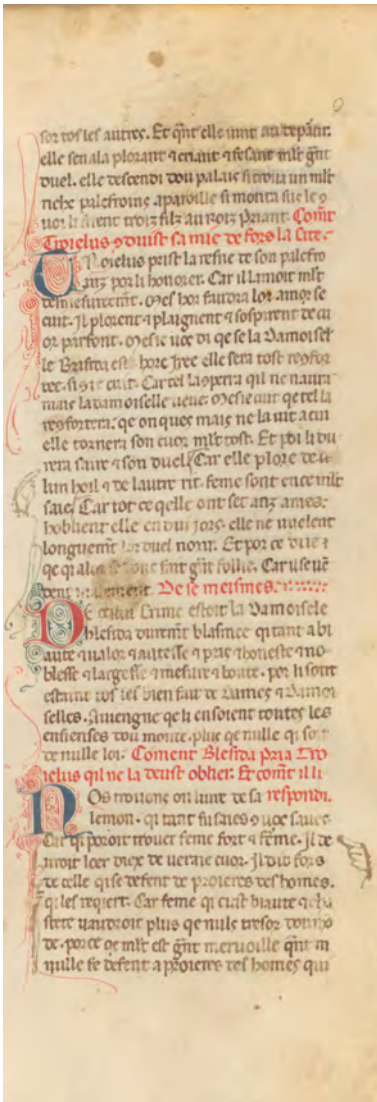


Plate 3: Grenoble, Bibliothèque Municipale, 861, f. 57, detail. Note the manícula.
(*Roman de Troie*, en prose, Bibliothèque Municipale de Grenoble, cote Ms. 263 Rés. Cliché BMG.)

that the form of an individual word is neither clearly French, nor clearly Italian, but mixed. I have elaborated elsewhere a critique of the notion of ‘hybridity’ as applied to texts of this kind, one key point being that it imposes an imperative to analyse the language of a text deemed to be linguistically ‘hybrid’ against a ‘pure,’ non hybrid model (Gaunt, *Marco Polo* 86–94). This is not always clearly stated, but even in a textbook as fine as Frédéric Duval’s outstanding *Le Français médiéval*, the implication is that “Franco-italien” needs to be evaluated against an ‘original’ form of French from France: “L’apparition du franco-italien s’explique peut-être par un compromis, qui consisterait à contenter le public pour la compréhension du texte tout en conservant *le prestige de l’original français*. La *forme hybride* franco-italienne ne résulterait pas de l’incapacité des rédacteurs à s’exprimer en français, mais du désir de concilier la langue étrangère [...] et la compréhension du public” (52, emphasis added: “the appearance of Franco-Italian may perhaps be explained by a compromise which consists of catering to the readership’s need to understand the text, while conserving the *prestige of the original French*. The *hybrid form* of Franco-Italian would not then be the product of the redactors’ inability to express themselves in French, but of their desire to mediate between a foreign language [...] and the public’s capacity to understand”). If writers of Franco-Italian texts are not deemed incompetent here, as has often been the case, their readers are nonetheless implicitly charged with a limited knowledge of French. To what extent is the notion of *le prestige de l’original français* useful in an evaluation of the Grenoble manuscript of the second *mise en prose* of the *Roman de Troie*?

According to Jung, one of the few scholars to have passed any comment on this text, “la langue est truffée d’italianismes” (485: “the language is stuffed full of Italianisms”). Some of these Italianisms are clear and common in Italian manuscripts of French texts:

- Reduction of [ou] > [o] systematically in some words: *trover* < *trouver*; *soveraine* < *souveraine*; *tornera* < *tournera*; *novelle* < *nouvelle*
- *Parledor* (for *parleur*)
- *Ciascune* (for *chacune*)
- *Chouse* (for *chose*)

Furthermore there are ‘errors’ with agreements of gender and number, and of verb morphology that are typical of Italian scribes of French texts, ‘errors’ that indicate imperfect knowledge of French as

written in France, or at the very least a casual attitude towards its written grammatical norms in that a scribe of French origin is unlikely to have written in this way:

- *tos le doulor*
- *elle ne vuelent*
- *fairons*

Finally, syntactic structures sometimes mimic those of Italian: for example “les nos ancessors” on the first folio.

It is instructive, however, to consider these ‘errors’ within the broader framework of the manuscript’s orthographic system, which is idiosyncratic, but nonetheless fairly systematic by medieval standards:

- The frequent, almost systematic use of inorganic ‘h’ in words beginning with a vowel, particularly ‘e’ and ‘o’: *hoc, hoisi* < *issi*, *horent* < *eurent*; *hosast* < *osast*; *hole* < *o le*; *hestoit* < *estoit*; *hosels* < *osels*
- The almost systematic use of ‘i’ as a graphy for intervocalic [dʒ] in some words, most notably *saie*, ‘wise’
- The almost systematic use of ‘s’ as a graphy for intervocalic [ʃ] in some words and metathesis of [ts] and [ʃ] in *cersoit* < *chercher*
- ‘l’ for ‘r’ or ‘lamdacism’: *Blesida*

The initial inorganic ‘h’ could be a Burgundian trait, but this seems unlikely here; it seems more probable we are dealing with a scribal tic, perhaps intended to give the script a more learned, Latinate flavour. The graphy *saie* is common in Franco-Italian manuscripts, but is not to my knowledge used in France, where either *sage* or *saige* prevails. *Saie* would seem therefore to be a specifically Italian form of a French word. I have not found any analogies for the metathesis in *cersoit* or for this form of Cressida’s name.²²

This overall complex of linguistic features and orthographical traits makes it imprudent, in my view, to judge a text such as this against a notional French original either in terms of the text itself or the language in which it is copied. In any case, what would the ‘original’ be here textually or linguistically? Clearly not Benoît de Sainte-Maure’s text, since although it is a source, it has had such a thorough make-over. And then what constitutes ‘correct French’ for the Italian prosifier, a copy of whose work we are reading? I would like to take seriously Alberto Varvaro’s suggestion that linguistic features of the

22. I am grateful to Ian Short for advice on some of these points.

23. See Carpentras, Bibliothèque Inguimbertaine, 1260, 1r (*Histoire*); Paris BNF, f.fr. 1113, f. 5 and f. 100 (*Tresor*), 1386, f.1 (*Histoire*), 9865, f. 2 (*Histoire*), n.a.f. 9603 (second *mise en prose* of the *Troie*); Wien, ÖNB, 2576, 3r (*Histoire*). I am grateful to Keith Busby for his advice on these initials.



Plate 4: Grenoble, Bibliothèque Municipale, 861, 7v. The historiated initial here shows stylistic parallels with portraits of troubadours in Paris BNF, f.fr. 854 and 12473. The figure stands beside a passage clearly evocative of the lyric spring opening. (*Roman de Troie*, en prose, Bibliothèque Municipale de Grenoble, cote Ms. 263 Rés. Cliché BMG.)

kind that philologists often use to *localise* a text or scribe by identifying dialectic traits, or sometimes ‘errors’ characteristic of foreign or non-local scribes, may in fact be *stylistic* choices (532). But I would like to suggest further that if this linguistic veneer of a text is seen as a stylistic choice, it needs also to be looked at *in conjunction* with other stylistic choices, such as those pertaining to narrative voice, prosody, and the representation of authorship I discussed earlier. Furthermore, we can push further this stylistic approach to the medieval text in its manuscript context if we also look at how it is presented visually.

With Grenoble 861, we can locate and date the text precisely through a colophon informing us one Johannes de Stennis copied the manuscript while imprisoned in Padua in 1298. But even without this information, the manuscript has visual traits that localise it and tie it to the late thirteenth century:

- the characteristic display script of the opening initial (1r above)
- the style of the miniatures (e.g. 19r above)
- the decorative medallions (e.g. 19r above)
- the scribe’s hand
- instructions to the artist in Italian (e.g. 19r above)

The first two if these points are particularly telling. Although this style of display script is found in manuscripts of other vernacular texts from the Veneto (e.g. Brunetto Latini’s *Tresor*), the majority of other examples I have been able to locate are Italian manuscripts of the *Histoire*.²³ As for the style of the miniatures, there may well be stylistic analogies here with troubadour *chansonniers* produced in the Veneto (See Plate 4).

So who and what was this new version of the *Roman de Troie* for? At the time it was produced and reproduced Benoît’s text was still in circulation in Italy, but in the late thirteenth century it must have seemed stylistically archaic to an Italian Francophone reading public that seems never to have had a taste for French verse romance, except for the *Troie*, and yet seems to have had a strong appetite for prose romance, particularly the *Tristan en prose* and material derived from or related to it (see Delcornu Branca 49–76). The stylistic modernization effected by the prosifier of the second *mise en prose* goes hand in hand with a visual packaging in Grenoble 861 at least that seems to create a link with other vernacular ‘French’ texts, notably the *Histoire ancienne*, with its central Trojan theme, but also trouba-

dour lyric. This starts to give a sense of a vernacular literary canon in the late thirteenth-century Veneto, to which one should add of course the numerous *chansons de geste* copied in the region at this time. But the Italian reading public who commissioned and used manuscripts of works in French did not require them to be written in ‘correct’ or ‘pure’ French. Thus as with Gaimar’s *Estoire* the French of the second *mise en prose* of the *Roman de Troie* localises it on one level, and yet probably also means that the text is not *translatable* to France, or at least not in this linguistic form, and again as with Gaimar’s *Estoire* the dissemination of this text seems to have been confined to a single region. But crucially, the language of a manuscript like Grenoble 861 has its own distinctive style, which is sustained and clearly has its own aesthetic rather than simply reproducing debased forms of imported ‘French’ literary culture.

Conclusion

The manuscript and text I examined in the last section offer an insight into the literary culture of a specific place and time. Yet, the phenomena I was discussing are redolent of broader trends within Francophone literary culture throughout Europe. Even when specific instances of texts in French do not translate easily, their production and dissemination show how readers could participate in a cosmopolitan, supralocal textual culture by virtue of being able to read French. Furthermore, this textual culture was associated with the formation of supralocal historical narratives that helped shape an emerging ‘European’ identity. Indeed, in some instances and in many regions of Europe, texts in French, such as the *Histoire ancienne*, seem to have been the main vehicle for propagating bodies of knowledge about the past, particularly ancient history. These texts are not, however, the texts usually taught in modern university curricula as ‘French literature,’ nor have they been particularly popular with literary scholars. Our modern concentration on the emergence of ‘fictional’ material (though the category is questionable), such as Arthurian romance, or high aristocratic literary culture, such as lyric, skews our sense of what medieval readers were reading across Europe and also why they were reading in French.

One way of correcting our apprehension of medieval vernacular literary culture would be to revisit the texts of the traditional canon within the broader context of the larger textual culture to which they

belonged. This reorientation of scholarship has already begun, but there is still a long way to go. Ian Short, for example, asks what literary history would look like if we were to read writers like Wace, Marie de France and Benoît de Sainte-Maure primarily in relation to British literary culture, rather than French? If we were to do this, we would see that the main precedent for the literary (or historical?) enterprises of both Wace and Benoît, continental poets writing for the cross-channel Angevin dynasty or their acolytes, was Gaimar, whose work Wace almost certainly knew (“Patrons and Polyglots”). Chrétien de Troyes is usually firmly situated at the court of Marie de Champagne and in the ‘French’ courtly circles she is thought to exemplify, but his final patron was Philip of Flanders and his *Conte du Graal*, which was in the Middle Ages by some margin his most successful romance even though incomplete, emerged from exactly the same cultural milieu as the *Histoire ancienne*.²⁴ Finally, Alison Cornish reminds us that Jean de Meun spent formative years at the University of Bologna and was not just a product of the university in Paris (88–89). Rather than a history of French literature in the Middle Ages being one of French courtly culture being exported to the rest of Europe from a central point, the literature of France starts to look like a *bricolage* of influences from elsewhere. Perhaps this is precisely what makes French literature so compelling, important, and ultimately influential. But the key point to remember too is that what makes this possible is that French itself is *nos lenge*, ‘our language,’ a supralocal language, not a national or proto-national one.

24. Indeed, one hypothesis about the authorship of the *Histoire* is that it is the work of Wauchier de Desnain (see Szkilnik), otherwise known as the author of the second continuation of the *Conte du Graal*.

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Contesting Conceptual Boundaries

Byzantine Literature and Its History

Abstract

The paper presents the problems of writing a history of Byzantine literature in the context of postmodern anxieties about canonization, authority and narrative histories of literature. An essential difficulty for such a project is the fact that Byzantine literature has been viewed as a continuation of or appendix to Ancient Greek literature, while, on the other, it has been divided into “learned” and “vernacular”, the latter category having been defined as Modern Greek since the middle of the nineteenth century. The paper offers two sets of criteria for establishing new concepts of periodization and taxonomy. A series of examples are indicatively adduced in order to explain the scientific and ideological impasse in which Byzantine Studies have found themselves at the end of the previous century, while delineating a proposal for a different approach to content and structure of a wider synthesis. Writing a ‘new’ history of Byzantine literature is an experiment in proposing a radical paradigm shift by means of which this particular literary production in Medieval Greek can be studied within the broader context of Medieval European literatures as an integrated entity rather than as a separate and peripheral phase in the histories of Ancient or Modern Greek literature.¹

1. The present paper developed out of a lecture given at the workshop “Cosmopolitan languages and their literatures”, organized in February 2014 at the University of Ghent. I am grateful to all participants for our inspiring conversations, but especially to our host Wim Verbaal and his enthusiasm. My particular thanks go to the Henri Pirenne Institute for Medieval Studies and the Research Committee of the University of Cyprus for covering my travel expenses. The paper also profited from the workshop organized by the Centre for Medieval Literature (Odense and York) at the

Exasperated by the growing production of literary histories in Germany during the first half of the nineteenth century, Arthur Schopenhauer solemnly declared in 1851:

Corresponding to the course of human progress just outlined, literary history is, as to its greatest part, the catalogue of a cabinet of deformed embryos. The spirit, in which these are preserved for the longest time, is pig leather. However, we do not need to look there for the few, well-formed offsprings: they have remained alive, and we meet them all over the world, where they go about as immortals in their eternally fresh youth. Only these constitute what in the previous section has been characterized as true literature,

Fondation des Treilles (Provence) in April 2014, as well as from a series of fruitful conversations on matters historical with Polymnia Katsoni in Thessaloniki. Parts of sections 2 and 4 are based on my forthcoming articles “Late Antique or Early Byzantine?” and “Karl Krumbacher.”

whose poorly peopled history we, from our very youth, learn from the mouth of every educated man and not from compendia. (Schopenhauer 458; Ch. XXIV, § 297)

Schopenhauer’s aestheticist preference for a high literary canon, quite prevalent among German philologists of his time, was also the attitude with which Byzantine literature was condemned. Our post-modern age has come to criticize and to reject – partially, at least – such attitudes by promoting decentralized and antihierarchical approaches to literary history (Jauß, “Literaturgeschichte;” Wellek; Strelka). Byzantine philology, however, has not as yet profited from this change, at least in terms of participating in the current debates by contributing its own theoretical proposals within the broader frame of medieval European literatures. The twofold aim of this paper is to highlight the historical and scientific reasons for this absence and to propose a way for more interactive participation in medievalist discussions by outlining the concept of a narrative history of Byzantine literature. However, a point of clarification is necessary. The paper does not aspire to cover all aspects of textual production in Byzantium, much less does it aspire to offer full coverage of the field’s recent research. It attempts to highlight some of the main issues as to why, according to my view, Byzantine Studies have not as yet produced a narrative history of Byzantine literature. It should be more than obvious that much will be omitted and much only hinted at. What is presented here summarily will be discussed more broadly in a book I am currently preparing.

1 On Literary History and Its Discontents

Ancient and medieval literate cultures produced in various contexts and for various needs works that grouped together ‘authors’ or ‘texts’ on the basis of some unifying principle. This could be a similarity of form and purpose (*e.g.* Ancient Chinese cultic poetry), a similarity of content (*e.g.* grammars of Classical Arabic), or an ideological affinity (*e.g.* religious beliefs). It could even be the particular choices of a specific person (*e.g.* the *catalogue raisonné* of a private library). Such works were either composed in some narrative form or were given a more schematic, catalogue-like shape. Their internal organization was usually based on chronological or formal criteria, sometimes combined with each other. In either case – narrative or cata-

logue – the overall structure remained paratactic, since a series of smaller units was strung together creating a loosely coherent collection.

The narrative type of such works usually took the form of a collection of independent biographical sections. In the narrative category we find chronologically arranged portrait galleries of authors. Two examples from the Greco-Roman world of the late fourth century are Eunapios' *Lives of Philosophers and Sophists* (Penella 32–38) and Jerome's *Distinguished Men* (Rebenich 97–100). Both works are organized chronologically, the former as a continuous narrative presenting a 'succession' of lives, the latter in clearly marked and numbered brief chapters. Another form is the alphabetically organized biographical dictionary. One might mention the monumental *Obituaries of Distinguished Men* by Ibn Khallikan (d. 1282), written over a period of almost twenty years (1256–74) in Cairo (Fück). Contrastingly, the catalogue-like category usually displays a thematic rather than a chronological arrangement, while the entries are often accompanied by brief comments on various literary matters. Three examples of this type are Ibn al-Nadim's vast *Inventory* from tenth-century Baghdad (Dodge), Michael Psellos' brief and highly autographical essay *On the Style of Certain Books* from the middle of the eleventh century (Wilson 172–74), or even Liu Hsieh's *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, an interpretive treatise on older commentaries on the way to read poetry correctly, written in sixth-century China (Owen 183–298).

Works with such structural arrangements, when viewed from a contemporary point of view, do not display any apparent overarching principle that would shape the various separate units into a coherent whole. In other words, such works do not (and could not) adopt a historical perspective as to the way the textual material at hand was 'represented' and 'explained.' Here lies a major difference between our approach and the approach of past cultures to the study of authors and texts. What we understand today as 'history of literature' is a concept that took shape during the period of the Enlightenment and was fully developed by the middle of the nineteenth century within the political and cultural context of Romanticism and Nationalism. There were two major aims in creating such a historically defined and philosophically bolstered 'master narrative' that reached back to a remote past (Lyotard; Anderson 24–27; Jarausch and Sabrow): (i) to define a particular literature as expressing the 'immanent spirit' and 'natural characteristics' of a specific nation and

of its national language; (ii) to establish a scientific (*qua* objective) hermeneutic method by means of which this literature could be studied (Müller; Compagnon 19–213; Béhar and Fayolle). In other words, the model of a national literature developed parallel to and in conjunction with the formation of the model of a nation state, its history and its national language.

Therefore, in the sense of a nation's historical continuity and its development towards the nineteenth century as the 'age of progress,' the beginnings of a specific nation were sought in the Middle Ages, where the oldest written evidence was to be found supposedly proving the existence of a national language and a national literature. The fashioning of such master narratives was attuned to the then prevailing 'biological' concepts about the birth, growth and decay of a state or of a literature as if it were a living organism (Demandt, "Biologische Dekadenztheorien"). As a result, the concept of historical development also played an important role in the formation of a biogistic master narrative for Ancient Greek literature among German thinkers and philologists during the formative years between the lecture courses of Friedrich August Wolf (1759–1824) on Greek poetry and the *Overview of Greek Literature* by Gottfried Bernhardt (1800–75), the very people against whom Schopenhauer was to protest.

The superimposition of this model on cultures removed in time and space from nineteenth-century Europe and the political and artistic ideologies prominent at the time proved simultaneously felicitous and infelicitous: felicitous, because scholars embarking on such historicist projects collected, classified, studied and presented textual material that was often unknown and difficult to access (Lewis 99–118); infelicitous, because these monuments of labor and erudition gave to the vast material collected a fixed shape and a uniform meaning that the individual texts did not have within their proper historical and geographical contexts (Said 201–25). In this way, static images of great taxonomic power came to define the study and teaching, for example, of Oriental literatures in the academic institutions of the Western world (Macfie). One such normative image was the strict separation between languages or linguistic idioms within a multilingual and geographically extended cultural environment. This separation reflected the supposed dichotomy between Latin and the *linguae vulgares* as perceived by nineteenth-century medievalists. It was superimposed, for example, on Japanese and Chinese as written by Japanese authors in Early Japan until the late eleventh century (Aston; Florenz; Keene 17–22). Another form of this separation was

the exclusion of any foreign language in the study of a literature that was viewed as national and self-contained. This attitude reflected the supposed superiority of Old French as a ‘culturally exporting’ literature over Middle High German as a ‘culturally importing’ literature. This separation was then superimposed, for example, on Arabic literature in relation to Persian or Ottoman (Brockelmann; Heinrichs). These forms of separation were of crucial importance in the modern construction of ‘national’ literatures during the Middle Ages, because they either ascertained the empowering primacy of a culturally exporting language (for example, Anglo-Norman texts were ‘absorbed’ into French medieval literature, leaving to medieval English literature only texts in Middle English), or promoted the rise to competitive superiority of a culturally importing language (Middle High German rivaling Old French).

All of the above explains why Byzantine literature had fared so badly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Because Byzantine texts had been written in Greek, they were, according to the biologicistic model, placed in the period of the final decadence of Greek literature – one only needs to read how Erwin Rohde (554–67) described the ‘decadence’ of the Greek novel from late Hellenistic to Byzantine times. Given that Byzantine literature was seen as decadent, its linguistic idiom was delegated to the position of a culturally importing language in respect to Ancient Greek, a peculiar case of ‘intralinguistic importation.’ Of course, this Ancient Greek literature was for the most part a school canon formed in the second and first century BC (Pfeiffer). Even though this school canon was not ‘naturally’ related to any modern European nation, it was also invested with national characteristics since the eighteenth century and was in the nineteenth century given a national literary history. But Byzantine literature had failed to be related to a specific modern European nation and was, consequently, seen as a nationless and mummified textual production, not dissimilar to Medieval Latin literature. To Ancient Greek ‘national’ literature, ‘nationless’ Byzantine literature was added as an appendix because it preserved much information about the ancient world and because many Byzantine texts appeared to be imitating ‘Classical’ or ‘Hellenistic’ works as to style or genre (Agapitos, *Narrative Structure* 3–19).

Even if literary history as a scientific enterprise had been subjected to various kinds of critique since the turn of the twentieth century (Perkins 4–8), histories of literature remained an established practice well after the Second World War. However, the linguistic turn of

the 1960s and 1970s brought with it a concerted attempt by literary critics, linguists and anthropologists to cancel the difference between ‘text and context’ by absorbing the context as imaginary into the text as material. Historians and philologists found themselves defending certain essential methods of their fields from the deconstructivist and postmodernist attack, while the battlefield was greatly expanded in the 1980s through the participation of feminist and post-colonial studies (Spiegel 59–72; Ankersmit 29–74). Literary history was also attacked as being a prime example of a nationalist-colonialist master narrative that established during the nineteenth century a specific Eurocentric canon of literary masterpieces in a specific language to the exclusion of anything else (Hutcheon), while it also failed to do justice to medieval European literatures (Gumbrecht). Finally, literary history was attacked either as aestheticist and fictive in its ‘narrative’ form or as unstructured and heterogeneous in its ‘encyclopedic’ form (Perkins 29–60).

2 A History of Byzantine Literature?

If, then, literary history has to a substantial extent been brought into question, the history of Byzantine literature appears even more questionable in the early twenty-first century (Odorico and Agapitos). In order to understand this problem, we will have to move briefly back in time and look at Karl Krumbacher (1856–1909), the ‘founding father’ of Byzantine Studies. After an invitation by Wilhelm von Christ (1831–1906), Krumbacher published his *Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur* (= *GBL*) in 1891, as part of Iwan von Müller’s (1830–1917) immense *Handbuch der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft*. The publication of the thirty-five-year-old philologist created a sensation. Contrary to the original plan, the *GBL* was a separate volume of 500 pages and not an overview integrated as an appendix to Christ’s *Geschichte der griechischen Litteratur* of 1889. Furthermore, the volume opened with a preface and an introduction wherein Krumbacher (*GBL*¹ v–vii and 1–13) argued that Byzantine literature had to be treated as an entity distinct from Ancient Greek literature, but connected to Modern Greek literature. As to the main body of the *GBL*, two large parts were devoted to *Litteratur in der Kunstsprache* (prose and poetry), what in English is conventionally called ‘learned’ literature. However, the volume included – for the first time in the history of classical philology – a final part devoted to *Litteratur in der Vul-*

gärsprache, what is respectively termed ‘vernacular’ literature. Thus was Byzantine Philology born.

Krumbacher based his argument on three major premises: (i) Byzantine literature was the most important intellectual expression of the Greek nation during the Middle Ages; (ii) there was a clear opposition between the *Kunstsprache* and the *Vulgärsprache*, the former being elitist, the latter being popular; (iii) on account of its ‘ugliness’ this literature had to be studied with objective historical methods and not interpreted with subjective aestheticist notions. By combining late Romantic ideology, liberal reformism and scientific positivism, Krumbacher furnished the newly created discipline with a powerful hermeneutic model, which I will call the ‘Krumbacher paradigm,’ using the definition furnished by Thomas Kuhn (1992–96) in his essay on *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Kuhn 10–11). To a substantial extent and in various ways scholars studying Byzantine literature operate even today under this paradigm. For example, reading through the major Byzantinist journals and some less prominent periodicals we find that the majority of papers concerned with literary analysis of Byzantine texts completely avoid any application of literary and cultural theory. Most papers are governed by a positivist and empiricist perspective, while the analysis is highly technical, fully internalized and closed to any dialogue with other medieval literatures.

In the *GBL*, Krumbacher was forced to follow the overall concept of the Munich classics compendium, which was based on three essential assumptions: (i) Antiquity ended around AD 500, more specifically in 476 in the West and 529 in the East; (ii) there existed a ‘primordial’ division of literature into poetry and prose – a distortion of Aristotle’s pronouncement on poetry and history in the *Poetics* (9; 1451b.5–7), and the adoption of Hellenistic genre classification; (iii) the volumes of the *Handbuch* had to offer concise and full information on everything. As a result, the *GBL* does not have a narrative structure but only a basic chronological frame. The taxonomic order imposed by the poetry-prose division resulted in fragmenting authors and regrouping them according to genre. Byzantine literature started in 527 with the accession of Justinian and ended in 1453 with the Fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks. This structure was also superimposed onto vernacular literature, but the chronological boundaries were differently placed. Vernacular literature begun in the twelfth century because the first longer texts in the *Vulgärsprache* appeared then, and it ended in the seventeenth century with the in-

clusion of texts written on Venetian-dominated Crete in various forms of the local dialect.

Krumbacher addressed these restrictions in the introduction to the *GBL*. There he argued that the ‘true spirit’ of Byzantine culture took shape after the appearance of Islam, and he proposed AD 640 as the upper boundary. Furthermore, he pointed to the strong relation between prose and poetry through rhetoric, suggesting that hymnography was the true poetry of the Byzantines. He also argued that vernacular literature was the true root of Modern Greek literature and had to be studied up to the time of the Late Renaissance. In the second edition of the *GBL*, which was published in 1897 as a volume of 930 pages, a series of changes took place. A whole part on Byzantine religious literature and another one on Byzantine history were added, written by Albert Ehrhard (1862–1940) and Heinrich Gelzer (1847–1906) respectively. In his introduction, Krumbacher changed his opinion about the upper boundary of Byzantine literature and argued for 324, when Constantine assumed sole rulership of the empire. It is quite instructive to realize that Krumbacher’s two different opinions about the beginning of Byzantine literature or his doubts about the poetry-prose division did not have any practical impact on Byzantine Studies given that the ‘technical’ boundary of 500 and the separate treatment of prose and poetry have retained their force until today.

No comprehensive history of Byzantine literature has been written since Krumbacher’s *magnum opus*. The substitution of the *GBL* within the Munich *Handbuch* resulted in further fragmentation of the textual material, since the ‘new Krumbacher’ was physically divided into three separate volumes: religious literature, learned secular literature and vernacular literature (Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur*; Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur*; Beck, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Volksliteratur*). Furthermore, most shorter overviews published until the 1980s retained and sometimes even deepened the boundaries and inner divisions of the *GBL*, without actually redefining Krumbacher’s vision or substituting a new one (e.g. Dölger; Browning and Jeffreys; Hunger, “Byzantinische Literatur”). At the same time, the developments in Classical and in Modern Greek Studies since the Second World War introduced radical changes in matters of periodization and hermeneutical methods. For example, we have witnessed the rise of Late Antiquity as a new period in history and a new field of study that is intrinsically related to Early Christian Studies, another new field that has begun to substi-

tute the traditional field of Patristics. To a substantial extent, both fields have risen out of Classical Studies in the areas of history, archeology, religion and philology, practically to the exclusion of Medieval and Byzantine Studies. The recent appearance of two weighty volumes on these two fields in a new handbook series launched by Oxford University Press (Harvey and Hunter; Johnson) delineates in an almost symbolic manner the expansion of a spatiotemporal and mental territory that reaches from Ireland to China and from 300 to 700. What Krumbacher had termed “Early Byzantine literature” (*GBL*² 20) has for all practical purposes been incorporated into Late Antique and Early Christian Studies, a process that is distancing this textual production more and more from the research interests of Byzantinists. At the same time, Modern Greek Studies moved the beginning of Modern Greek literature upwards to 1100 in order to include the very first samples of vernacular texts, such as the epic-like verse narrative of *Digenis Akritis* (Jeffreys) or the burlesque *Poems of Poor Prodromos* (Eideneier). Thus, Krumbacher’s *vulgärsprachliche Litteratur* was ‘re-nationalized’ by having been incorporated into the histories of Modern Greek literature (e.g. Vitti; Politis). This process has also distanced younger Byzantinists from studying vernacular literature written before the fifteenth century.

As a result, scholars and students wishing to inform themselves about Byzantine literature are confronted with two basic versions of its external boundaries: (i) the 500–1453 version with vernacular literature included (Aerts; Kambylis; Rosenqvist), or (ii) the 700–1453 version with vernacular literature excluded (James; Stephenson). The ambivalent attitude of Byzantinists can be clearly seen in the treatment of literature in the recent *Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies* (Jeffreys and Cormack and Haldon), where the relevant chapters are organized according to the time-honored generic divisions of the Munich *Handbuch*. Though the authors of these chapters include in their brief overviews texts produced between 300 and 600, these are consistently labelled as ‘late antique.’ Vernacular literature, except for a brief mention in the poetry chapter, does not have a chapter of its own, which means that all kinds of prose texts and religious poetry written in the vernacular have been excluded. The radical solution for a ‘historically adequate’ presentation of Byzantine literature, freed from the pressures of Late Antiquity and Modern Hellenism, was presented by the eminent Russian historian Alexander Kazhdan (1922–97) in a project titled *A History of Byzantine Literature* (= *HBL*) that was conceived as a kind of companion to his

Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium. Unfortunately, Kazhdan's sudden death left his *History* unfinished. Only two of the three planned volumes appeared posthumously (Kazhdan, *HBL 650–850* and *HBL 850–1000*), though his concept becomes apparent from what was published: Byzantine literature was to cover the period from 650 to 1204, while vernacular literature, with the exception of *Digenis Akritis*, was to be excluded.

This brief presentation has made clear that the writing of a history of Byzantine literature has become doubly questionable, because, on the one hand, literary history as such has suffered a serious demotion of its scientific status, and, on the other, Byzantine Philology has not so far laid the foundations for any kind of synthetic and interpretive narrative history of Byzantine literature. As to the latter issue, the reason, in my opinion, is that Byzantinists are unwilling to face explicitly the abandonment of the Krumbacher paradigm. It is here again that Kuhn's essay offers me the necessary tool to understand what I see. Kuhn (52–91) astutely describes the symptoms of a paradigm crisis. When scientists conducting their research within the framework of a specific paradigm recognize that the physical evidence does not conform to the interpretive model, 'normal science' as an esoteric and regularized 'puzzle-solving' activity is disrupted.

In my opinion, this characterizes the state of affairs in Byzantine Philology during the past thirty years. Scholars from various areas – e.g. paleography and codicology, textual criticism, linguistics, metrics, literary criticism – have been recognizing that the 'physical evidence' they happen to study does not conform to the paradigm they are working with. To give but a few examples of such critical studies with innovative proposals:

- i. The system of accentuation and punctuation in Byzantine manuscripts has proven to be far more consistent and logical than was previously assumed, even though it is quite different from the normalizing practices of classical philology (Noret; Reinsch).
- ii. The study of Byzantine metrical practice has also changed, taking into consideration the material reality of the manuscripts rather than abstract norms of versification deriving from Ancient or Modern Greek metrics (Agapitos, "Byzantine Literature;" Lauxtermann, "Velocity;" Lauxtermann, *The Spring of Rhythm*).
- iii. Recent studies of the Greek language in medieval times have begun to yield surprising insights into the linguistic

realities of both vernacular and learned texts (Joseph; Pappas; Hinterberger, “How Should We;” Holton and Manolessou).

- iv. Editorial practice has begun to take all these phenomena into consideration, gradually moving away from the traditional, regularizing approach to the editing of Ancient Greek texts (Giannouli and Schiffer).
- v. The introduction of literary theory to the study of genre has shown that Byzantine texts are far removed from imitation as perceived in nineteenth-century terms, which means that genres in Byzantium were not the homogeneous products of mechanical application of Roman Imperial school rhetoric (as seen, for example, by Sideras, 45–68). Critical approaches to this stance have been published by Mullett, “Madness;” Hinterberger, *Autobiographische Traditionen*; Agapitos, “Ancient Models;” Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry*; Constantinou, “Generic Hybrids.”

What previously, therefore, appeared as incoherent, inept, wrong or ugly, has come to be viewed in quite different terms, while a common denominator of this intense scholarly activity is provided by the critique directed against the practice of ‘normal science’ (Maltese; Agapitos, “Der Roman der Komnenenzeit” and “Genre, Structure and Poetics;” Constantinou, “Subgenre and Gender;” Hinterberger, “Die Sprache;” Manolessou; Mullett, “No Drama”). However, the scientific paradigm behind this practice has not been criticized, while resistance from different perspectives to these innovations is being expressed (e.g. Mazzucchi; Bydén; Kaldellis, *Mothers and Sons* 36–37). In my opinion, Byzantine Philology has reached the critical point where a ‘paradigm shift’ needs to be introduced in order to escape the impasses into which the history of the field has led its practitioners. If these impasses are not removed, the study of Byzantine literature will become even more introverted than it used to be, and will not be able to develop a scientific discourse commensurate to and participating in the current developments of the relevant neighboring fields.

3 Problems of Method

We need then to address a series of methodological problems that are related to the conceptual boundaries discussed in the previous section. Let us imagine ourselves at the banks of the river of time, at a point where the river flows into a lake whose shores are not clearly visible. Somewhere here lie the shifting beginnings of Byzantine literature. As has been often stated, Late Antiquity rose out of the ‘decadence’ of the Later Roman Empire in order to satisfy specific demands stemming from pathbreaking reevaluations in Roman archaeology and history and Latin literature in the western territories of the empire (Elsner; Mazza; Liebeschuetz; Athanassiadi). The projection of these issues onto the eastern part – and therefore onto Greek literature – has superimposed a specific historical and socio-cultural framework on to another, rather different environment. However, whereas the ‘end’ of the Roman empire in 476 (Momigliano; Demandt, *Der Fall Roms* 220–35; Bowersock) created an apparent chronological fixture between Roman Antiquity and the Western Middle Ages, no such fixture can be construed for the Greco-Roman East. This is one of the reasons why the beginning of Byzantine literature, together with that of the Byzantine empire, is shifting between ‘324’ (sole rulership of Constantine I) and ‘717’ (accession of Leo III), as Late Antiquity is continuously expanding (Giardina; Cameron; Lo Cascio). This expansion has even claimed the first hundred years of Islam as part of its chronotope, to the extent that we now talk about Islamic Late Antiquity, reaching down to the beginning of the Abbasid Caliphate in 750 and the move to Baghdad (Crone and Cook; Fowden, *From Empire* 138–168; Hoyland).

Thus, a powerful chronological boundary, symbolizing the demise of Antiquity around 700, has been established, though it is now receiving some critique (Fowden, *Before and After Muhammad* 18–48). In contrast to the old 476 (*qua* 500) ‘turning point’, the new boundary encompasses the whole of the sixth and even the seventh century (AD 600 in Cameron and Ward-Perkins and Whitby; AD 700 in Stephenson). This extended boundary has also had another effect. Many scholars on both sides of the boundary between Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages have begun to view the ‘Greek’ Empire and the ‘Arab’ Caliphate in the eighth century as new ‘medieval’ states (Kazhdan and Cutler; Kazhdan, *HBL* 650–850 7–16; Kennedy), comparable to the ‘Frankish’ Kingdom of the early Carolingians

in the West. This poses another problem of method because neither the ‘Greek’ Empire nor the ‘Arab’ Caliphate can be viewed as ‘medieval’ in the conventional meaning of the term, much less can they be viewed as ‘medieval nation’ states, as has been recently suggested for the Byzantine Empire (Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium* 42–119).

The gradual formation of Late Antique and Early Christian Studies during the twentieth century also added a non-chronological boundary to textual production in Greek because it deepened the distinction between secular and religious literatures. Here secular is understood either as ‘pagan’ (e.g. the historian Zosimos in the early fifth century) or as ‘classicizing’ and possibly ‘cryptopagan’ (e.g. the historian Prokopios in the sixth century), while religious is unanimously understood as Christian. Secular literature has been overwhelmingly studied by classicists and historians of philosophy, while religious literature has been studied by theologians and historians of religion, but also by classicists. The effect of this particular boundary was that the texts of the two separated domains were not read together or, if they were, the main purpose was to detect literary influences and debts, for example, the Ancient Greek generic antecedents to Athanasios’ *Life of Antony* from the middle of the fourth century or the knowledge and use of the classics by apparently classicizing Christian authors such as Gregory of Nyssa in the second half of the fourth century. I shall mention only one case where this boundary created problems for the study of the texts involved and was recently shown to be simply wrong.

Nonnos of Panopolis (second quarter of the fifth century) composed the vast *Dionysiaka* in 48 books of dactylic hexameter and epic diction, producing the longest surviving ‘epic’ narrative in Greek literature: the number of books programmatically points to the respective books of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* combined. But Nonnos also composed a *Paraphrasis of the Gospel According to John* in 21 books of dactylic hexameter and epic diction: here the number of books corresponds to the Gospel’s *kephálaia* (“headings”) according to the division that had developed by the late fourth century. The conventional biographical reading was that Nonnos started out as a pagan poet celebrating in grand style the deeds of Dionysus and then, in his older years, converted to Christianity and produced the feeble *Paraphrasis*. However, this is a pattern that finds no support in the two texts (Livrea). Moreover, a focused metrical analysis of the word *mártys* (“witness”) has demonstrated that the *Paraphrasis* was the earlier of the two works (Vian). The safe conversion theory collapsed and new

comparative approaches to the generic and poetological substance of the two ‘epic’ works began to appear (Agosti 367 and 380–82).

As we leave the lake of Late Antiquity and move downwards along the river of time, we discover that the inner periodization of Byzantine literature is exclusively argued on the basis of major historical events which, upon closer examination, prove to be military catastrophes. Most prominent among such disasters are: (i) the defeat of the Byzantine army by the Arabs at the River Yarmuk in 636 and the subsequent loss of Syria, Palestine and Egypt by 650; (ii) the defeat of the Byzantine army by the Seljuq Turks and the capture of Emperor Romanos IV at the battle of Mantzikert in 1071; (iii) the Fall of Constantinople to the Crusaders and the Venetians in 1204. Obviously, such catastrophic events were recorded in histories, chronicles and other texts, and they were also variously commented upon by contemporary or near-contemporary witnesses. Yet such disasters had no immediate impact on textual production to the degree that from a literary point of view they could be plausibly considered as boundaries marking a “structural break” as socioeconomic history has defined them (Giardina). Let me give as an example the often discussed and very popular boundary of AD 650.

The main arguments developed for this turning point are purely historical, such as the breakdown of the ancient cities, the militarization of the state, the loss of substantial territory, the settlement of the Slavs and the Bulgars, and the incursions of the Arabs. Recent research, however, tends to evaluate the old and new evidence, especially the archeological evidence, under a different light (Louth). The only argument made about 650 that relates to textual production is the breakdown of the late antique school system and the interruption in the writing of secular (i.e. classicizing) literature. As to this last argument, it should be made clear that the amount of classicizing literature produced between 600 and 650 is very small, in effect restricted to five authors (George Pisides, John of Antioch, Paul of Aegina, Stephen of Alexandria, Theophylaktos Simokattes), whereas the amount of religious literature (classicizing or not) between 600 and 750 is very large and immensely varied (Chrysos). Thus, it is the non-chronological distinction between secular and religious literature that has governed the approach of scholars in evaluating the evidence and setting the boundary, as it had guided Krumbacher in the *GBL*¹. However, the quantitative evidence of textual production in the first hundred years (650–750) of the so-called ‘Byzantine Dark Ages’ (650–850) shows that neither did school education

break down, nor did texts stop being written. In fact, neither did the major topics and perspectives of religious textual production change, because they are all fully present before AD 600, though, obviously, new ones were added.

The simplistic approach of equating structural breaks with military disasters provides an easy solution of fitting texts into a given historical frame organized by events, without any theoretical consideration of the textual evidence as such. Furthermore, it is because of the conventional nineteenth-century division of the Middle Ages into ‘early–high–late’ that Byzantine history was also given the respective labels of ‘early–middle–late.’ But if we pause for a moment, we will realize that these labels clearly project a biologicistic progression of the type ‘birth–maturity–death,’ since ‘early’ implies a nascent dynamism, ‘high/middle’ a powerful culmination, and ‘late’ a protracted decline. Within this context, it is worthwhile contemplating the immense conceptual contradictions latent in the term ‘Late Antiquity.’

But let us now move even further down the river of time in order to find the end of Byzantine literature. Here, as if it were a steep waterfall, the chronological boundary is unanimously fixed to 29 May 1453, when Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks. No single handbook or brief overview of Byzantine literature has expressed any theoretical or plainly practical concern about this date. For example, did Byzantine literature continue to be produced after 1453 with no ‘empire’ to accompany it, as was the case with Latin literature after 476 in the West? Or, even more provocatively, did Byzantine literature possibly cease to be produced *before* the capture of the diminished empire’s depopulated capital? That such questions have not been asked makes us understand how powerful is the superstructure imposed by *l’histoire événementielle*. Irrespective of 1453, however, vernacular texts of the twelfth to the fifteenth century, as I have already pointed out in section 2, have in the minds of most scholars migrated to Modern Greek literature, leaving Byzantine literature only with its learned texts. Thus, we are faced with another potent non-chronological boundary, that is, the distinction between ‘learned’ and ‘vernacular’ language and literature (Hinterberger, “Δημιώδης και λόγια λογοτεχνία”). Let me present only one example that shows how problematic this distinction is.

The Amorous Story of Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe is a verse romance surviving in a single manuscript of the early sixteenth century (Cupane 58–213; Betts 37–90). The romance is written like a folk-

tale, with a king and three sons, an abducted princess, enchanted castles, dragons, witches, poisoned apples and other fairy-tale accoutrements. It has been mostly viewed as a prime example of early Modern Greek vernacular (*qua* popular) literature. However, Manuel Philes, a learned poet of the early fourteenth century, addressed a long poem to the prince Andronikos Palaiologos, author of a philosophical moral compendium (Knös). Philes praises the prince for the composition of an “erotic book” (ἔρωτικὸν βιβλίον) and then offers an allegorical reading of this work, whose plot is quite similar to the *Kallimachos*. As to the text of the surviving romance, it has been shown that its language is far more mixed in terms of learned and vernacular usage than was previously thought (Apostolopoulos), because it had been heavily normalized by its first editor (Agapitos, “Byzantine Literature” 254–59). Moreover, it has been shown (Agapitos, “The Erotic Bath”) that the spicy love scenes of the romance are based on erotic epigrams from the *Greek Anthology* in the edition prepared by the scholar and monk Maximos Planoudes. His edition is transmitted in the autograph Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Marc. gr. 481 of 1299–1301 (Turyn 91–96 and pls. 70–74), the very manuscript that preserves the fullest text of Nonnos’ *Paraphrasis of the Gospel According to John*. In other words, the supposedly popular folktale narrative is, in fact, a highly learned text, written around 1320–40 at the imperial court (Agapitos, “Χρονολογικὴ ἀκολουθία” 122–28). Just as the ‘Christian conversion typology’ failed to explain the complex works of Nonnos in the fifth century, so does the ‘vernacular Modern Greek typology’ fail to explain the complex composition and primary reception of *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe* in the fourteenth century.

We have seen so far that the boundaries of Byzantine literature have been defined either by historical events, such as accessions of important rulers and military disasters, or by non-chronological divisions based on ‘content’ (secular vs. religious) and ‘language’ (learned vs. vernacular). As a result, we come to note two trends in Byzantine Studies. On the one hand, Byzantine literature is gradually being pushed into the boundaries of its conventional ‘middle’ period (AD 650–1200). On the other hand, Byzantine literature was declared ‘dead’ in the Enlightenment, was then proclaimed ‘national’ in the late nineteenth century, and is currently viewed as ‘dead *qua* learned’ and ‘national *qua* vernacular.’ It is no wonder, then, that no Byzantinist or team of Byzantinists has embarked on a history of Byzantine literature, given that the obstacles set by the prevailing bound-

aries and the latent dominance of the Krumbacher paradigm make such a project seem a daunting, if not impossible enterprise.

4 Representation and Explanation

Having raised in sections 2–3 various points of criticism concerning older and more recent approaches to the history of Byzantine literature, I would like to pick up some thoughts from section 1 on the discontents of literary history. David Perkins (121–73) described at length what in his view constitutes the impossibility of such a project in its various forms, especially in its double aim of representation and explanation. At the same time, he concedes that such a project is a necessary evil, though he hides this concession behind an ambivalent critique of Nietzsche (Perkins 175–86). However, what becomes clear from a careful study of Perkins' essay is that much of his critique does not apply to premodern cultures and their textual productions. By using the German paradigm of the history of Ancient Greek poetry as his premodern case study, Perkins has fallen into the trap that the fate of books in a manuscript culture has laid for modern critics. Ironically enough, it is Byzantine teachers and readers who, to a certain extent, have laid this trap through the transmission of the school canon of Ancient Greek literature as it had been more or less stabilized in Roman Imperial times. In other words, students of Byzantine literature and its history are not bound by the postmodernist anxieties of critics like Perkins because, to use a paradox, the premodernity of Byzantine literature is essentially postmodern. In my opinion, this is one of the key concepts for approaching medieval European literatures in general, namely, to recognize the pronounced consciousness of metalinguistic and metaliterary discourses cultivated by those involved in medieval textual production.

Consequently, Byzantine Philology needs to substitute its old scientific paradigm with a new one, but it also needs to translate Krumbacher's broad vision of modernist reform into our own times. Obviously, the issue is not to exclude any discipline (such as Classical, Late Antique, Early Christian or Modern Greek Studies) from studying parts of a vast number of extremely varied texts written in equally varied forms of Greek, and spanning more than a thousand years. The issue is to propose a flexible but still coherent paradigm for the study of Byzantine literature. It must be a paradigm that will

take into consideration the texts as historical entities in order to set up a workable structure for periodization, rather than choose for this purpose any arbitrary historical events. In other words, we should allow the texts to offer us relevant criteria for such a structure that could then be profitably compared to historical structures determining rhythms of change, continuities and discontinuities on a regional or transregional level. For we should not forget that history is not the neatly synchronized succession of clearly defined units but the continuous co-existence of non-synchronisms, as the eminent Polish economic historian Witold Kula (1916–88) astutely described the notion of historical change in his essay *Reflections on History* (Kula 63–78).

Byzantine Philology urgently needs a narrative literary history in order to represent and to explain textual production in Byzantium, because so far no such narrative history has ever been written. Even though representation and explanation have been criticized in their application to literary history (Perkins 29–52), they are indispensable tools of any analytical method that aims at plausibility and validity (Ankersmit 75–103). However, we could recast these two modern concepts as Byzantine theological categories of analysis. *Apeikonizein* (ἀπεικονίζειν) was used to signify the process of pictorial depiction of divine and holy images (Clement of Alexandria, Eusebios of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa), while *exegein* (ἐξηγεῖν) signified the process of verbal exposition of divine and sacred meanings (Eusebios of Caesarea, Epiphanius of Salamis, the *Suda* lexicon). Thus, *apeikonizein* indicates the process of synthetic representation, whereas *exegein* indicates the process of analytic interpretation. Both concepts include the notion of narrative – visual in the former case, verbal in the latter.

In order, therefore, to ‘represent’ and to ‘explain’ the fluidity and multileveled character of a pre/postmodern and metadiscursive textual production like Byzantine literature, it is necessary to establish a series of criteria by means of which we might detect structural breaks. For the purposes of my proposal I have developed three types of criteria, which I shall label as ‘authorly,’ ‘operative’ and ‘sociopolitical’ respectively. The first two are textually intrinsic categories and the third one is textually extrinsic. The application of such criteria would allow us to read texts within the appropriate concrete and abstract levels of their phenomenological nexus (Ingarden 25–196; Gadamer 107–74), in other words, as textually and contextually signif-

icant entities (Jauß, *Ästhetische Erfahrung* 655–865). Let me start with the first category, where four ‘authorly’ criteria would be:

- i. The choice of at least two contemporary authors with a sizeable *oeuvre* so as to conduct a satisfactory comparison on the basis of substantial textual material.
- ii. A study of the structural, generic and stylistic characteristics of the various works of the authors chosen.
- iii. A study of the ‘consciousness’ of these authors concerning: (a) their opinion about the structural, generic, stylistic or other formative elements that are to be found in their works; (b) their more general opinions as authors, possibly in relation to their real or imagined predecessors; (c) the degree of convergence, divergence or innovation as to these predecessors.
- iv. A study of the primary and secondary reception of their works, that is, on the one hand, of their immediate addressees and their contemporary audience and, on the other hand, of later readers.

I have consistently used here the word ‘author’. By this usage I am not espousing a modernist psycho-biographical notion of the author for Byzantine texts, nor do I, however, reject the author *tout court* by adopting a structuralist stance. ‘Author’ refers to the textual – and in many cases material – construction of an authorial *persona*, even when the presence of such a *persona* is apparently denied, as in anonymous works, or when texts purport to be nothing other than collections of other texts, florilegia, various anthologies, and dictionaries.

Such a construction is the author’s ‘portrait,’ mostly preceding a collection of his works in a high-quality manuscript. An impressive example is the full-page ‘portrait’ of Niketas Choniates (†1217), an important political figure in the late twelfth century, acclaimed orator and historian (Simpson). The miniature (see Plate 1) precedes the text of Choniates’ *Historical Account* (Van Dieten; Magoulias) in Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (ÖNB) Cod. Vind. hist. gr., 53, a fine paper manuscript of the early fourteenth century. The image is carefully executed, showing Choniates in the act of writing in front of his desk, where an inkbox and loose sheets of paper are placed on the lectern. On the upper margin of the page and written in a calligraphic style with vermilion-red ink, we find the rubric: ὁ Χωνιάτης καὶ συγγραφεὺς τῆς βίβλου ταύτης (‘Choniates and author

Plate 1. Niketas Choniates as author:
ÖNB, Cod. Vind. hist. gr., 53 (early 14th
cent.), iv .



of this book”). Obviously, this layout was not prepared by Niketas himself. But the anonymous scribe of the Vindobonensis, in preparing the manuscript for his handsomely paying client, depicted Choniates as author (*syngrapheus*), identifying the manuscript (*biblos*) with the only text included therein and certainly being Choniates’ most famous work, as its textual transmission amply attests.

The authorial *persona* in the text allows us to recognize the manifold strategies employed by all sorts of textual producers (writers, compilers, anthologists, philologists, notaries etc.) in order to promote various ideological agendas, and to support or undermine change within a specific sociocultural system and its codes of communication. This system is reflected in what Gabrielle Spiegel (78–86) described as the ‘social logic’ of the medieval text. It is the way in which texts interact with their social surroundings through the changing literary forms they assume in order to express specific ‘meanings.’ Let me give one example of such an authorial *persona* from the eleventh century.

If in Choniates’ case the ‘author’ is identified with his ‘book’ as a single work, the case of John Mauropous (c. 1000–c. 1085), established teacher, writer and later bishop, presents us with another type of authorial *persona*.² Mauropous prepared some time around 1075 a collection of his works, which is preserved in the Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (BAV), Vat. gr. 676, a fine parchment manuscript of the late eleventh century, probably the clean copy prepared by his secretary (Karpozilos 34–36). The actual collection is preceded by four pages presenting a set of prefatory peritextual material. On the open pages ii–iii (see Plate 2) we find a series of texts

2. The example discussed on the following pages was chosen as a small tribute to the splendid team at the University of Ghent who under Kristoffel Demoen have prepared a [database](#) of Greek book epigrams (see Bernard and Demoen); the team will continue with an ambitious research project dedicated to studying this immense textual material from various literary, linguistic, and sociocultural perspectives.

Plate 2. BAV, Cod. Vat. gr. 676 (late 11th cent.), ff. ii–iii.



(De Lagarde vi–vii). The left-hand page presents the reader with three poems. The first of these poems – placed under a finely drawn vermilion-red band and composed in four twelve-syllable iambic verses – bears an explicative rubric:

Εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ βιβλόν.
 Τίς ἂν σε προσβλέψει, φιλάτη βίβλε;
 Τίς ἐντύχοι σοι; Τίς δ' ἂν εἰς χεῖρας λάβοι;
 Οὕτως ἔχει με φόβος τῆς ἀχρησίας,
 κἄν τι προσεῖη χρήσιμον τοῖς σοῖς λόγοις.

To his own book.
 Who will cast his gaze at you, my beloved book?
 Who will read you? Who will take you in his hands?
 Thus does fear of disuse seize me,
 even if there might be something useful in your words.

A ‘first-person authorial voice’ addresses the book as a material and textual object. The layout of the two pages is visually dominated by an ‘authorial signature’ – it is an iambic couplet – placed under a gold and dark red decorative band on the top of the right-hand page:

Ἰωάννου πόνοι τε καὶ λόγοι τάδε.
 ὃς σύγκελλος ἦν, καὶ πρόεδρος ἐνθάδε.

These are the labors and literary works of John,
 who was a patriarchal secretary and a bishop here.

Following the signature and written out separately, we find a single iambic verse where “the author” (ὁ συγγραφεὺς) as *persona* first points to himself and then to “his works” (οἱ λόγοι) included in the book:

Ὁ συγγραφεὺς μὲν οὗτος, οὗτοι δ' οἱ λόγοι.

This then is the author, these now are his literary works.

This old device to authorize a text copied out in a manuscript is known as a “seal” (*sphragis*). The signature and the seal are placed exactly opposite the introductory poem of the left-hand page, where the name of the authorial voice is not revealed.

On the manuscript page, therefore, the poems operate both textually and visually in a performative metaliterary act that circumscribes and describes the authorial *persona* of John. The importance of these two pages for the author’s self-representation is visually even

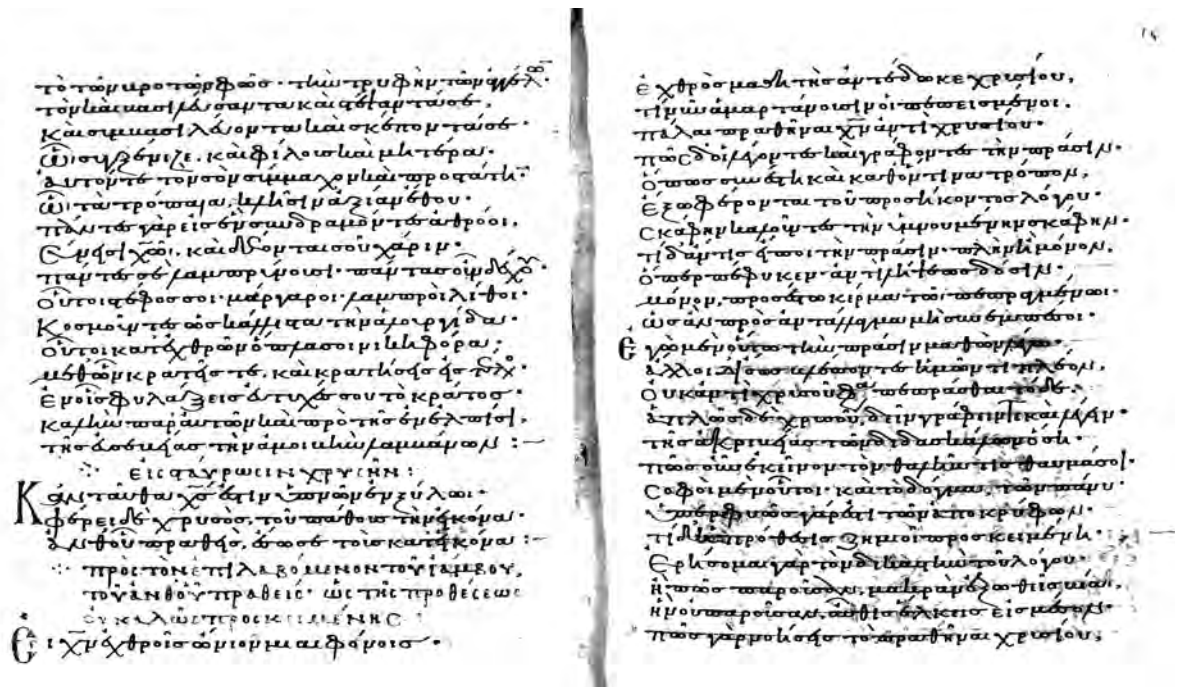


Plate 3. BAV, Cod. Vat. gr. 676 (late 11th cent.), ff. 14–15.

more accentuated by the fact that the texts are written out in a decorative majuscule script (something rare and certainly expensive by the late eleventh century), while the main body of the manuscript is copied out in a standard minuscule of the late *Perlschrift* type (see Plate 3).

The literary works pointed to by the author on the right-hand page prove to be “verses” (*stichoi*), “letters” (*epistolai*) and “orations” (*logoi*), as the three centered lines placed under the seal disclose. The orations, in particular, are furnished with a separate title listing and numeration. Even though the three textual groups appear to have a certain formal cohesion, they represent a broad variety of genres and subgenres in verse and prose, while their composition spreads over a period of thirty years. Nonetheless, all of these “literary works” (*logoi*) constitute together a single text, the “book” (*biblos*), whose meaning is dictated by a specific social logic related to the eleventh century, the capital’s competitive literary environment, the imperial court and its sociocultural pressures (Lemerle 193–248; Agapitos, “Teachers”). A “useful” (*chresimon*) and, therefore, ‘true’ understanding of the ‘author’ requires a ‘reader’ who will literally grasp the book as a material entity with his hands and metaphorically grasp it as a textual entity with his mind. This is something new in Byzantine textual production, though it becomes visible to us around the middle of the eleventh century, if we are to judge by the surviving ‘books’ of other authors contemporary with Mauropous, for example, Chris-

topher Mitylenaios and the collection of his poems (De Groote xxi–xxiii), or the various works of Symeon the New Theologian as edited by his disciple Niketas Stethatos (Hinterberger, “Ein Editor”).

Similar to the layout on the two pages of Mauropous’ book, texts in Byzantine culture – but also buildings, paintings, manuscripts, even musical compositions for the liturgy – often appear to display certain ‘inner principles’ which determine a new aesthetic frame and a new understanding of structure, different, in my view, from those of Antiquity and Early Modernity. These inner principles form the ‘operative’ category of criteria to which I referred above. Seven such principles would be:

- i. **CENTRICITY:** The text focuses on a marked structural or conceptual centre placed within a clearly hierarchical disposition.
- ii. **COUNTERLINEARITY:** We observe the cancellation of linear *hypotaxis* that would allow the multiple and in-depth structural connection of the text’s recognizable parts
- iii. **PARATACTICALITY:** Instead of *hypotaxis*, the structure of the text presents a paratactical organization of its smaller units, all placed on the same narrative level.
- iv. **COMPARTMENTALIZATION:** The smaller units are highlighted as independent compartments through some kind of strong marking, giving, in this way, the impression that the removal or insertion of one or more compartments would not affect the text’s macrostructure.
- v. **NON-CLOSURE:** The text often seems not to reach a recognizable closure, while in some cases it gives the impression of continuously awaiting further reworking. In other words, the notion of a work completed by a subjective authorial will is substantially weakened.
- vi. **ABSORPTIVITY:** The text visibly absorbs in different ways and for different purposes a multitude of various passages from older texts.
- vii. **REVEALMENT:** The text consciously reveals the mechanisms of its own structuring with references to its structural parts and their ‘relation’ to each other.

In my opinion, the four authorly criteria and the seven operative principles are two satisfactory, textually intrinsic, tools for looking at texts in order to determine their poetical and rhetorical strategies, their structural mechanics and their social logic within a broader his-

torical frame. This brings me to the sociopolitical criterion I would like to present.

I have already pointed out that military catastrophies cannot be satisfactory boundaries of literary periodization because they do not generate some kind of dialogic discourse that would lead to a negotiation about and a reappraisal of literary practices. Therefore, I propose to introduce the concept of internal crisis as a more appropriate sociopolitical, textually extrinsic, tool for establishing literary boundaries. This type of crisis reflects ideological tensions within society, sometimes violent, certainly acted out on many different levels, emanating from the state or directed against it. An internal crisis is not a 'moment' to be easily identified with a 'historical turning point' (e.g. 18 September 324 or 13 April 1204), but a diffuse process of some duration, for example, a 'biblical generation' of thirty years or the fifteen-year taxation cycle – two units used by the Byzantines themselves in counting time.

There are at least three such crises that form useful boundaries: (i) the so-called Great Persecution under emperors Diocletian and Galerius in the early fourth century (303–13); (ii) the central phase of the Iconoclast controversy in the eighth century (754–87); (iii) and the second civil war combined with the Hesychast controversy in the middle of the fourteenth century (1341–54). These crises involved the state, religion and the Church, they encompassed broad strata of their respective societies, they erupted in violent activities against the citizens or between the citizens of the realm, they were resolved by imperial legislature and, very importantly, they led to a change in religious ideology, in state governance and in the image of the emperor. Examining the texts produced during and shortly after the crises will help us to realize that in the case of the Great Persecution and the Iconoclast controversy the crises led to the establishment of new ideological and aesthetic codes in the production of texts. However, in the case of the Hesychast controversy the crisis led to a substantial cancellation or attenuation of polyphony, variety and cosmopolitanism. More specifically, around AD 400, Greek, Latin and Syriac had developed common codes of literary aesthetics over the broad expanse of the Eastern Mediterranean in a transregional system of textual production, while around 850, Greek had entered into active dialogue with Ancient Greek literature and Arabic science, leading to new formulations of earlier aesthetic codes. However, by around 1400 Greek had broken down into regional textual productions (Constantinople and Thessalonike, Mystra,

Crete, Rhodes, Cyprus), while Bulgarian, Serbian and Russian had also fully developed their own regional literatures. It is quite instructive to compare this particular situation to premodern India between c. 950 and 1450 and the shift from Sanskrit to the vernaculars, as it has been impressively described by Sheldon Pollock (281–436).

Let me then briefly summarize my main points for a ‘new’ history of Byzantine literature. First, I believe that such a history should display a spatiotemporal narrative form. In other words, the texts should be treated as ‘characters with lives of their own.’ This means that groupings by genre should be avoided, while stronger prominence should be given to the texts as historical entities, often encapsulated through the authorial *personae* reflected in them. By using the three categories of authorly, operative and sociopolitical criteria, such a history should be structured in larger parts or sections so as to allow the narrative to unfold unencumbered by too many smaller encyclopedic chapters. At the same time, the larger parts should be divided into subsections organizing the spatiotemporal movement of the narrative. Each larger part should include a special chapter on genres and another one on book production, so as to enable readers, once they have gained a sense of the ‘story’ within each part, to form an idea about generic negotiations and to understand the important role of book production for textuality and literariness in Byzantine culture. I am still in the process of drafting this proposal in greater detail, but I believe that it opens up paths to step out of my field’s dominant scientific paradigm and to approach Byzantine literature as a variegated, dynamic and historically changing entity, rather than as a series of generic variations and failed imitative transmutations, unrelated to the other literary systems of the broader medieval Mediterranean and the northern lands of medieval Europe in their widest sense.

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Gute Geschichte/n

Literarische Selbsterfindungen und die Geschichte der Literatur des Mittelalters

Abstract

This contribution is a plea for the substitution of the grand narratives of literary history by small 'good (hi)stories'. These 'good (hi)stories' must be based on a detailed reconstruction of the literary realities: on the testimony of the work itself, on its transmission, on the description of the social networks in which the works circulated and which they addressed. An integrated view of these 'good (hi)stories' can help develop a dynamically changing picture of a possible literary history of the Middle Ages which must be negotiated further in the scholarly discussion. Two examples will demonstrate this model: Otfried's *Evangelienbuch* and the paraphrase of the Song of Songs by Williram of Ebersberg.

Die Zeit der meisterhaften Großerzählungen von der einen Geschichte der Literatur ist vorbei. So beruhigend die Darstellung von sich ablösenden Epochen, die als solche eindeutig definierbar sind, auch ist, man musste erkennen, dass hier der Einfluss der Interpreten zu weit ging; obwohl trotzdem die Ergebnisse der klassischen Autor-Werk-Gattung-Epoche-Literaturgeschichten immer noch unser Handbuchwissen prägen. Selbst die Modifikationen literaturgeschichtlicher Gesamtentwürfe halfen da nicht weiter; nicht die strikte Abwendung vom Kontext (Formgeschichte) und auch nicht die Flucht in die Arme desselben (Sozialgeschichte). Die großen Entwürfe, in deren Kontinuität man sich dann selbst einstellen darf – und welches Volk will nicht eines der Dichter und Denker sein –, sind so sehr aus der Mode gekommen, dass man gut daran tut, Worte wie 'Teleologie' oder 'Entwicklung' nur mit größter Umsicht in den Mund zu nehmen. Geschichte wird nicht mehr gedacht als kohärente Kontinuität, sondern als Medium der Alteritätserzeugung –

und damit zwar auch wieder als *magistra vitae*, nur dieses Mal nicht in Formen der Identifikation, sondern als Hilfsmittel für den Umgang mit Andersartigkeit und als Instrument zur De-Monopolisierung der eigenen Weltsicht.

Im Großen und Ganzen wird man dieser Entwicklung wohl auch zustimmen, denkt man nur an die skurrilen Ideen nationalliterarischer oder gar ‘völkischer’ Art, genauso wie an die Ideen einer werkimmanenten Weltsicht, in denen literarische Kunstwerke als Entität für sich genommen wurden und man die sie umgebende Welt als für einer Berücksichtigung zu banal erachtete. Weder der Behauptung der Wirkmacht genereller sozialer Regeln (oder Spielregeln) wird man folgen, noch dem Phantasma von den autonomen Regeln der Kunst.

Doch wenn im Mittelalter wirklich alles anders war, vielleicht ist dann für diese Epoche all diese Skepsis obsolet? Nun, es ist mit der Alterität hoffentlich nicht so weit her, wie man zuweilen tut, denn immerhin stehen – wenn auch in anderer Gestalt – doch auch im Mittelalter die Themen im Zentrum der Texte, die das auch heute noch tun: Liebe, Tod, Gewalt – wo kommst du her, wo gehst du hin – Trauer, Trost – Recht, Unrecht – Herrschaft, Sieg und Untergang; das sind Themen, die auch in der Andersartigkeit des Mittelalters die Menschen umtrieben. Eine Psyche wird sich wohl auch ein Ritter geleistet haben, der – auch wenn er es nicht so gesagt haben würde – ein Individuum war, bevor man im 12. Jahrhundert die Individualität erfand oder entdeckte. Eine Epoche, die ihre Neuerer als *isti moderni* denunziert (Kann), ist der unseren vielleicht doch in manchen Zügen ähnlicher, als das eine verbreitete Alteritätsfreudigkeit uns glauben machen wollte. Natürlich gibt es Differenzen und andere Spielregeln, als wir sie kennen. Dazu gehört mit Blick auf die literarischen Texte auch, dass es einen institutionalisierten Literaturbetrieb nicht gab, und das je früher, desto weniger. Selbstredend aber unterschied man zwischen *ficta* und *facta*, gab es Texte mit der Lizenz zum Lügen und Texte, die auf ihre Wahrhaftigkeit verpflichtet waren, aber die Grenzen waren eben fließend (und sind es übrigens immer noch!) und sie verliefen anders, als sie das in der Moderne tun. Der “pacte de générosité” den Jean-Paul Sartre zwischen Autor und Leser in der Moderne konstatiert, war im Mittelalter anders konfiguriert und es gab wohl kaum Kontexte, in denen Texte ohne jeden konkreten Anlass nur um ihrer selbst Willen entstanden – also keine Kunst nur um der Kunst willen, die sich die Moderne als zentrales Paradigma erfinden wird. Das, so kann man einwenden, ist auch

heute nicht anders, denn welcher Autor achtet nicht auf seine Wirkung und Rezeption (schon aus rein wirtschaftlichen Gründen, oder aus einer uns allen gegebenen Eitelkeit). Aber die Funktionen, die die Texte dieser Autoren für die Welt haben, sind gerade nicht ein Mittel zum Ausweis ihrer Qualität. Im Gegenteil ist die 'Nicht-Anlässlichkeit' oder – um es positiv zu sagen – ihre Autonomie ein hohes Gut, das selbst unser Recht zu schützen versucht, womit es streng genommen diese Autonomie untergräbt.

Auch im Mittelalter denkt man über diese Zusammenhänge nach. Hartmann von Aue sagt etwa im Prolog seines *Iwein*:

Ein riter, der gelêret was
unde ez an den buochen las,
swenner sîne stunde
niht baz bewenden kunde,
daz er ouch tihtennes pflac
daz man gerne hoeren mac,
dâ kêrt er sînen vlîz an:
er was genant Hartman
und was ein Ouwære,
der tihte diz mære. (Hartmann von Aue, *Iwein*, V. 21–30)

(Ein Ritter, der gelehrt war
und in Büchern las;
wenn er seine Zeit
nicht besser verwenden konnte,
dichtete er sogar.
Was man gerne hört,
darauf verwendete er seinen Fleiß:
Er wurde Hartmann genannt
und kam aus Aue.
Der dichtete diese Geschichte.)

“Nebenberuf Dichter,” das was Arno Schmidt als unmöglich ansah, das propagiert Hartmann hier anscheinend. Hauptberuf “Ritter,” das ist die message dieser Passage, die wohl ganz auf seine Zuhörer zugeschnitten ist, unter denen Ritter sich befunden haben werden. In den Eingangswersen des “Armen Heinrich” ist uns die Selbstbeschreibung Hartmanns als Autor aus moderner Perspektive dann noch fremder:

Ein ritter sô gelêret was,
 daz er an den buochen las,
 swaz er dar an geschriben vant:
 der was Hartman genant,
 dienstman was er ze Ouwe.
 er nam im manige schouwe
 an mislichen buochen:
 dar an begunde er suochen,
 ob er iht des funde,
 dâ mite er swære stunde
 möhte senfter machen,
 und von sô gewanten sachen
 daz gotes èren töhte
 und dâ mite er sich möhte
 gelieben den liuten. (Hartmann von Aue, "Der arme Heinrich", V. 1–15)

(Ein Ritter war so gelehrt,
 dass er in Büchern das las,
 was er in ihnen geschrieben fand:
 Der wurde Hartmann genannt,
 und war Ministeriale in Aue.
 Er schaute oft
 in alle möglichen Bücher:
 Er suchte darin,
 ob er nicht etwas fände,
 mit dem er schwere Stunden
 leichter machen könnte.
 Und solche Geschichten,
 die Gott zur Ehre gereichen
 und mit denen er sich bei den
 Leuten beliebt machen könnte.)

Zeitvertreib und Verbreitung von Freude, das könnte auch heute noch auf vielen Klappentexten stehen, wengleich nicht denen jener Autoren, die einen sogenannten 'Anspruch' für sich erheben. Zur Ehre Gottes gereichen, das will vielleicht auch mancher fromme Autor, der heute lebt. Aber offen zu sagen, dass man um die eigene Beliebtheit buhlt, das wäre dann doch eine ironische Brechung, auch wenn sich hinter ihr eine tiefe Wahrheit verbirgt.

Aber sieht man einmal ganz davon ab, wie man sich den Status des Autors hier konkret vorstellen will, deutlich ist doch, dass Hart-

mann über seine Rolle als Autor spricht und sich eindeutig definiert. Das, was in der Moderne stillschweigend vorausgesetzt wird, wird hier zum Thema und zwar nicht im Modus des Selbstreferentiellen, was als wichtiges Merkmal von Literarizität verstanden werden könnte, sondern als Modus der Selbstverständigung und Legitimation nach Außen – protoliterarisch, könnte man sagen. Literatur wird dabei dargestellt als eingebunden in die soziale Wirklichkeit (hier des Rittertums): Sie dient ihrem sozialen Kontext und will von ihm bedient werden. Literatur ist verschaltet mit der Welt, in der sie entsteht: Moderne Texte sind das auch, aber ein wesentlicher Anspruch moderner Literarizität ist es, sich autonom gegenüber ihrem Kontext zu positionieren und gerade nicht in einer 'dienenden' Position.

So zumindest die Selbstaussagen Hartmanns. Aber wer traut schon literarischen Autoren? Es ist ein Dilemma: Nehmen wir die Sache wörtlich, dann lesen wir einen faktischen Text und rechnen die folgende Erzählung – also hier den *Iwein* oder den *Armen Heinrich* – auf die Dimension der Didaxe, der Frömmerei oder der bloßen Unterhaltung herunter. Trauen wir Hartmann ein literarisches Spiel mit seiner Rolle als Autor zu, dann beobachten wir das ganz aus der Perspektive moderner literarischer Kategorien, die die Sache zwar interessanter, aber vielleicht historisch unangemessen erscheinen lässt. Doch unabhängig davon, welchen Weg des Verständnisses man auch einschlägt, wir haben es hier mit einer Autorinstanz zu tun, die über sich selbst spricht und sich als historisches Subjekt gegenüber seinem Text positioniert. Das ist in der Pragmatik des mündlichen Vortrags keine triviale Angelegenheit, denn neben dem Verfasser, der sich von seinem Werk im historischen Prozess trennt, stehen die Vortragenden, die das Werk durch die Zeiten begleiten. Die Selbstaussage am Anfang des Textes okkupiert also die Ich-Position des Textes (wenn sie nicht Figurenrede ist) für den Verfasser. Wie wenig trivial das ist, kann man auch im Vergleich zu den früheren Autornennungen erahnen. Die Autoren nennen sich – natürlich nicht alle, aber doch oft – am Ende des Werkes und das mit der Bitte um Gebetsgedenken oder ähnliches. So der Pfaffe Konrad oder Heinrich von Veldeke und viele mehr. Solche Nennungen am Ende verbinden die Verfasser mit den Folgehandlungen, die die Texte auslösen mögen, etwa der *memoria*. Die Nennung im Prolog dagegen steuert die Rezeption des Textes von Anfang an, versucht es zumindest, oder – um es noch vorsichtiger zu sagen – erhebt das Wort und den Anspruch, das tun zu können oder zu wollen.

Als Form des ‘Sprechens über Literatur’ hat man Prologe oft als Ausgangspunkte für die poetologische und literaturgeschichtliche Thesenbildungen genommen; Walter Haug hat sie zum Gegenstand seiner *Literaturtheorie im deutschen Mittelalter* gemacht. Zweifellos trennt sich hier eine Instanz des Textes von der spontanen Logik der jeweiligen Aufführung und weist dem Text einen historischen (oder eben literarhistorischen) Ort zu. Hugo Kuhn bezeichnet das als Überschreitung einer ‘Bewusstseinschwelle’: Man spricht über Literatur als Literatur und nicht über Literatur als beliebige Kommunikationsform. Nun kann man nicht eindeutig sagen, ob sich in Hartmanns Selbstaussagen tatsächlich ein literarhistorischer ‘realer’ Sachverhalt greifen lässt. Erfahren wir hier wirklich etwas über Hartmann von Aue, sein Leben als Ministeriale und ‘Dichter’? Erfahren wir etwas über seine tatsächlichen Intentionen? Wir können es nicht sagen, aber gewiss ist, dass wir etwas sagen können über die Art und Weise, wie Hartmann sich selbst darstellt. Welchen Anspruch er für sich formuliert, wie er sich in Bezug zu seinem Text positioniert sehen will.

Ausgehend von diesen behaupteten ‘Ansprüchen’ und ‘Selbstdarstellungen’ (ob sie nun zutreffen oder auch nicht) will ich in diesem Beitrag für Folgendes plädieren: Für eine Abgleichung eben jener Behauptungen mit den greifbaren Realien, wie etwa die Überlieferung und den Inhalt der Texte. Das klingt ziemlich banal, aber könnte uns doch helfen, Aussagen der Texte selbst und Aussagen, die wir über die Texte machen, besser aufeinander beziehen zu können, ohne das Bild festgelegter literarhistorischer Positionierungen bemühen zu müssen. Also nicht: ‘Höfische Klassik’ – und das bedeutet für den Inhalt, dass es um den ‘Prozess der Zivilisation’ einer neuen höfischen Kultur gehe und für die Überlieferung, dass wir die Texte im Kontext der Fürstenhöfe zu suchen haben. Sondern: Die Fakten, die der Text selbst und die Fakten, die seine Überlieferung uns geben, werden abgeglichen und die hermeneutische Aufgabe besteht darin, formulierten Anspruch und textuelle wie materielle Wirklichkeit aufeinander abzubilden. In die Rolle der Parameter einer vorformulierten ‘Literaturgeschichte’ rücken dabei die Anspruchsformulierungen und die Selbstbehauptungen, die Autoren ihren Texten mitgeben. Was dabei herauskommen soll, sind ‘gute Geschichte/n’, die sich im wissenschaftlichen Gespräch zur Geltung bringen, indem sie punktuell in Texten formulierte Ansprüche und empirisch greifbare Wirklichkeiten in einem verbindenden Narrativ vereinen. Ab-

geschlossen sind diese ‘guten Geschichte/n’ nie, sie sind Segment und ausgerichtet auf wissenschaftliche Anschlusskommunikation.

Ich will das an zwei Beispielen aus dem früheren Mittelalter vorführen, wohl wissend, dass die Verhältnisse in der literarischen Kultur des 13. Jahrhunderts wesentlich komplexer werden. Es geht mir dabei um zwei große Texte, die beide sich mit dem Text der Bibel auseinandersetzen: Das *Evangelienbuch* des Weißenburger Mönchs Otfrid und der Hoheliedkommentar des Williram von Ebersberg.

Zuerst zu Otfrid von Weißenburg. Sein *Evangelienbuch* entstand um 870 und erzählt das Leben Jesu in Form einer Evangelienharmonie und bietet allegorische Auslegungen zu Stationen des Lebens Jesu und der Heilsgeschichte an. In vielerlei Hinsicht ist das Buch eine Pionierarbeit: Otfrid verwendet als erster in einem größeren deutschsprachigen Text den Endreim (er gilt gewissermaßen als Erfinder desselben). Aber alleine schon die Verwendung der deutschen Sprache für ein Biblepos ist ein Sachverhalt, den er aufwändig legitimieren muss. Er tut das in mehrfacher Form (Müller, “Erzählen und Erlösen”, mit den entsprechenden Literaturhinweisen). Da ist einmal die lateinische Widmung an Liutbert, den Erzbischof von Mainz. Darin sagt er, dass es in der Volkssprache viel unnützes Götön (*sonus inutilium*) gäbe und dieses unnütze und obszöne (*obsce-nus*) Gesänge beleidige die fromme Gesinnung vieler. Deshalb wurde er, Otfrid, von einigen Brüdern und einer besonders verehrungswürdigen Frau namens Judith gebeten, eine Evangelienharmonie in deutscher Sprache zu verfassen. Otfrid weist dabei auch auf antike Texte hin, die nicht nur von heidnischen Dingen, sondern auch von den Taten der Heiligen berichten – das sind seine Vorbilder. Otfrid wählt in lateinischer Sprache also zunächst eine passive Form der Legitimation: Deutsche Dichtung sei verwerflich und sündhaft und diesem Bild will sich Otfrid entgegenstellen. Es geht also um die Etablierung einer ethisch korrekten deutschen Dichtungstradition, die sich als Parallelunternehmen zu den Bibeldichtungen in den heiligen Sprachen versteht.

Viel grundsätzlicher steigt Otfrid dann im ersten Abschnitt seines ersten Buches (von fünf) ein, und zwar in seiner berühmten Vorrede *Cur scriptor hunc librum theotisce dictaverit*. (“Warum der Schreiber dieses Buch in deutscher Sprache schrieb.”) Dort führt er aus, dass es zu den Ruhmestaten der griechischen und römischen Antike gehöre, dass die Völker der Antike ihre Taten in Form von Dichtungen weitertragen. Dichten über Ruhmestaten ist selbst eine Ruhmestat und eine solche sollte auch für die Taten der Franken mög-

lich sein. Er entwirft dabei ein großartiges Programm, in dem Dichtung und christliches Leben in eins gesetzt werden und in dem Ethik und Ästhetik sich gegenseitig hervorbringen (Müller, "Erzählen und Erlösen"). Ich kann hier nicht im Detail darauf eingehen.

Für den Augenblick geht es ja mehr um die Geltungsansprüche und literarischen Selbstaussagen, die damit verbunden sind. Und mit Blick auf diese zeichnet sich eine Ambivalenz von Selbstzurücknahme und Autorenstolz ab, zumal der zweite Abschnitt mit einer klassischen Inspirationsbitte beginnt, bei der Otfrid als Autor hinter dem Prozess der göttlichen Eingebung verschwindet: Einerseits beschreibt sich Otfrid also auf Augenhöhe mit der antiken Dichtungstradition, andererseits demütig vor Gott und durch Gott. Otfrid positioniert sich aber auch – und zwar als erster Autor in deutscher Sprache – gleich gegenüber mehreren Personen: Er widmet sein *Evangelienbuch* Liutbert, dem Erzbischof von Mainz (mit dem lateinischen Sendschreiben, das ich oben erwähnte), Bischof Salomon von Konstanz und den St. Galler Mönchen Hartmut und Werinbert, mit jeweils endgereimten deutschen Texten. Dazu kommt die endgereimte deutsche Widmung an König Ludwig den Deutschen, in der Otfrid den Herrscher dezidiert dazu auffordert, für die Verbreitung des Buches zu sorgen:

Themo díhton ih thiz búah; oba er hábet iro rúah,
ódo er thaz giuuéizit, thaz er sa lésan heizit
(V. 87f., *Althochdeutsche Literatur*, 70f.)

(Diesem dichtete ich dieses Buch, auf dass er ihm Beachtung
schenke,
und das zum Ausdruck bringt, indem der es zu (vorzu-)lesen
befiehlt)

Ludwig soll das Buch lesen und besonders wohl auch vorlesen lassen; der Herrscher als Promotor des neuartigen Buches, das in einem neuen sprachlichen Gewand daherkommt. Diese Aufforderung kann man als Teil eines sehr komplexen Gesamtplans für die Verbreitung des *Evangelienbuches* lesen, wie ihn Michael Giesecke (53) angedeutet hat. Otfrid wendet sich an mehrere Schichten und Kreise: An seine Studienkollegen Hartmut und Werinbert, die das Buch im klösterlichen Alltag weitergeben könnten; an den Erzbischof Liutbert von Mainz, also an seinen direkten 'Vorgesetzten', der das Werk einerseits approbieren und letztlich sicher auch seinem Skriptorium zur Verfügung stellen sollte; ähnliches kann man für Salomon von

Konstanz annehmen, auch wenn der Text dazu explizit nichts sagt und es sich eher so liest, als ob Otfrid hier den Rat und die Bestätigung eines gelehrten Freundes und Erziehers einholen will. Mit der Widmung an König Ludwig wird der Text dann auch in die Welt der weltlichen Eliten eingeführt, wobei Otfrid explizit sagt, dass das Buch dem König die Inhalte des Evangeliums vorführt, was für die geistlich-gelehrten Empfänger nicht der Zweck der Übung sein konnte.

Kurz: Otfrid legitimiert sich und sorgt aktiv dafür, dass sein Buch auch Erfolg hat, zumindest aber eine gewisse Verbreitung erfährt. Dieser Plan bildet sich nun auch in der Überlieferung selbst ab. Erhalten sind vier Handschriften:

1. Zur Überlieferung: [Paderborner Repertorium](#); Digitalisiert durch ÖNB.
2. Zur Überlieferung: [Paderborner Repertorium](#); Digitalisiert durch UB Heidelberg.
3. Zur Überlieferung: [Paderborner Repertorium](#).
4. Zur Überlieferung: [Paderborner Repertorium](#), dort auch Digitalisate nachgewiesen.

V: Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (ÖNB), Cod. 2687 vor 867 mit autographen Korrekturen Otfrids.¹

P: Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek (UB Heidelberg), Cod. Pal. lat. 52 (c. 870).²

F: München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (BSB), Cgm. 14 (zwischen 902 und 906).³

D: (Discissus): Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek (HAB), cod. 131.1 Extrav.; Krakow, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Cod. Berol. mgq 504; Bonn, Universitätsbibliothek (UB), Cod. 499 (78) (nach der Mitte oder Ende des 10. Jh.).⁴

V und P stammen aus Otfrids direktem Umkreis, in V ist er sogar selbst als Schreiber und Korrektor nachzuweisen. So etwa in den letzten Zeilen von Blatt 144b.

Otfrid verfolgte seinen Plan also nicht nur abstrakt, in Form der Widmungen, sondern auch sehr konkret. V und P sind dabei echte Prachthandschriften und es wird sich wohl um zwei der Widmungsexemplare gehandelt haben. Beide enthalten dabei alle vier Widmungen, sodass man vermuten darf, dass nicht nur jeweils eine Widmung im Buch stand, sondern jeweils alle. Die spätere Freisinger Handschrift F hat dann gar keine der Widmungen mehr. Bei D können wir nichts über die Widmungen sagen.

Die Widmungen richten sich also wohl nicht nur an die Widmungsempfänger, sondern legen Otfrids Plan offen, zeigen, für wen das Buch gedacht ist – und das ist eben nicht nur eine Person oder Gruppe. Wenn man nicht davon ausgeht, dass Salomon ein Exemplar bekommen sollte und nicht nur als 'Korrektor' gedacht war (und ich halte es für sehr wahrscheinlich, dass eines für ihn bestimmt war), dann waren zu Otfrids Lebzeiten gleich 5 Exemplare unterwegs: Die

4 Widmungsexemplare und sicher auch ein Weißenburger Exemplar. Otfrid selbst hat an diesem Überlieferungserfolg mitgewirkt, ja selbst dabei zur Feder gegriffen! Und dieser Erfolg ließ im 10. Jahrhundert nicht ganz nach, wie F und D bezeugen.

Man hat das Projekt des *Evangelienbuches* nun im Kontext der Herausbildung einer deutschsprachigen Tradition im ostfränkischen Reich bewertet. Um es pointiert zu sagen: Otfrid ist einer der Repräsentanten für eine Sprach- und Kulturpolitik Ludwigs des Deutschen, dem es um die Etablierung der Volkssprache als Buchsprache im ostfränkischen, also in seinem Reich ging. Schon Karl dem Großen hat man ähnliches unterstellt, zumal sein Biograph Einhard ihm Interesse an der Grammatik und an volkssprachigen Heldenliedern attestiert: Zusammengedacht mit den karlischen Reformen, war man schnell mit Thesen zur Hand, dass es Karl auch um die einheitliche Verbreitung etwa von Gebetsübertragungen gegangen sein könnte. Inzwischen hat man gegen diese zu pauschalen Bilder Einspruch erhoben. Denn bei allem Gewinn im Detail und den unbestreitbaren Forschungserfolgen, laufen diese Argumentationen sehr leicht anachronistischen Vorstellungen in die Arme, vor allem jener von der Identität von Sprache und 'Nation,' die dem europäischen Frühmittelalter sicher nicht angemessen ist. Auch die Unterstellung einer 'Kulturpolitik von oben' wird der Sache kaum gerecht und es ist sehr zu bezweifeln, ob Ludwig der Deutsche tatsächlich einen Weißenburger Mönch beauftragt haben könnte, die 'ostfränkische Sache' weiterzubringen. Dieter Geuenich hat am deutlichsten gegen eine systematische Sprach- oder gar Kulturpolitik Ludwigs des Deutschen plädiert (Geuenich, dort auch die weitere Literatur und die ältere Forschung), ich kann ihm nur folgen. Und trotzdem stehen die Befunde für sich: Eine Häufung des Gebrauchs des Deutschen in verschiedenen Kontexten, überregional parallel auftretenden Phänomene wie etwa der Endreim, etc. Auch wenn man daraus keine einfachen Geschichten machen darf (wie etwa die Geschichte von Otfrid als Erfinder des Endreims, dessen Erfindung dann einen Siegeszug im deutschen Sprachraum antritt – und das vielleicht deshalb, da er sozusagen unter königlicher Schirmherrschaft stand), es zeichnet sich eine 'gute Geschichte/n' (oder mehrere) ab, die Ausgangspunkt für eine mögliche Geschichte der deutschen Literatur des Frühmittelalters sein könnten. Selbst wenn wir es mit institutionell unabhängig voneinander entstandenen Mehrfacherfindungen zu tun haben sollten, da ist doch ein gemeinsamer Horizont, den es zu beschreiben gilt. Und genau dafür – so mein Plädoyer – sind die ge-

nannten Selbstaussagen Schlüsselinformationen, die mit den Realien abgeglichen werden müssen.

Wie sieht das bei Otfrid aus: Otfrid wendet sich an die genannten Personen und Schichten. Er sucht die Nähe zum Herrscher, also muss die Autorität des Herrschers eine Rolle für ihn spielen, auch wenn dieser ihn nicht beauftragt haben wird. Er sucht die Nähe zu geistlich-gelehrten Kreisen und das überregional. Das heißt zunächst einmal, dass Otfrid überregional vernetzt war und dass es eben ein solches (vor allem monastisch geprägtes) Netzwerk gab. Keine übergreifende Sprachpolitik von oben, aber eine Kooperation unterhalb der Ebene des Herrschers im Kontext einer kleinen und gut vernetzten Elite mit dem Anspruch, ganz oben gehört und unterstützt zu werden. Otfrid verknüpft, so meine These, real existierende Austauschverhältnisse um sie mit intendierten Austauschverhältnissen zu kombinieren. Die Exemplare, die im Umkreis Otfrids entstanden, tragen alle diese Informationen in sich. Später, als sie funktionslos geworden sind, verschwinden die Widmungstexte.

Wir müssen bei der Argumentation verschiedene Ebenen unterscheiden. Da ist die Anspruchsformulierung Otfrids. Er betont und begründet ausführlich, dass es legitim und vor allem gut sei, die deutsche Sprache zu verwenden und er legt fest, wer die primären Rezipienten sein sollen, spricht sie direkt an und sagt, was sie zu tun haben.

Dann gibt es die Ebene der Ausführung. Es bleibt ja nicht beim Plan, sondern es kommt zu seiner materiell sehr aufwändigen Umsetzung: die mindestens fünf Handschriften, an deren Herstellung Otfrid selbst aktiv beteiligt war. Zwar sind nur zwei dieser Ursprungsexemplare erhalten, aber die beiden späteren Handschriften zeigen, wie an Otfrids Projekt weitergearbeitet wurde. Die Handschrift F ist dabei von großem Interesse, da sie vom Freisinger Bischof Waldo in Auftrag gegeben wurde. Ausgebildet bei Liutbert von Mainz wurde Waldo Bischof – genau wie sein Mitbruder Salomon, mit dem er ‘studiert’ hatte. Es liegt nahe, dass er auch Otfrid kannte, aber sicher ist, dass Waldo als Auftraggeber einer bairischen Überarbeitung des *Evangelienbuchs* mit zwei Widmungsempfängern in Kontakt stand und in denselben Netzwerken zu Hause war, wobei die Klosterschulen der Reichenau und von St. Gallen (wie auch die Widmung an Hartmut und Werinbert zeigt) eine so wichtige Rolle spielen, wie heutzutage Stanford oder Princeton. Und der Vergleich scheint mir auch deshalb ziemlich passend zu sein, da es ja auch in den modernen Netzwerken selten um konkrete gemeinsame Zielsetzungen

geht, sondern eher um eine ganz allgemeine Verbindung und Solidarität, die dann in einzelnen Situationen wirksam wird.

Aber es ergibt sich über diese direkte Umsetzung hinaus noch eine Ebene, jene der Folgehandlungen. Die Otfridhandschriften sind nämlich selbst Medium einer lang anhaltenden Anschlusskommunikation. In die Heidelberger Otfridhandschrift ist das althochdeutsche *Georgslied* nachgetragen (*Althochdeutsche Literatur* 80–89), ebenso eine althochdeutsche Griffleintragung, der sog. *Hicila-Vers*, in dem gesagt wird, dass “die schöne Hicila” oft in dem Buch gelesen habe (*Althochdeutsche Literatur* 266f.). Der *Hicila-Vers* übrigens zeigt, wie ‘fruchtbar’ die Vorstellung vom Einfluss der Herrscher auf die deutschsprachigen Texte war: Man las früher hier den Namen Kicila und bezog ihn auf die Kaiserin Gisela, deren Interesse an der deutschen Sprache man im Kontext der Forschung um Notker den Deutschen konstatiert hatte. Da würde es wie die Faust aufs Auge passen, wenn die Kaiserin sich auch das Produkt der Sprachenpolitik Ludwigs des Deutschen vorgenommen hätte. Für diese schöne – fast Victor Scheffel würdige – Geschichte hat man lange das H- als K- gelesen, obwohl das paläographisch nicht sein kann, wie Volker Schupp im Anschluss an Johanne Autenrieth vollkommen richtig ausführt (Schupp). Aber auch wenn die Geschichte von der Kaiserin Gisela zu schön war, um wahr zu sein, bezeugt der Eintrag aber natürlich doch eine Weiterverwendung des *Evangelienbuches* und zwar in diesem Fall durch eine Frau. In der Freisinger Otfridhandschrift finden sich schließlich am Ende die sogenannten Gebete Sigihards (*Althochdeutsche Literatur* 194f.), von denen man früher glaubte, dass sie vom Schreiber der Handschrift herkommen. Aber auch hier ist man weiter gekommen und kann nun sagen, dass die Gebete nicht von Sigihard stammen, der das *Evangelienbuch* für Waldo abgeschrieben hat, sondern eine Spur der Weiterverwendung des Buches im Konvent sind.

Kurz: Die Exemplare von Otfrid *Evangelienbuch* eröffnen einen Schreibraum für das Deutsche und stimulieren Versuche, in der deutschen Sprache zu schreiben. Diese Wirksamkeit ließ bis in die Neuzeit nicht nach. Ich nenne nur einige Beispiele: Im Wiener Schottenkloster – Cod. 733 (Hübl 605) – liegt eine Abschrift des *Evangelienbuchs* durch Achill Pirmin Gasser aus dem Jahr 1560. In (oder für) Göttweig wurde es im 18. Jahrhundert wohl aus der Wiener Handschrift abgeschrieben; diese Abschrift liegt noch immer in der Stiftsbibliothek Göttweig mit der Signatur Cod. 913 (rot) / 813 (schwarz) (früher G 29). In Kremsmünster wird das *Evangelienbuch*

im 19. Jahrhundert durch Leopold Kopplhuber übersetzt und als Grundlage für lexikographische Studien verwendet. Otfrids Plan ging also sehr gut auf und er erreichte genau das, worum er Ludwig den Deutschen in der Widmung bat: Er wurde gelesen und verbreitet. Und auch das, worum er Liutbert von Mainz bat: Es wurde an seinem Werk weitergearbeitet.

Wenn man das alles zusammen sieht, dann ist man vom Ergebnis, das die ältere Forschung privilegierte, nicht weit weg. Ob man nun intentional – sozusagen von oben – eine Etablierung der deutschen Sprache im ostfränkischen Reich wollte, oder ob das – gleichsam von unten, als Projekt einer kleinen und gut vernetzten Elite – einer der Effekte von Otfrids Werk selbst war, scheint mir nicht wirklich erheblich zu sein. Ja, man wird letztlich nicht sagen können, ob das eine nicht aus dem anderen hervorging oder das andere erst eigentlich hervorbrachte. Hat Otfrid ein Interesse erst geweckt oder ein vorhandenes Interesse stimuliert? Das wage ich nicht zu entscheiden. Viel wichtiger ist indes, dass wir durch den Fall studieren können, wie Texte im Frühmittelalter zirkulierten, welche Anschlusskommunikation sie hervorzubringen vermögen und wie dezidiert und kalkuliert Otfrid die dazu nötigen Netzwerke kennt, nutzt und ihnen vorgibt, wie die Sache zu laufen hat.

Es ist der Anspruch, den Otfrid erhebt, das einzige sichere Faktum in diesem Spiel, denn er steht so im Text. Dann kommt der Umsetzungsversuch, den wir teils in Form der Handschriften sehr konkret greifen können, der aber auch uns herausfordert und zu Interpretationen drängt. Am unspezifischsten ist am Ende die Frage nach den Gründen des Ganzen. Darüber können wir nicht viel sagen, aber wir können uns doch Spekulationen erlauben, die in eine mögliche Erzählung von der Geschichte der Literatur des frühen Mittelalters münden können; nur muss man sich das eben bewusst machen. Es scheint mir sogar die wesentliche Aufgabe eines Literaturwissenschaftlers zu sein, solche 'guten Geschichte/n,' die aber nur gut sind, wenn sie auf der Geltung der Fakten beruhen und als Spiel um einen Konsens verstanden werden, ein Konsens, der am Ende des Tages als eine neue Form der guten alten "Wahrheit" daherkommen mag.

Dieses Herangehen vom sehr Besonderen ins mögliche Allgemeine von 'guten Geschichte/n' ist exakt das Gegenteil der überkommenen literarhistorischen Großerzählungen, die Deutungsvorgaben machen, Wege zeigen, wie die Details zu verstehen sein könnten – und je schematischer die Meistererzählung dabei ist, desto

wirksamer war sie und desto unbeweglicher. Die ‘guten Geschichte/n,’ für die ich plädiere, sitzen auf tausend kleinen Fundamenten und müssen beweglich sein. Eines dieser Fundamente sind die Selbstaussagen der literarischen Texte und ich hoffe zu zeigen, dass sie ein wichtiges Fundament sind; nicht weil sie wahr sind, sondern weil sie da sind, als eine besondere Form der Rede über Literatur, von der aus die Suche nach ‘gute Geschichte/n’ beginnen kann.

Ich komme damit zu meinem zweiten Fall. Im 11. Jahrhundert übersetzt Williram von Ebersberg das biblische Hohelied ins Deutsche und kommentiert es lateinisch und in einer lateinisch-deutschen Mischsprache. Wieder haben wir es also mit der Übersetzung und Exegese eines Bibeltextes zu tun, denn natürlich übersetzt auch Otfrid sein *Evangelienbuch* nicht einfach, sondern kommentiert und deutet ausführlich. Und wieder wird ein solcher Großtext einem Herrscher gewidmet. Jetzt ist es Heinrich IV., den Williram um Unterstützung bittet und zwar um eine Unterstützung, die ihm Heinrich III. schon gewährt habe. Auch der Sohn solle ihn in seinen ärmlichen Verhältnissen unterstützen und um ihn dazu zu motivieren schickt Williram dem unbesiegbaren König ein Buch, das ihm zum zwischenzeitlichen Trost die Muse diktierte: “Affuit interea solatrix parva camena, / rex invicte librum quæ tibi dat modicum” (“Inzwischen half mir als kleine Trösterin die Muse, die dir, unbesiegbarer König, ein bescheidenes Buch übergibt,” Williram von Ebersberg, 2).

Auch hier also wieder das Spiel von Stolz und Zurücknahme, wie wir es schon bei Otfrid sahen. Und auch im Falle von Willirams Hohelied haben wir eine ganz besondere, bis dahin nicht dagewesene Form der Überlieferung von uns. Williram nämlich gestaltet sein Werk dreispaltig und erläutert dieses Konzept in einer lateinischen Vorrede. In der Mitte findet sich, als schmalste Spalte, der Text des Hohenliedes, der ‘umgürtet’ ist von der lateinisch-deutschen und der lateinischen Auslegung, die damit immer präsent neben dem Bibeltext sind – synoptisch mit ihm verbunden. Dieses dreispaltige Layout prägt als Sonderformat die Williram-Überlieferung, wird aber schnell auch in ein einspaltiges Layout überführt, das für das sukzessive Lesen von Übersetzung und Kommentaren auch nicht ganz unpraktisch ist. Parallel zu Otfrid ist auch die Überlieferung der Widmung, die sich nur in den autornahen Handschriften befindet. In der Ebersberger Handschrift (München, BSB, cgm 10⁵), in einer Abschrift dieser Handschrift, die wohl in, aber sicher für Kremsmünster entstand (Kremsmünster, Stiftsbibliothek CC 32), einem Schwes-

5. Der Anfang des Textes als Digitalisat der BSB.

terkloster von Ebersberg und in einer Handschrift aus Lambach, die heute in Berlin liegt (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Ms. theol. lat. qu. 140), wobei Lambach ein Schwesterkloster von Kremsmünster ist. Schon die Lambacher Handschrift hat das spektakuläre (und pergamentfressende) Layout aufgegeben.

Die – zumindest vorgebliche – Herrschernähe ist nur im Umkreis des Autors relevant, dann verschwindet sie. Die spektakuläre Form der Überlieferung bewirkt einen schnellen Verbreitungserfolg, wie bei Otfrid, und, mehr noch als bei Otfrid, eine intensive und lang anhaltende Überlieferung des Werks, das so etwas ist, wie der erste Bestseller in der deutschen Literaturgeschichte und bis in die Frühe Neuzeit hinein immer wieder abgeschrieben wurde. Und auch die bei Otfrid genannte Anschlusskommunikation finden wir bei Williram. Das zwischen 1077 und 1081 entstandene *Annolied* etwa war höchst wahrscheinlich in der Breslauer Williramhandschrift überliefert und der deutsche Text des Hohenliedes wurde schon im 12. Jahrhundert als deutsche Fassung des Hohenliedes im *St. Trudperter Hohenlied* verwendet, hatte sich als Übersetzung also schon eingebürgert.

Was ich damit zeigen will, ist, wie konkret die personellen und institutionellen Netzwerke auch bei der Verbreitung dieses Werks entscheidend waren und wie das Werk dabei zunächst von einer Nähe zum Herrscher zu profitieren suchte – und diese Herrschernähe sich in der Tradition dann schnell verliert. Auch die Relevanz der herausragenden Überlieferungsform spielt dabei eine Rolle, so wie in der Moderne ein gutes Cover zum Erfolg eines Buches beitragen kann. Für Kremsmünster etwa lässt sich aus dem Bibliotheksbestand kein guter inhaltlicher Grund für das Interesse an der volkssprachlichen Hoheliedfassung erkennen, wohl aber kann man sich vorstellen, wie beeindruckend das Layout gewirkt haben muss; den Lambachern hat man dieses Luxusformat dann schon nicht mehr gegönnt.

In den gängigen Literaturgeschichten wird von Williram stets im Kontext des ‘Wiederbeginns’ der deutschen Textproduktion gesprochen. Nach den Großwerken des 9. Jahrhunderts, also vor allem auch nach Otfrid, war es im 10. Jahrhundert still geworden um die deutschen Texte. Aber genau besehen, macht Williram nichts anderes, als Otfrid das getan hat: Eine gute Idee wird mit großer Konsequenz und professionell umgesetzt; beide Male im Geist der Zeit: Otfrid im Kontext der etablierten Herrschaftsreligion, des Christentums, Williram im Kontext einer aufblühenden Hoheliedexegese.

Beide Werke haben ähnliche Folgen und tragen zur Ausbildung eines weiteren Literaturbetriebs in deutscher Sprache bei, auch wenn das nicht in ihrer Absicht gestanden haben mag – denn auf Konkurrenz waren sie wohl nicht aus.

Otfrid und Williram – solche ‘gute Geschichte/n’ erzählte man auch im Mittelalter selbst. Ich habe das einmal am sogenannten *Ezzolied* (11. Jahrhundert) zu zeigen versucht, das in einer späteren Prologstrophe in der Vorauer Sammelhandschrift (im 12. Jahrhundert) mit einer solchen Geschichte versehen wurde (Müller “Ezzo” mit weiterer Literatur):

Der guote biscoph Guntere vone Babenberch,
 der hiez machen ein vil guot werch:
 er hiez die sine phaphen
 ein guot liet machen.
 eines liedes si begunden,
 want si di buoch chunden.
 Ezzo begunde scriben
 Wille vant die wise.
 duo er die wise duo gewan,
 duo ilten si sich alle munechen.
 von ewen zuo den ewen
 got gnade ir aller sele. (V. 1–12)

(Der gute Bischof Gunther von Bamberg
 ließ ein sehr gutes Werk anfertigen:
 er befahl seinen Geistlichen,
 ein gutes Lied zu verfassen.
 So begannen sie ein Lied,
 denn sie kannten die Bücher.
 Ezzo begann zu schreiben,
 Wille erfand die Melodie.
 Als er sie gemacht hatte,
 da wurden sie alle zu Mönchen
 Gott sei ihrer Seele gnädig.)

Das Lied sei für die berühmte Pilgerfahrt ins Heilige Land im Jahr 1064/65 gemacht worden und die *Vita Altmanni* bestätigt das anscheinend, wenn sie um 1130 erzählt, dass ein Ezzo für diese Pilgerfahrt ein Lied gemacht habe. Aber die Geschichte wird so wohl nicht stimmen und steht in einer gut greifbaren Tradition, das Singen von Liedern mit herausragenden Ereignissen der Geschichte zu verbind-

den, wie ich zu zeigen versuchte (Müller 2011). Aber auch wenn sie stimmen sollte – und darauf kommt es mir eigentlich an –, wir haben vom *Ezzolied* zwei Fassungen vor uns, und die Forschung konnte zeigen, dass beide Fassungen für je unterschiedliche Kontexte gemacht (oder zumindest bearbeitet) wurden – und schon das konterkariert die ‘eine gute Geschichte’ des Vorauer Prologs, so wahr sie auch sein mag. Schon das Mittelalter kennt also den Versuch, eine Geschichte über einen Text oder Autor zu erzählen und schon das Mittelalter führt uns vor, dass es dabei nicht bei einer Geschichte bleiben muss oder bleiben kann.

Es geht eben nicht um die eine Geschichte, es geht um die jeweils ‘guten Geschichte/n,’ die sich aus den Details erzählen lassen – ohne den Anspruch auf eine umfassende Wahrheit der Literaturgeschichte, aber mit dem Anspruch etwas erzählen zu können, an das das Gespräch der Forschung sich anschließen kann. Und dieses Gespräch kann sich dann um die Dinge drehen, die in den alten Geschichten der Literatur immer schon vorausgesetzt werden mussten: Liebe, Tod, Gewalt – wo kommst du her, wo gehst du hin – Trauer, Trost – Recht, Unrecht – Herrschaft, Sieg und Untergang – also um die Dinge, auf die es eigentlich ankommt.

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Genealogies of Czech Literary History

Abstract

The article analyses the most important and most influential narratives of the history of Czech medieval literature that were produced from the beginnings of modern historiography and literary history in the 19th century onwards. The question is how the character of individual narratives and their socio-historical contexts influenced the questions, topics and areas of interest in research on the history of medieval literatures in Bohemia. For Czech literature, such analysis is especially important, because it shows that the problems the history of Czech literature has had to face from its modern beginnings are also the problems of any new approach that literary historiography may pursue in future, from whatever point of departure. The narratives on which the article focuses are built on an amalgamation of the history of society, language and literature, which a) makes it difficult to supersede them and b) makes any detailed research on transmitted texts look less important. Here lies one of the challenges for future research: the relation of language, text and social and political history has to be analyzed in detail, because it is only through a coordination of all these perspectives that a coherent narrative of the history of Czech literature has been maintained in the past.

Sometimes, for example during the International Medieval Congress in Leeds, when one strolls through the corridors where the publishing houses present their newest publications, one gets the impression that Czech medieval literature (that means literature written in Czech but also texts written in Latin and/or German from the Bohemian basin) does not exist. This can easily throw one into turmoil and existential uncertainty, especially if one is a person doing research in this area. As Walter Schamschula, the German specialist on medieval literature in Bohemia, expressed it more than twenty years ago: “Old Czech literature is one of the most undervalued areas of verbal art outside of its homeland” (Schamschula *An Anthology* 5). It is sometimes very difficult indeed to convince colleagues, especially those from Western countries who have not mastered any Slavonic languages, that quite the opposite is true and that the medieval Latin as well as the vernacular literature from Bohemia is rich, manifold

and worth of analysis and above all is an integral part of medieval occidental literatures. For these reasons we may again cite Walter Schamschula, whose judgement has not lost its relevance even after a quarter of a century:

The European areas in which medieval literatures have been investigated and edited most extensively and intensively are the Romance, Celtic and Germanic, essentially the cultural sphere of the Western Roman Church. Medievalists are concerned either with these areas or, within the Slavic world, with orthodox traditions. They tend to neglect the fact that there is also a Slavic tradition that belongs to the area of the Roman Church. In this area, an intellectual and artistic universe has developed which deserves high attention. This is especially true for Czech, Slovak, Polish and Croatian literatures, and foremost for Czech which, as the westernmost Slavic culture, was also the most advanced in the Middle Ages, showing the closest ties with Latin erudition. (Schamschula *An Anthology* 5: see also Picchio)

To illustrate this 'artistic and intellectual universe' it will be sufficient to touch on some of its significant features. At first, at the beginnings of literature in Bohemia, the ephemeral yet fascinating competitive coexistence of western-Latin and eastern-Slavonic written cultures is documented. Although the transmission history of all the relevant Slavonic as well as Latin manuscripts is extremely complicated, nevertheless the history of mutual influences of the Latin and Slavonic as well as Greek literatures and respective languages represent an exciting research topic waiting for differentiated debate. However, it always has been and, for the reasons Walter Schamschula formulated so well, still is a domain of individual disciplines remote from each other: Byzantine studies, Greek philology, Slavonic studies, medieval Latin philology and archeology.

After this period of imperial struggle for influence is over at the end of the tenth century, another competitive coexistence in the Bohemian basin starts to emerge, between Czechs and Germans. At this point, the chronicle of Cosmas, which contains the first and only and therefore the most successful *origo gentis* narration of the Czech-Bohemian nation and statehood, already bears anti-German tendencies. During the Middle Ages (at least till the fifteenth century) the Cosmas chronicle served as the basis for any subsequent historical narrative. As the most powerful *origo gentis* narrative, the chronicle

was a prominent source of interest for historians from the beginnings of modern Czech historiography. The modern narratives of the Bohemian-Czech history of the Middle Ages rely heavily on Cosmas's chronicle, very often adopting not only its factual information but also its interpretation of events and its overall judgements on the respective society and its elites. For the history of literature in Bohemia, Cosmas's chronicle is important because of its prominence in the modern historical narrative, but also as the prime literary text from a period that is considerably poor as to written sources.

The competitive coexistence of the Czech- and German-speaking population in Bohemia reaches its discursive peak at the turn of the fourteenth century as a consequence of so-called German colonization in Bohemian lands, which was heavily supported by Bohemian kings in the second half of the thirteenth century. From this period, meaning from around the middle of the thirteenth until the middle of the fourteenth century, literary culture in Bohemia is influenced and shaped by Latin literature alongside German literature. Czech literature emerges at the beginning of the fourteenth century in a close relationship with German. Several Czech adaptations of German epics and lyrics flourishing at the time at the courts of late Přemyslid kings (Přemysl Ottokar II, Wenceslas II) have been transmitted to us. The fascinating Bohemian chronicle in verse written in Czech, known as the *Chronicle* of the so-called Dalimil, dating from the 1310s-20s, has an undeniable anti-German tone, now and then quite aggressive, which is explicable by the environment in which the chronicle had its origin. The presumed audience and very probably also the text's sponsors, who were recruited from within the ranks of Czech-speaking nobility of the realm, feared the loss of its privileges and its economic as well as political power in favour of the ever more powerful cities, which were often dominated by German-speaking patricians. The existence of two contemporaneous German translations of the chronicle and of a slightly later Latin one (preserved in a quite recently discovered fragment of a lavishly decorated codex made in Italy and commissioned probably by an unknown Czech/Bohemian customer) allows us to assume much more complicated relationships between the social groups and interests involved than the simple 'antagonism,' as the relationship between 'Czechs' and 'Germans' is ostensibly described in the Czech version of the chronicle.

The time of the reign of Charles IV and Wenceslas IV brought not only a flourishing of literatures in all three languages of the realm,

but their interconnections and ideological significances also deepened in a way of which contemporary research is only partially aware. The foundation of the University of Prague (1348) brought about a sort of textual production hike in the last third of the fourteenth century. A considerable number of texts from this period have always attracted the interest of historians and philologists, especially because of the prominent role of the university in the formation of the Hussite movement from the beginning of the fifteenth century. Nevertheless, the concentration on the Hussite reformation has also conditioned the selection of material worth of analysis, which has only recently started to be more balanced. We may also assume that the period of the Hussite movement before and after the outbreak of Hussite wars has to be scrutinized and contextualized anew, not simply with a focus on Czech written production, which of course experiences a real boom in consequence of the self-definition of the movement as a Czech cause: the interpretation of Czechs as the elect nation whose task was the reform of the church was widespread among the leading figures of the movement from its beginnings. The Hussite reformation and its textual inheritance is such a prominent research topic, especially in Czech but also in international historiography and (mainly Czech) literary historiography, that we may speak of the individual discipline of Hussitology, but nevertheless much is left to be done beyond this area, and the results may surprise us all.

Why then, if literature in Bohemia represents such an interesting research area, especially for contemporary historiography and literary history with their interdisciplinary-oriented methods of cross-cultural comparison, is the research on the material extant rather modest, and the material itself almost *terra incognita* for international scholars?

This situation has many explanations, and in this essay only some of them can be addressed. They are of an institutional, scholarly, theoretical and methodological nature in addition to the simple language barrier: *slavica sunt, non leguntur*. Let us start with Czech scholarly discourse. This is important because, as the editors of this issue have emphasised (see “What is European Medieval Literature?” above), “although we are always operating with multiple possible developments seen from a certain time and place, we can only write and understand retrospectively.” Introspection – a sort of meditation on the history of literary historiography itself – should be an integral part of this reflection. For Czech literature, such introspection is especially impor-

tant, because it shows very quickly that several problems the history of Czech literature has had to face from its modern beginnings are also problems for any new approach we may pursue in future from whichever point of departure. In the following analysis I will concentrate on the main literary historical as well as historiographic narratives in Bohemian-Czech literature, which were produced from the beginnings of modern historiography and literary history. I will set aside the individual genres, groups of texts or special research areas and the development that they underwent in the given time frame. I will also quote only the most important secondary literature concerning the dominant narratives and their role in society. Special studies, text editions and lexica I will also leave aside.

Josef Dobrovský and His Research on Czech Literature: Uniting Literature and Language

Modern research on Slavonic and Czech literature, culture and history starts more or less with the pioneering work of Josef Dobrovský in the last two decades of the eighteenth century, on which the disciplines of Slavonic and Czech philology were founded. Dobrovský and his generation of scholars began to focus on the earliest history of the Slavs for various reasons: an important one was the influence of Rousseau's teaching and the judgements of the German scholars influenced by Rousseau, especially the work of Johann Gottfried Herder. German scholarly discourse was decisive for the development of the two young disciplines: Dobrovský applied the methods of modern German philology – for example the methods of comparative linguistics – to Slavonic material. Analytical work on language was the central point of his Slavonic studies and had a direct impact on the following generations of Czech philologists. The ideological underpinning Dobrovský gave to his Slavonic studies was also very important for subsequent generations of philologists and literary intelligentsia.

Dobrovský wrote the first modern history of Czech literature, *Geschichte der tschechischen Sprache und Literatur* (1791–92, second edition 1818). In this work he connected the analysis of language and literature; he regarded literature only as a representation of a particular language. The structure of his book indicates this: the first four chapters are devoted to the development of the common Slavonic language, the fifth and sixth chapters to Slavonic orthography and

character font. The remaining chapters (seven through twelve) describe the history of literature in the Slavonic and Czech languages. Individual literary works are treated by the author as monuments of the six different stages in the development of the Slavonic-Czech language. Dobrovský suggested a periodization of the Czech language and its literature into six ages: the first from the immigration of the ‘Czechs’ into the Bohemian basin until their Christianization in the ninth-tenth century AD; the second from the Christianization until the rule of Johann of Luxembourg (1310, the disappearance of the indigenous ruling family of Premyslids); the third until the outbreak of the Hussite revolt in 1419 (Dobrovský writes “until Jan Hus or the death of the king Venceslas IV of Luxembourg”); the fourth from the 1420s until “the spread of book print or the beginning of the rule of Ferdinand I” (1526); the fifth from this time until 1620 (the battle on the White Mountain in Prague, in which rebellious protestant and Utraquist Czech estates were defeated by the Habsburg Emperor Ferdinand II); and the last and sixth from “the expulsion of non-Catholics until our times” (Dobrovský 14).

Dobrovský’s periodization concentrated exclusively on Czech written texts; German and Latin production is mentioned only as a context for Czech production. Dobrovský understood German literature as a more developed one, which served as an authoritative model for Czech literature. According to him, this relationship between German and Czech literature was constituted by the dominance of German culture in general, at the court of the late Premyslids as well as in the fast-developing Bohemian cities. German immigration into the Bohemian basin in the second half of the thirteenth century was in his conception the key factor for the development of Czech literary culture:

Die deutsche Sprache beliebte der Hof und der Adel, und sie war das Mittel, wodurch die Nachahmung der deutschen, die in Künsten und Wissenschaften die nächsten Muster waren, erleichtert worden ist. Man lernte nun die Werke der schwäbischen Dichter kennen und fand Geschmack daran. Das Beispiel deutscher Dichter reizte die Böhmen nun auch zur Nachahmung, zu ähnlichen Versuchen in ihrer Muttersprache. (Dobrovský 329–30)

This narrative could be easily read as a description of the situation of Czech-speaking literary culture in Dobrovský’s own times: at the end of the eighteenth century, German scholarship and literary culture

were leading the way for the first Czech national thinkers and men of letters. Many of them, like Dobrovský himself, published their ideas and analyses solely in German.

Dobrovský's approach may seem ancient history today, but it is a key factor for understanding the subsequent development of the scholarly discourse on the question of what Czech literature is and what it is not. Dobrovský's understanding of literature as a demonstration of the abilities of a language to fulfil the highest cultural aspirations lies behind the works of all his followers, Czech philologists and literary historians alike, reaching far into the twentieth century. The language itself was never critically discussed from the methodological point of view in its relationship to literature on the one side and society on the other, and it was never discussed as a social and cultural phenomenon together with other languages coexisting at a given time in the respective area.

The role of literature as a sort of legitimization for its respective language and society representing together the idea of a nation further shaped the way in which literary works were perceived in society, in lower and higher educational systems as well as in scholarly discourse. The concentration of Czech philology and literary scholarship on 'their' literature and its almost compulsive urge to compare the 'quality' and the 'development' of this literature with other European literatures, especially German literature, is very comprehensible in the times of 'cultural struggle' (*Kulturkampf*) of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, as the Czech national intelligentsia and political elites called the ideological background of their activities concentrated on the Czech nation, its historical past and political future. The other part of this ideological background provided the movement of Pan-Slavism, which was nevertheless more ephemeral in Bohemia than it may seem at first sight. Although in Czech literary history the 'initiating' role of medieval Slavonic written culture in the ninth and tenth centuries was always regarded as prominent (see below), research on it was only partially influenced by decisively politically connoted ideas about Pan-Slavism, and not without ambivalence. Soon after the 1848 Pan-Slav Congress in Prague, leading figures of the political Pan-Slavic movement in Bohemia, Karel Havlíček Borovský, Ludovít Štúr and František Palacký, explicitly refused to agree to its logical consequence, namely the leading and protectionist role of the Russian empire, and pursued a new concept of Austro-Slavism. In addition to the always-ambivalent role of Pan-Slavism in contemporary research at this point,

Pan-Slavic ideas were at best expressed in the forged Czech medieval poems from the second decade of the nineteenth century. After their exposure as forgeries in the 1880s, Pan-Slavic ideas were dead not only as political but also as scholarly concepts.

Czech Manuscript Forgeries and Josef Jungmann: National Literature without Texts

Nevertheless, aside from Pan-Slavism, which represented a problematic political concept anyway for the Czechs (who initiated it), the Ossian-like forgeries of Czech medieval heroic epics and lyric poetry that were produced by ardently nationalistic poets and linguists (bred almost without exception by Josef Dobrovský, who also was the first scholar who strongly doubted the authenticity of the allegedly newly-found medieval manuscripts with the said poems) played an enormously important role in the formation of the new Czech political nation (Rychterová “The Manuscripts”). For the second generation of intellectuals and politicians of the so-called national awakening (the first one formed by enlightenment scholars, Dobrovský and his circle), the forged manuscripts were seen as evidence of a very high level of advancement of Czech literature between the eighth and tenth centuries that could in this way compete with German. For these people, the fact that the poems were forged was not important (several of them were among the presumed authors) because of the philosophical background that legitimated their existence. According to this, the forged poems were expressions of the soul of Czech nationhood, which had continued unaltered from the beginnings of the Czech nation to the present times. It was only necessary to dive deep enough into this soul to hear and to record the echo of its songs (Dávidházi). The forgeries became an integral and for several reasons the most important part of the history of Czech literature, as is already seen in the 1820s in the *Historie literatury české* [*History of Czech literature*], which was written by one of the presumed authors of the forged poems, Josef Jungmann. In his narrative, Jungmann mingled the history of the Czech language, Czech literature and Czech society (the nation) in a way that far surpassed Dobrovský’s approach. Jungmann defined ‘literature’ at first very widely – his *Historie* gathered practically all documents in which Czech words or sentences appear – from glosses in medieval Latin manuscripts to tracts on horse diseases from the sixteenth century

to decrees of city councils from the seventeenth century. For his own time (the nineteenth century), he concentrated on poetry and prose. He also proposed a new, or, rather, a slightly modified periodization from the one proposed by Josef Dobrovský. He marked the beginning of the first period with the year 451 and the end with the extinction of the Přemyslid dynasty in 1306: the period nevertheless ends in 1310 with the beginning of the rule of John of Luxembourg as it was described by Dobrovský.

Jungmann emphasised the key role of the ‘ethnically Czech’ dynasty as he understood it. The second period was determined by him using the years 1310 and 1409, the year of the issue of the decree of Kuttenberg, which adjusted the relation of the four ‘nations’ at Prague University in favour of the Czech nation: in Jungmann’s time this was understood as the first victory of the ethnic Czechs over the Germans (the difference between a ‘nation’ at a medieval university and ‘nation’ in an ethnic and cultural sense was here suspended). The earlier date of the end of the second period also allowed Jungmann to put the vernacular Czech writings of Jan Hus at the beginning of the third period, which starts with the year 1410 and ends in the year 1526 with the end of the rule of the last Slavonic dynasty in Bohemia (the year that Louis the Jagiellonian dies in the battle of Mohács). He marked the end of the fourth period with the battle at the White Mountain (1620), the fifth with the Josephine reforms in the 1770s and 1780s, in his own words with the introduction of the German language as the language of state administration and education in the Habsburg monarchy, and the sixth he left open up to his own time. Jungmann reworked his book again in 1846 (Jungmann 1849), 20 years later, but the periodization stayed the same.

A close look at the few differences between Dobrovský’s and Jungmann’s periodization reveals that Jungmann kept Dobrovský’s basic structure and only connected the respective dates with different events, which means that he gave them a new historical and ideological background with a focus on the *Kulturkampf* between German and Czech national elements throughout history. His major change concerns the first period, which he began with the year 451. The date is not further explained in the book, and it is very interesting to look at it more closely because it illustrates in detail what concept of literature (never explicitly discussed by him) stood behind Jungmann’s work.

Jungmann connects the year 451 with the arrival of the ‘Czechs’ in the Bohemian basin. He borrows the story from the medieval

chronicle of Cosmas (written at the end of the eleventh and in the first two decades of the twelfth century), which contains in its first chapter a sort of ethnogenesis of the ‘Czechs,’ as Cosmas knew them in his own time. The story is well known. It talks about the so-called forefather Czech, who came with his people to the Bohemian basin from the south, recognized the land as suitable for settlement and settled there. There are no temporal designations in the narrative, and Cosmas himself characterizes the story as the “narration of old men we may or may not believe.” The first written medieval Czech chronicle of the so-called Dalimil, composed during the first two decades of the fourteenth century, added several details to the story. In it, Croatia was determined to be the land of departure of the forefather Czech and his people, and the forefather himself was described as a man who was banished because of murder. Later chroniclers of the fourteenth century more or less continued this narration, which was altered, or, rather, enlarged by Václav Hájek of Libočany in the third decade of the sixteenth century. He described two brothers, Czech and Lech, Croatian princes who moved (without explicitly mentioning a reason) north with their *Volk* and founded the land of the Czechs (Bohemia) and the land of the Poles (Poland). This event is dated to 644. Hájek’s chronicle is the only source Jungmann could use for his dating. Although it was already known in his time as an extremely unreliable source (a detailed critical analysis of the text of the chronicle was delivered by Gelasius Dobner in 1761–82), Czech as well as other European poets and men of letters (among others Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Johann Gottfried Herder, who were both leading the way for their Czech followers and emulators) liked the chronicle because of its lively and colourful stories and narratives.

Nevertheless, Hájek’s dating does not have anything in common with the dating of Jungmann’s *Historie*. If we look further, the only possible explanation that remains is that he took the date from the battle on the Catalaunian fields, in which the Huns under the leadership of Attila were beaten by the Roman general Aetius and which meant the end of Hunnish rule in Europe. Only the collapse of Hunnish rule could (hypothetically) open the way for migrants from the Balkan Peninsula towards northern parts of Europe. The year 451 as the date of origin of Czech literature is (of course) attested by no document. This fact nevertheless does not call it into question in the eyes of Josef Jungmann. In his perception (which is never explicitly discussed in the book), the simple existence of a nation (and he regards the mythical Croatian immigrants as such) sufficiently documents

the existence of its national literature, and, what is even more important, its national literature in its purest, most original, uncontaminated form. Without a single text in his hands, Jungmann regards this period of Czech literature (no matter how absurd this sounds today) as its golden age. This golden age ends with the disappearance of the ethnically Czech ruling dynasty, the direct heir of the forefather Czech and his descendants in Jungmann's understanding. The forged poems from the manuscript from Königshof, which contained the heroic narratives from the time before the Christianization of Eastern Central Europe and were regarded by their authors as a representation of the soul of the nation, were placed in the last years of Přemyslid rule. Declaring the first period of Czech literature as a golden age, to which the forged epics allegedly belonged, therefore allowed Jungmann to connect his own time (meaning the sixth period) with the origins of Czech literature, nation and language and to present it simultaneously as its representation, reincarnation and resumption.

Dobrovský already regarded the history of the language and its literature as inextricable. For Jungmann, this conjunction, in which the history of the society (nation) was also incorporated, possessed an even higher, almost metaphysical meaning. The works of Dobrovský and Jungmann remained the only attempts at describing the development of Czech literature from its beginnings to modern times until the end of the nineteenth century. The reasons why they did not have followers who would develop and/or discuss their concepts further are manifold. One of them is surely the problem of the literary forgeries, the manuscripts of Königshof and Gründberg. Their authenticity was attacked repeatedly from different positions and fiercely defended until the 1880s, when the most distinguished Czech philologist and linguist Josef Gebauer switched sides and, leaning on his lifelong research into the medieval Czech language, exposed the texts from both manuscripts as works from the early nineteenth century. The following controversy filled the next decade and absorbed the energy of all its participants. Only after its partial remission, from 1892 onwards, did the Czech literary historian Jaroslav Vlček publish the first volumes of his history of Czech literature, which replaced Dobrovský's and Jungmann's works.

Jaroslav Vlček and His History of Literature as History of Ideas

Vlček returned in his periodization to Dobrovský, but he modified it significantly. At first he included Old Slavonic literary monuments connected to the mission of Constantine and Methodius in the ninth century in the narrative as a part of Czech literature (first period: “The beginnings of Czech literature under the rule of Latin”). This was a highly ambivalent decision from a contemporary point of view (there are no documents with Old Slavonic literary texts extant from the given time that originate in the Bohemian basin) that determined the perception of Old Slavonic literary culture in Czech literary scholarship for decades to come. Vlček interpreted the mission of Constantine and Methodius as well as the reaction of the Frankish church, which are both relatively well documented, as the first stage of the *Kulturkampf* between Latino-German and Greco-Slavonic Christian concepts of culture and state formation in Bohemia. This was ultimately won by the Latino-German party, which according to him had grave consequences for Czech society and culture: “The Czechs permanently adhered to the European West and were from now onwards at the mercy of its prolific as well as its lethal influence” (Vlček 22). In Vlček’s *History*, the conflation of the history of literature with the history of society, which Jungmann had introduced in his work, was pursued further. For example, in Vlček’s work the Latin chronicle of Cosmas, which during the Middle Ages was already regarded as the best narrative on the beginnings of the Czech nation and state, is listed among Czech literary works, whereas other contemporary Latin literary production is strictly omitted.

Vlček linked the beginning of the second period to the introduction of courtly lyrics and epics at the court of the late Přemyslids in the second half of the thirteenth century. Incidentally, he also linked it to the spread of German literary culture in Bohemia in the course of the so-called German colonization of the Bohemian lands. With these origins, courtly poetry (meaning mostly Czech adaptations of German models in his narrative) does not find any sympathy in Vlček’s work: he calls the respective texts “sluggish” and “boring” and, with reference to their low aesthetic and literary qualities, avoids an otherwise necessary compliment to German literature as an integral part of Czech literature. The second period, lasting some 50 years, is in his understanding a time of dominance of German courtly culture (poorly imitated by Czech authors) in Bohemia in its last,

decadent phase. It is very probable that Vlček's judgement and his negative view of the courtly epics were heavily influenced by the struggle for and against the forged manuscripts. The 'loss' of the forged epics for the narrative of Czech medieval history and literature was also a frustrating disappointment for the adversaries of their authenticity, among whom Vlček belonged. Besides, the controversy about their authenticity was by no means settled when he published his *History*. He did not include the manuscripts in his narrative on medieval Czech literature, because he would have been immediately forced explicitly to state his position on them by commenting on all the contradictory opinions that had been published in great numbers just in the time he had been working on his book. He avoided this by his critique of the entire genre of courtly lyrics and epics and by depriving it of any importance for the subsequent development of Czech literature.

The third period from c. 1310 till c. 1390 was, in his narrative, some sort of resurgence of Czech literary culture, which is described as a self-preservative movement of the 'Czech element' against the 'Germanization' of Czech noble courts and cities. In this conception the Czech chronicle in verse of the so-called Dalimil plays a main role, as with its emergence the period itself starts (1310–15). It allowed for the merging of literary and social history better than the chronicle of Cosmas because firstly it was a piece of literature in Czech and secondly it contained an indisputable anti-German tendency, which seemed to mirror the social situation of the time. Vlček does not incorporate any Latin and German literary works of the time in the third period; his focus is solely on texts written in Czech. This causes several omissions and logical gaps in his narrative that are difficult to understand from a contemporary point of view. For example, he includes in his narrative with regard to the next 'Hussite' period the reform theologians Matthew of Cracow and Matthias of Janov from Prague University as well as the reform preachers Konrad Waldhauser and John Milicius of Kremsier (the so-called 'predecessors' of Hus). Waldhauser and Milicius of Kremsier are even described as of utmost importance. All these authors expressed themselves in Latin and/or in German. They are present in the narrative only as 'personal' background for Czech written works of religious education from the last third of the fourteenth century, without establishing any connections between their writings and any extant Czech written text. Their writings are not analysed or described in detail in the book.

The amalgamation of the history of language, literature and society allowed Vlček as well as other authors after him to use the extant textual material according to his (their) momentary ideological needs. This amalgamation was successfully used to bypass the gaps in the narrative caused by missing comparative analysis of primary sources. This is probably one of the reasons why analyses of individual texts are so scarce in Czech literary scholarship from its beginning. It was never really necessary to deal with literary monuments as such because they were stratified according to external parameters and treated either as historical documents, or as documents of the history of ideas, or as documents of language development, with the task being to serve the resulting general narrative in which the history of society supported the history of language and the history of literature, and vice versa.

The fourth period in Vlček's *History* is very interesting in this respect. Jan Hus and his followers are regarded almost exclusively from the point of view of medieval history, church history and (especially in this case) the history of ideas. Literature (however defined) completely fades into the background, which is very well illustrated by the appraisal of Jan Hus and of his importance for Czech literature. Hus is the creator of a unified written Czech standard language in Vlček's narrative: only in this 'new language' lies his relevance for the history of literature. The third pillar of the narrative of the history of Czech literature, the language, dominates here to a surprising extent. Hus left behind an impressive bulk of texts written in Czech which may very well document a completely new stage of the development of literature written in Czech, concerning the language, literary style, genre, a new ideology of literature as well as a new strata of recipients etc. (Rychterová "The Vernacular"). Hus's care for the 'new' Czech language itself, meaning the development of a new diacritic orthography that indeed started to be popular in the time of his literary activity, is not well documented, and his participation in its introduction remains speculative. But nothing of this is discussed in Vlček's *History*. His effort aims at depicting Hus's struggle for a reform of the church, *ergo* his 'historical' value.

But why did Vlček choose to present diacritic orthography (the new 'normative' language as he calls it) as the major (and only) literary achievement of Hus? Firstly, he heavily depended on the work (unpublished university lectures) of the philologist and author of the (first and only) vocabulary of the medieval Czech language, Jan Gebauer, who appreciated Hus only for his role in the formation of lan-

guage and nothing else. Secondly, Vlček regarded Hus's written Czech work as not original enough, because it was dependent in its ideas on Wyclif and his theological and philosophical concepts. There was a controversy about the 'originality of ideas' of the Czech reform thinker Hus at the time (from today's point of view the question of 'originality' is obsolete). Vlček's judgement about Hus was driven by contemporary discussions of nationalistic historiography about Hus's and his movement's place in the history of the European reformation, and not by specific literary historical questions and evaluations. The socio-political history of the Czech-Hussite reform movement also determines Vlček's depiction of the literary activities of Hus's followers, the leaders of the Hussite (Utraquist) church during the fifteenth century. Interestingly, the military leader John Žižka is depicted here as a great Czech writer, very probably more for his military achievements than for his ideas or literary activities, which remain speculative: only one work, the Hussite 'military order' written in Czech from the 1420s, is transmitted under his name (Vlček 127–29).

From the history of the Czech reformation, which Vlček ends with the year 1485 (when religious peace was agreed by the representatives of catholic and Utraquist churches in Bohemia), he returns into the fourteenth century and starts a new chapter concerning the rise of humanism and the renaissance in Bohemia. He therefore offers two separate narratives of the same period, leaning on different concepts of historical development of European societies. What is more, these separate narratives concern the period he and many of his contemporary philologists and literary scholars regarded as the most important one in the development of medieval Czech literature. With humanism and the renaissance, Vlček returned to the history of literature in his second narrative of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. His way of dealing with the problem of the incorporation of the Hussite revolt into any history of European literatures became one of the most important features of Czech literary historiography until today: he ensured that literary works classified as 'humanistic' were always dissociated from the 'Hussite' narrative. In contrast to 'Hussite' texts, they were connected to the overall narrative of the European renaissance. However, in the narrative of Czech literature as expression of genuine 'Czechness,' of which the peak was Hussite production, they remained 'hanging in the air' between medieval and early modern times and also between medieval and early modern literatures. The narrative of the Bohemian literary renaissance

sance and humanism absorbed all those facts and findings about the late medieval history of Bohemia which did not fit very well into the dominant narrative of the Czech reformation of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The consequence was the production of concepts that tried to harmonise the two narratives, which were not only separate but also competing, by the means of terms and definitions, as for example with the concept of 'early Humanism in Bohemia' that is echoed in the scholarly discourse up to today. The two competing narratives are also present in the background of any medievalist reasoning about this period at least until the end of the twentieth century (and even later). After 1989 they were increasingly placed in opposition in medieval studies, which resulted in new appraisals of the high cultural achievements during the reign of Charles IV in contrast to the cultural collapse caused by the 'Hussites.' This narrative is also relevant to the public debate in the contemporary Czech media about 'Czech identity' and its roots. For historiography as well as the history of literature, such politically defined black and white representations of medieval history in Bohemia make efforts to overcome simplifying national and nationalistic historical narratives more difficult.

Vlček's 'medieval Czech literature' ends in the second decade of the sixteenth century by being crowned with the subsequent period of the 'golden age' of Czech literature, in which the introduction of print, religious peace, national self-consciousness and pride, humanism and renaissance are brought together: after the epoch of dissociation an epoch of harmony and tranquillity begins. It is fascinating how easily the fissured scholarly narrative can become the fissured history itself. Vlček returns in the fifth period to the periodization and narrative of Josef Dobrovský, to his concept of literature as a chaperon of the language: already for Dobrovský the 'humanistic literature' was proof of the highest peak ever achieved in the history of Czech language. Vlček avoids starting the debate between the differing concepts of Dobrovský and Jungmann, who contrary to Dobrovský placed the 'golden age' in the oral culture of the old Slavs and then again in his own times. Vlček's history of Czech literature ends in the second half of the seventeenth century, with the work of John Amos Comenius, the last bishop of the Bohemian Brethren, and with Czech baroque poetry.

Vlček's work was highly influential in Czech literary scholarship of the twentieth century and is still very influential today. This is for the simple reason that after him no convincing narrative has been

produced that could successfully serve the needs and beliefs of Czech society. It must not be forgotten that before World War II, before the genocide of the Jewish population and the forced displacement of the German population, Czech society was practically bilingual. Only later did it become vaguely homogenous (if the Roma minority is put aside) through language, culture and also through something we could perhaps call a 'shared historical experience.'

Narratives of Bohemian-Czech Literature until World War II: a Failed Breakthrough

The next overall narrative of the history of medieval Czech literature was put forward some twenty years after Vlček by positivist literary historian Jan Jakubec. In Czech literary scholarship of the twentieth century, Jakubec's history was always considered to be less valuable than Vlček's work because of its 'lack of ideological quality.' Jakubec's book indeed lacks the perpetual oscillation between the history of society, the history of ideas and the history of literature and/or language. However, the author informs the reader much more about literary texts. In his analysis he works quite successfully with the criterion of genre, which replaces Vlček's criteria that rely on the history of ideas. This allows him to eliminate some of the periodization problems Vlček struggled with.

He starts with the Byzantine mission of Constantine and Methodius and leans on the work of Josef Pekař, published ten years after Vlček's *History*, which concerned the dating of one legend of St Venceslas and Ludmila that was named after its hypothetical author, the so-called Christian. Dobrovský dated it to the fourteenth century, whereas Pekař moved the date of its origin four hundred years earlier. He did this with the explicitly formulated purpose of replacing the 'lost' forged manuscripts with another literary work:

It was a sad duty of critical Czech historiography until now to remove old and new forgeries. Let us hope that it will now gain some merits. Because now historiography can show that it is able not only to destroy, empty and depopulate history, but to discover new values, conquer new and almost forgotten kingdoms. (Pekař 1–2: translated PR)

The word choice is very interesting. Pekař talks about his dating of the legend as a metaphoric conquest of new and forgotten kingdoms:

there is an idea of a struggle for Czech history behind it, of a battle for its early medieval origins. It poses the question as to why Czech historiography (and literary scholarship) was generally so keen (and is still today) to place the origins of Czech nation and statehood in the tenth century. A simple answer would be ‘the sooner the better,’ but there is something else to be considered. Only if Czech statehood and written culture had already started to emerge in the tenth century was it possible to depict it as an heir of the ‘Great Moravian Empire’ in its more mythical than historical dimension: the Great Moravian ‘empire’ is more or less hypothetical in its extent and importance, and has been disintegrated in the course of Hungarian raids. The legend of so-called Christian fitted these efforts more than anything else: it contains the *translatio imperii* narrative, which starts with a passage defining the Czech duchy as the heir of Great Moravia. To put the text, extant in manuscripts from the middle of the fourteenth century, as close as possible to the presumed event of this *translatio* is a strategy of nationalistic historiography that is only too easily understandable.

In his analysis of the legend, Pekař was convincing, and a considerable part of the Czech historiographic discourse accepted his dating (it has nevertheless stayed hypothetical until today). From this moment on, it became easy to re-define the beginnings of Czech literature by using ‘authentic’ and, what is more, eulogizing literary texts, not written in Czech but in any case (presumably) produced by a ‘Czech’ author, and to connect the texts originating probably in Bohemia in the time of the Byzantine mission of Constantine and Methodius (there are no texts extant from the respective time and area) directly to the beginnings of Bohemian-Czech statehood under the rule of the first Přemyslids. Pekař himself called the legend of so-called Christian “the first chronicle of Bohemia.” He entitled his treatise on the problem of the dating with this phrase. It replaced the *Chronicle* of Cosmas as the first medieval narrative of Czech history in his interpretation.

Jakubec emphasized the importance of the legend exactly for these reasons. Together with Pekař, he presumed the author of the legend of so-called Christian to be a member of the Přemyslid family and a relative of the holy bishop Adalbert of Prague, which means a person of the highest political importance (there is no proof for this). He dated the legend to the year 993 and emphasized the quality of its language (compared to contemporaneous European production) and its allegedly more ‘historical’ than ‘hagiographic’ pur-

pose. He wrote that from this legend we gain information on the considerable influence of Slavonic liturgy in the Czech duchy. Only with the help of the (Latin) legend of so-called Christian could all the church Slavonic sources be fully incorporated into the history of Czech literature, since they are extant only in much younger manuscripts and were produced far away from the Bohemian basin.

The subsequent development of Czech written medieval literature was arranged differently by Jakubec than by Vlček. Jakubec used the social and political history of the area only as a necessary background, instead of making it a driving force of the narrative as Vlček did. The history of ideas, which was Vlček's foremost concern, he completely left aside. Jakubec rather chose genre as a criterion and, to a certain extent, replaced the criterion of language development with it. He nevertheless kept the basic periodization of Dobrovský, and in accord with him (in contrast to Vlček) he integrated German courtly poetry of the second half of the thirteenth century into the narrative as an essentially positive, although 'decadent,' element. Nevertheless, he completely left aside German literary production of the fourteenth century. He thereby ignored the fact that key political figures were involved in it as authors and recipients, as for example John of Středa, the chancellor of Emperor Charles IV. During the Czechoslovak First Republic (1918–38), German studies at the University of Prague started to turn their attention gradually to the German literary monuments from Bohemia (Sichálek). The leading figures here were Arnošt Kraus (Kraus 1917–24, Kraus 1933) and Franz Spina (Höhne-Udolph), but the war (Arnošt Kraus was killed in 1943 in the concentration camp Theresienstadt) and subsequent *coup d'état* of the communist party controlled by the Stalinist Soviet Union terminated all these efforts for a long period to come.

History of Literature during Communist Rule: the Choice of the People

The next coherent interpretation of the history of Czech literature was written after the communist seizure of power in 1948 (Hrabák). How the interpretations of the history of Czech literature would have developed in a democratic Czechoslovakia remains an intriguing question. The works of the prematurely deceased Czech literary historian Jan Vilikovský (1904–46) indicated new methodological approaches, which unfortunately could not be elaborated into a com-

prehensive narrative. For him, Czech literature was the sum of the literatures in all languages used in the given geographic area (Vilikovský *Písemnictví, Próza*). Vilikovský's pupils and followers Antonín Škarka and Josef Hrabák left this approach, revolutionary in the context of Czech literary historiography, and defined German literature as not belonging to the subjects of research on Czech literature. Their argument sounds slightly peculiar from a contemporary point of view, but it fits perfectly with the approaches that Czech literary historiography formulated from its very beginnings (the history of literature as an amalgamation of the history of language, society and literature): literary expressions in the German language do not have any relevance for the development of Czech literature, because German was never the literary language of Czech Slavs, which means that the German language does not belong to Czech "verbal and literary culture" (Hrabák 9). On the contrary, Czech literature had to fight against German literature at the end of the thirteenth century and only with supreme effort was it able to maintain its place in the sun (Havránek-Hrabák 11-12).

Hrabák became the foremost representative of Marxist literary historiography under the new regime, and as such he coordinated and in great part himself wrote the next comprehensive narrative on the history of Czech literature, this time under the central idea of '*lidovosti*' or '*zlidovění*.' Unfortunately there is no satisfying translation of these terms into English. Apparent equivalents such as 'popularization' and 'popularity' have a different meaning in the context of English-speaking literary scholarship. '*Völkisch*' or '*völkischness*,' 'becoming *völkisch*' is closer, but it is still not exact enough. '*Lidovost*' and '*zlidovění*' are not only terms imported by the Soviet form of Marxist literary historiography, but they are also terms deeply rooted in the cultural self-understanding of the modern Czech nation formed during the nineteenth century. The whole culture of the so-called 'Czech national awakening' turned, in the best Herderian manner, to the hypothetical 'poetic soul of the *Volk*,' in which the first generations of literary scholars searched for the purest form of national literature in their own language (Czech social elites were German- and French-speaking and reading at that time). As mentioned above, Jungmann based the main elements of his narrative on this search: his understanding of what literature is and what not, and where and when it started and ended, depended on the (hypothetical) participation of the *Volk* in it. Marxist literary historians therefore did not need to cope with the difficult introduction of extrinsic

concepts into their 'own' literary discourse. They only had to slightly adapt particular elements of their own discourse and to reinforce the tendency already available in it as one of their main interpretative approaches.

The anti-German tendency of Czech literary historiography of previous periods fitted perfectly into post-war Marxist concepts too. Hrabák again only needed to reinforce this and to interface it with the half-nationalistic, half-Marxist concepts of '*völkischness*.' In short, the resulting narrative had the following tenor: Czech literature began in the East with the Byzantine mission of Constantine and Methodius, which did not bring language and literature but Christian liturgy, which was able to compete with the Latin liturgy and script. Czech language was always there as well as a genuine '*völkisch*' literary taste, and the script simply made its proper expression possible. The script was abandoned hereafter, but this did not change the basic attitudes. Then, Latin and also German influences from the West arrived, which were adopted by the social elites and therefore became dominant for considerable periods. But they continually clashed with the Slavonic needs and aspirations of the 'common people.' The *Volk* defied the alien influences and promoted its own literary production and understanding of literature. Latin (or German) literature was not able to initiate '*völkisch*' vernacular literary production, in contrast to Church Slavonic. At the end of the Middle Ages, these *völkisch* needs and aspirations triumphed with the Hussite 'literary' revolution.

In the so-called 'academic history of Czech literature,' for which Hrabák designed the outline, we sometimes meet almost comical arguments in favor of this overall concept. For example, the fact that between the eleventh and the fourteenth centuries only Latin literary monuments are extant from the Bohemian basin (the German ones are excluded) is ascribed to the lethal political influence of German (Roman) emperors, who interfered with the inner issues of the Czech duchy. This was very weak during the given period, and unable to defy this German influence more effectively (Hrabák 61). From a contemporary point of view, the use of the bad-influence argument makes it even less understandable why German literary works are not mentioned in Hrabák's work. On the other side, the smaller the amount of information the smaller the possibility that the hypothesis would be criticized. Hrabák could use Dobrovský's periodization almost without any changes because of the ideological affinities of his concept to the concepts of the literary historio-

graphy of the 'national awakening.' He only had to interpret the fourteenth century, from the Chronicle of the so-called Dalimil until Jan Hus, as an 'intermediary phase' in a story of otherwise linear progress of the self-assertion of the *Volk*. He managed this with the help of the terms 'laicization' and 'democratization' of literature (used as terms describing subsequent periods, meaning that development went from laicization to democratization), which both then found their peak in the subsequent period of Hussite literary production in which the literature became entirely '*völkisch*.' Very important in Hrabák's concept was the direct connection of the Byzantine mission of Constantine and Methodius with the beginnings of literacy in the Bohemian duchy of the tenth century that had been created by the previous generations of historians and literary historians: without this the whole narrative of the '*völkisch*-Slavonic-Czech' literature, the narrative arc of its triumphant struggle against alien influences, would completely lack its basis. However – and we have to admit this – the resulting narrative appears surprisingly coherent up to today. It does not have any gaps and inconsistencies, unlike the narrative of Vlček (who did not have the legend of so-called Christian, of course), and it does not need the additional criterion of genre to cope with the divergent material, as Jakubec required. It is self-contained and as such also very convincing. No wonder that it is so difficult to abandon. The so-called 'academic history' of Czech literature (Hrabák) is the last overall narrative of Czech medieval literature written: there have been no new attempts after 1989, neither by the institutions nor by the individuals active in the discourse of Czech literary scholarship.

There are, however, two histories of Czech literature written by German literary scholarship, Winfried Baumann and Walter Schamshula, from the second half of the twentieth century. Both of them rely heavily on the material collections and narratives produced in Czech literary scholarly discourse: they simply redirect the focus in the direction of a positive appraisal of German literature and its more important and more differentiated role in the overall narrative. The explicit approach of Winfried Baumann (Baumann) was to describe and analyze the relations between Latin, Czech and German literary production between the tenth and fifteenth centuries. He left the Byzantino-Slavonic episode aside and also abandoned the chronological principle of narration. He has chosen instead the genre as the principle of primary organization of the given textual material. The chronological point of view nevertheless creeps in by the back door,

as it were, in the last two chapters concerning the literary boom in the second half of the fourteenth century until the end of the Hussite revolt at the end of the fifteenth century. Here, the criterion of the genre failed to sort out the material in a reasonable manner (frankly speaking, the criterion of genre was only useful for the period in which German literature dominated). Walter Schamschula (Schamschula, *Geschichte*) followed a decade later. He also paid more attention to German literature in Bohemia, and beside a basic chronological organization of the material, in his book genre is also the main criterion. Baumann as well as Schamschula did not pay any attention to Hebrew literature originating in the Bohemian basin. Czech narratives ignore it too, but they ignore everything written that is non-Czech as far as they can (Latin production is discussed only because of the lack of 'own' production written in Czech).

Now What? Medieval Literature in Bohemia between Concepts, Theories and Methods

If we return to the last narrative produced by Czech literary scholars, the 'academic history of Czech literature' (Hrabák), the question of how the 'new,' non-Marxist narrative of Czech medieval literature should look like after 1989 has no simple answer, although it may seem so at first. No 'anti-*völkisch*' turn would help, because this narrative is not simply a Marxist import but is deeply rooted in the self-identification of the Czech-speaking inhabitants of the Bohemian basin, beginning with the concept of their nation from the beginning of the nineteenth century. The periodization of Czech literature that the first generations of Czech linguists and literary scholars designed was a result of the amalgamation of the history of society, language and literature. Its focus on the metaphysically assumed role of the nation in history made it in a way a self-fulfilling prophecy that appeared to join, explain and represent everything (every text) from the most distant past to the very present. Therefore any analysis of extant texts was regarded as almost obsolete: they did not have the power to change the narrative anyway. It also successfully prevented attempts to regard literature from other than a national perspective. Although it may seem that the conceptual outlines Dobrovský, Jungmann and their followers designed were historicized a long time ago, quite the opposite is true. There is still no detailed analysis of the backgrounds of their outline of the history of Czech literature. And

there are still texts and authors almost unknown to research because they did not fit into the dominant narrative: such is the fate, for example, of the already mentioned chancellor of Charles IV, Jan of Středa, whom we should regard as a very important figure in the late medieval history of Bohemia. Only recently was basic research on the transmission and reception of his German writings started.

Connected to this basic problem are several aspects we have to take into account. A first and definitive factor in the hunt for any scholarly discourse that is comparable to the one of contemporary 'western' literary scholarship is the institutional situation of Czech literary scholars. For decades (at least from 1945 until 1989), the education and training of young scholars was organized around the concept of Czech literature as a 'national' literature, and was undertaken in their own national language. The necessary qualification for a scholarly career therefore did not involve any/enough linguistic proficiency in Latin and Middle German (or modern German at least). This meant that for a long time after 1989 there was a complete lack of specialists who had been educated and trained in a way that would enable them to regard and analyze Czech literature from a comparative point of view. Only in recent years has this handicap been overcome with several gifted scholars of younger generations who have been educated in different systems of foreign or reformed domestic universities (see the thematic issue of *Slovo a smysl – Word and Sense* 2014).

The second aspect is the dynamics of the development of European-American literary scholarship from the second half of the twentieth century onward, which brought along a whole series of conceptual, terminological and methodological innovations. These are subject to constant and fluid dialogue between disciplines involved in research on literary texts. It is quite unclear how the history of Czech literature may be integrated in its entirety into this dialogue. In other words, is there any chance of the development of an overall narrative of Czech medieval literature (or medieval literature from the Bohemian basin) that would 'catch up' with the dynamic discourse of the literary scholarship of the last fifty years, if not more? How can the 'squaring of the circle' be achieved: to catch up on the contemporary situation of the debate and at the same time critically to discuss its development from the point of view of the specific material to which it has to be applied?

The third aspect concerns the specifics of the territory and language. How should we describe the literatures of individual lands of

the Bohemian crown? (that means in the Middle Ages Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, Lusatia, etc.) How should one treat Czech literature as a part of literatures from Central and Eastern Central Europe? How can one describe their common features (if there are any)? How are the literatures from Bohemia to be integrated into superordinated units? How should one cope in this respect with the at least partly 'Slavonic' character of the literature from Bohemian basin? How should one solve the problem of the affinities of languages and the gaps between religions and cultures at the same time? Do Russian and Balkan literatures belong to the superordinated units that Bohemian literature has to be integrated into, or not? In this respect the question of cultural transfer and its directions also has to be reconsidered. The depiction of the transfer of ideas, narratives, literary forms and texts from the west to the east, meaning from the centers of Latin written culture in France, Italy and Germany to Bohemia as well as its counterpart, the search for the reciprocal movement back, depends heavily on the overall concepts of 'west' and 'east.' Both are provided with evaluative criteria, 'west' as more 'developed,' 'advanced' etc., 'east' as more 'genuine,' to mention only a few of them. More adequate for the extant material would be to abandon the east-west dichotomy and start from the premise of smaller units that stand in mutual contacts of varying intensity.

The fourth aspect is the complex relation of explanation and representation. How should one discern between explanations and representations of this literature, if the explanation and representation have, from the beginnings of Czech literary scholarship, been regarded and designed as one and the same thing, so much in fact that we can talk about self-explanatory representations (narratives)? The question of explanation and representation is crucial with regard to the audience the hypothetical 'new history' of Czech literature has to reach. On the one side there is an international scholarly community, on the other the Czech-speaking public. The history of 'native' literature is an integral part of lower and higher education in the Czech Republic (the population of which has been, as mentioned above, almost homogenous concerning ethnicity and language since 1945). How should a narrative (representation) look that would be able to satisfy both communities, the international scholarly one as well as the local one? Is such an overall integrated narrative even possible?

And last but not least: How should one cope with the role of the history of literature in contemporary European but also global society, considering the media revolution of the last twenty years?

The way suggesting itself is first to disintegrate any more or less coherent narrative and to start from smaller chronological and territorially delineated units. This was the approach of Eduard Petřů (Petřů), who saw the necessity of dealing with the question of the interrelations, interconnections and autonomy of Church Slavonic, Latin, German and Czech literatures as the first step on the way to a 'new' history of Czech literature (Hebrew literature is again missing in his outline). This would allow us to parcel out the history of Czech literature into individual histories that could be analyzed, explained and narrated separately at first and then, in a second step, put together again on a higher theoretical and methodological level as an integral part of medieval European literatures in the broadest sense. The problem here is again the amalgamation of the historical and literary historical narratives. The disintegration of the literary-historical narrative presumes previous disintegration of the historical narrative, a task which can become very quickly too complicated. Nevertheless, in my eyes this represents the only possible way to deal with the problem successfully, although it is costly in terms of time.

Taking this into account, the first step has to be scholarly concentration on individual works and/or groups of works, and new critical overviews of their transmission, conditions of origin and modes of reception from the point of view of their potential multilingual background and character. The historical conditions of individual processes of vernacularization have to be scrutinized again and again to avoid any self-explanatory narratives, which are almost irresistible, especially in the case of the Hussite movement and its indeed revolutionary new understanding of the role of vernacular languages in the political struggle for the church and social reform.

The first results regarding this first step on the way to the 'new' history of the Czech literature (or literatures) have already achieved been in the last decades. New topics were formulated, new methods introduced, works and authors were appreciated anew that had been long neglected because of their problematic status in the overall narrative of Czech literature (some of them, especially the German and Hebrew ones, were regarded as not belonging to it, some of them as not fitting in it, some of them as not interesting enough for it). Nevertheless – and this is the reason why the permanent critical preoccupation with the basic themes of the history of the literary histori-

cal narrative of the past and critical analysis of the historiographic discourse is of crucial importance – the main themes and problems of the periodization and overall narratives of the Czech medieval literature persist. They persist not only as implicit preconditions of perception (and this holds true for Czech as well as foreign specialists who in the past made attempts to narrate the history of the Czech literature), but also as problems of non-ideological (we may say post-nationalistic and/or post-Marxist) interpretation.

The overview of dominant narratives of the history of Czech literature I sketched above shows relatively clearly which these themes and problems are. Firstly, the necessity of contextualizing the Slavonic mission is relevant, together with several attempts to cultivate the ‘Slavonic heritage’ during the Middle Ages. Here the existence of the Slavonic liturgy in the Benedictine abbey of Sazava in the eleventh century and the literary activity of the Benedictine abbey of Emaus founded by the emperor Charles IV in 1347 has to be emphasized. The question is how the approaches of modern and contemporary Slavonic studies may be integrated into ‘new’ reasoning about the history of medieval Czech literature. The struggle of Slavonic studies to integrate (or to ignore) Czech literature because of its distinct ‘western’ character (Picchio) speaks for itself.

Further, the necessity of contextualizing the German courtly literature of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in Bohemia is relevant. The first literary activity in the Czech language in the Bohemian basin has also to be related to this literature without prejudice or martial rhetoric (Hon). The Czech written works of the genres of courtly literature from this period are transmitted mainly in fragments. It is necessary to scrutinize them anew from the point of view of their (mostly hypothetical) reception and sociopolitical impact. The explanation of the striking fact of the fragmentary transmission of these works that Jan Jakubec formulated in his *History of Czech literature*, namely that the destruction of the manuscripts from this historical period was more damaging in Bohemia than elsewhere, cannot hold. We need to ask whether the terminology and literary scholarly concepts developed by modern and contemporary German studies (for example ‘*Prosaauflösung*’) are fruitful or not for this German and Czech literature. Are they able to describe the specific character of Bohemian German literature and its Czech adaptations or not? Put another way, how inclusive and how exclusive has the concept of the ‘new’ history of medieval literature to be? How may the terminologies and methodologies of ‘national’ literary scholar-

ship be integrated and selected to serve the purpose of any new, maybe postnational, maybe postcolonial history of literature?

The necessity of understanding fully the new appreciation of the Czech language pursued by the leaders of the Czech reform movement, Jan Hus and Jakobell of Mies, pertains. It has to be discussed in detail as well as the consequent politicization of vernacular languages, especially Czech and German but also Latin, which is related to the 'national' (or proto-national) character of the Hussite revolt in the first half of the fifteenth century. For the Hussite period, the terms 'laicization' and 'democratization' as well as '*völkischness*' also have to be debated without prejudices: they are relevant for the discourse because of their effort to describe the emergence of significant lay participation in the church political agenda of the realm from the point of view of the history of literature. For a balanced appreciation of Hussite Czech literature in particular, the history of the Hussite movement, across its whole spectrum from conservative Utraquists to Taborite radicals, is of utmost importance. Research on the Hussite period is one of the few topics of Czech medieval history that is also methodologically and theoretically an integral part of contemporary European-American medieval studies. However, in the area of Czech written literary sources, this international Hussitology still relies too much on the prevailing, older narratives of history of Czech literature, because the analysis of this material requires special skills the majority of medievalists involved do not have.

This problem also concerns the role of modern critical editions of extant texts: what should these editions look like? Here the role of Latin, German and Czech as well as Hebrew philology is crucial. The respective philologies have to formulate questions that text editions should answer. In fact, the decisions concerning what an edition has to look like usually depend on the questions formulated by the history of literature and also by medieval studies in general. Only an overall debate on the literary-historical questions from the philological point of view and vice versa may help further, which is a debate still waiting to be started.

Above all, the relation of language, text and social and political history has to be analyzed in detail, because only their conflation has been able to maintain a coherent narrative of the history of Czech literature in the past. As I showed above, these three columns on which the available narratives so far rest have secured their balance. The question is, if it is possible after all to do without them. And if yes, then how, and – what is more important – to what purpose. The an-

swer suggesting itself, namely that only this step would make it possible to incorporate the Czech medieval literatures into the overall narrative of the European medieval literatures, could be too simple. There are too many specific features that define the literature from the Bohemian basin and the literature written in Czech: three of them I listed above. First is the recurring flirtation of basically Latin literary culture in Bohemia with Church Slavonic. Second is German courtly culture and the Czech literary response to it, which was probably short-lived and mainly politically motivated. In this case, terms like 'transfer' or 'acculturation,' if we decide to use them, have to be discussed with regard to this specific situation in the framework stated above. The third is the linguistic nationalism of the Hussite movement. Besides this, the material basis of Czech medieval literature is relatively narrow in comparison with Italian, French and German literatures in the period of interest - even if we take into account all the languages present in the Bohemian basin.

To abandon the history of the (Czech) language as a principle of narration and qualitative criterion seems relatively easy: in that case we only have to sacrifice the focus solely on the texts written in Czech and the narrative of linear qualitatively-defined development of Czech written literature. Focusing solely on the Czech literature means a slightly uncomfortable approach anyway, because it suggests more questions than it answers. It is for example not quite clear how to stratify the esthetical quality of literary language extant in few texts dispersed through three centuries. However, abandoning the socio-political history of the realm as a strong interpretative tool (and not only as some sort of 'context') seems almost impossible.

Firstly, a considerable number of extant texts (especially the texts regarded usually as most important for the literary historical narratives, those belonging to the canon) originated in very specific contexts: they were tightly joined to inner political circumstances. This is surely the case for the chronicle of the so-called Dalimil (in Czech as well as in German and Latin versions), for the majority of Hussite literary texts in all three languages, but very probably also for the Czech written courtly epics and lyrics, for the extant medieval Czech biblical translations, for literary works produced in the 'Slavonic' abbey of Emaus, and also very probably for some of the works of religious meditative literature written before the Hussite revolution.

Secondly, we have to take into account that, compared to the situation of transmission in German, French, Italian, Dutch and also English literatures, the possibilities of reconstructing the reception

of individual texts or text groups, especially in the case of Czech written literature, are very rare, and the possibilities of reconstructing respective communities of interpretation are even rarer, especially for the time before the Hussite revolution. This applies not only for hypothetical communities of lay readers, but also for monastic communities and their libraries which were disrupted in great numbers in the time of the Hussite wars. Here the different situation in the individual lands belonging to the Crown of Bohemia also has to be considered. But the outbreak of this revolution and the veritable flood of Hussite (and anti-Hussite) texts, especially in Czech, warn against the hasty conclusion that there was only very moderate demand and equally very moderate supply. However, it is still very possible that the necessary result from this observation will be a thesis on the 'retarded cultural development' of Czech-speaking society in Bohemian lands and its acceleration based on the reinforced 'Europeanization' of Bohemia during the reign of the Luxembourg dynasty on the Bohemian throne, especially in the last third of the fourteenth century.

It is obvious that the 'new' history of literature(s) in Bohemia has to discuss the perspectives of literary studies together with the perspectives of medieval studies, which are of course also dependent on the historical narrative changing permanently in the course of shifting historiographical approaches. Both have to be regarded as equal, because both of them illuminate different parts of the whole. We can remember 'genre' as an example. It never had great success in the overall narrative of the history of Czech medieval literature (although there are of course many seminal studies from past decades on individual genres (for example Lehár *Nejstarší, Česká*). The material basis is too narrow and the Hussite period has turned it on its head anyway (as Winfried Baumann for example had to recognize). But Hussite literature alone could be actually an argument for the creative use of the 'genre' category, as one of the striking features of Hussite propaganda was without doubt the fusion of genres and the fusion of discourses: the fact that Jan Hus was burned in Constantia just because he did this shows that it was important. Then the European perspective has to be pursued (only a rigorous European approach can help to overcome ideologically teleological narratives of the past), which is already happening in many collaborative studies concerning individual texts and their reception in various languages and societies (only a few of them are quoted in this text). But we do not know yet what the resulting narrative (teleological or not) of lit-

erature and/or literatures in Bohemia as a part of the history of European medieval literature will look like. There is a lot of work to be done before then.

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Les frontières du *dictamen*

Structuration et dynamiques d'un espace textuel médiéval (XIII^e–XV^e s.)

Abstract

A study of the practice of *dictamen* among the schools and chanceries of Late medieval Europe (13th–15th c.) offers a broad range of perspectives in order to map neglected dimensions of late medieval textual cultures. It is well known that *Ars dictaminis* was a set of rhetorical doctrines, mostly devised for and used in the world of chanceries and for the redaction of letters and charters. But how exactly did the process of translation of a sophisticated rhetoric in an epistolary, mostly political practice, work? This paper focuses on the coalescence and the impact of the rhetoric 'database' constituted by the great collections of *dictamina* traditionally called *summae dictaminis*. This material served as a matrix to create an immense array of rhetorically and rhythmically similar texts throughout Europe during at least two centuries. This process transcends the disciplinary frontiers between literary and politico-administrative studies. Not only had classical *ars dictaminis* developed into a sort of semi-formulaic logic, a combinatory technique that was in some ways more akin to poetry than to what we would imagine under the heading of 'letter writing,' but the variety of texts impacted by these techniques also cancelled every genetic barrier between 'literary' and 'non-literary' textual production.

Il existe de multiples manières d'envisager l'intérêt des recherches portant sur l'*ars dictaminis* pour l'étude des littératures médiévales. Dans le cadre du numéro inaugural d'une revue dont l'objectif est de dépeussier les perceptions habituelles concernant ces dernières, la plus efficace est peut-être de suggérer en quoi la structuration du champ documentaire produit sous l'influence de l'*ars dictaminis* transcende les frontières traditionnellement tracées entre documentation politico-administrative et sources dites 'littéraires.' Il y a certes longtemps que l'apparition de nouvelles grilles d'interrogation sur les sources médiévales a conduit à rapprocher ces deux types de documentation, notamment en leur appliquant conjointement la pro-

1. Sur le tournant du ‘linguistic turn’ et le courant du retour aux sources, vu du côté des historiens, voir la mise en perspective de Morsel.

blématique d’analyse des “écritures pragmatiques” (Keller und Grubmüller). Il s’en faut pourtant de beaucoup que cette tendance ait conduit à supprimer les cloisonnements disciplinaires qui caractérisent encore l’étude de l’écrit médiéval. Les historiens peuvent bien être plus sensibles aux approches textuelles depuis le *linguistic turn*,¹ les diplomatistes appliquer des méthodes littéraires pour analyser leurs actes (e.g. Zimmerman), les spécialistes des romans médiévaux opérer une meilleure contextualisation historique de leurs sources: l’idée que des secteurs entiers de la production textuelle médiévale transcendent totalement, de par leur configuration comme de par leurs modes de production, les divisions académiques, peine encore à s’imposer en pratique.

L’étude de l’*ars dictaminis* et du *dictamen* n’échappe pas à la règle. Il est vrai qu’elle a grandement bénéficié depuis au moins une génération de la revitalisation du champ des études rhétoriques, à la croisée de l’histoire de la communication, d’une philologie renouvelée et des travaux sur les littératures médiévales. Dans la recherche de langue anglaise, les études sur l’*ars dictaminis* et son enseignement sont aujourd’hui bien mieux intégrées à la présentation des arts du langage et de leur application dans la pratique littéraire (e.g. Copeland and Sluiter), et certaines recherches récentes ont, dans la veine de l’œuvre magistrale de Martin Camargo (cf. en particulier le recueil *Essays*), poussé fort loin l’analyse de l’impact de l’enseignement du *dictamen* non seulement sur la pratique littéraire, en latin comme en anglais, mais aussi sur certains aspects de l’histoire sociale (Cornelius) et socio-politique (Cox) des îles britanniques et du reste de l’Europe. En Europe continentale, le récent réveil des études sur l’*ars*, sensible tant au niveau de la recherche philologique qu’à celui d’une histoire de la communication procédant à partir de bases différentes, participe également de cette meilleure perception de l’importance du *dictamen* dans les sociétés médiévales, tout particulièrement en Italie (Hartmann; Delle Donne e Santi; Grévin et Turcan-Verkerk).

Pourquoi, dans ces conditions, insister sur le travail encore à faire pour désenclaver l’histoire de l’*ars*? La raison en est simple. Dans sa véritable dimension, l’*ars dictaminis* à son apogée (XIII^e–XIV^e siècles) n’était pas qu’une simple doctrine rhétorique se résumant à un ensemble de préceptes théoriques, enseignés à l’école pour être dans un second temps appliqués. L’étude même de l’*ars* passait dans les classes de Bologne, Naples, Prague ou Oxford par l’intériorisation de milliers de modèles – *dictamina* – tantôt inventés *exempli causa*, tantôt retraités à partir de lettres et actes de chancellerie, et le plus

souvent regroupés dans de colossales ‘sommés de *dictamen*’ (les *summae dictaminis*). La lecture des traités théoriques servait de propédeutique à l’étude et à l’intériorisation de ces ‘bases de données rhétoriques,’ dont l’imitation et le retraitement ont en fait conditionné la création d’une part considérable de la documentation du XIII^e au XV^e siècle. Or c’est précisément cette étape intermédiaire – pragmatique – correspondant à l’étude et au retraitement des modèles offerts par les *summae*, entre la théorie rhétorique et la pratique discursive, qui a été jusqu’à présent la moins étudiée dans la réflexion sur le *dictamen*. Cette lacune s’explique en partie par la difficulté à relier les recherches de type rhétorico-littéraire s’occupant de la théorie de l’*ars* et celles, centrées sur l’histoire des chancelleries, de l’administration et du politique, qui analysent la plus grande partie des textes créés selon ces logiques. Les grandes *summae* qui ont joué le rôle de matrices de premier plan dans cet univers textuel sont en effet surtout issues des chancelleries papale et sicilienne. Elles se trouvent certes au centre d’une histoire textuelle recouvrant, on le verra, l’ensemble de l’Europe de la fin du Moyen Âge, mais même si leur rôle potentiel comme modèles dans la structuration rhétorique des discours politiques a été régulièrement suggéré (*cf.* dernièrement Cox 5–7), elles ont d’abord été étudiées par les spécialistes de l’histoire administrative et politique de la papauté, de la Sicile et de l’Empire. Les textes de tous ordres dont la rédaction est susceptible d’avoir été conditionné par les processus de retraitement de ces sommés forment quant à eux un univers textuel paneuropéen transcendant totalement les barrières génériques qui conditionnent d’ordinaire la recherche, de l’annale au traité, de l’acte solennel à la lettre ludique, de la propagande de guerre à l’hagiographie. C’est la cartographie de cet univers textuel du *dictamen*, entendu comme l’ensemble ouvert des textes lié par une logique de production dépendant des mêmes outils et des mêmes techniques, que la présente contribution souhaite esquisser, en centrant d’abord son propos sur les techniques d’utilisation des grandes *summae* élaborées en Italie tout au long du XIII^e siècle et exploitées en Europe jusqu’au XV^e siècle, puis sur les différents genres de textes concernés. Mais pour ce faire, il faut d’abord rappeler quelques traits fondamentaux de l’histoire du *dictamen* qui ont conditionné l’exploitation de ces sommés.

1 Au-delà de la prose épistolaire: l'*ars dictaminis*, forme communicationnelle englobante

L'*ars dictaminis* naît d'abord au Mont-Cassin à la fin du XI^e siècle (Alberico di Monte Cassino, éd. Bognini) puis à Bologne (Witt 252–437; Hartmann) comme adaptation des règles de la rhétorique antique d'inspiration oratoire à la production d'un discours épistolaire – discours étendu depuis les débuts de la discipline à l'acte sous toutes ses variantes (du mandat jusqu'au privilège). Cette extension suggère comment s'est structuré le champ communicationnel défini par l'*ars*. La définition par les *artes dictandi* de la communication épistolaire n'épouse en effet qu'imparfaitement les contours d'une 'rhétorique de la lettre' au sens où on pourrait l'entendre dans un contexte temporel différent, par exemple celui de la 'République des Lettres' moderne. L'absence de distinction entre la production de documents officiels (actes divers, lettres officielles 'politiques') en chancellerie et la rédaction de lettres plus 'personnelles' s'explique à la fois par les conditions de naissance de l'*ars dictaminis* en tant que doctrine, et par la position socio-institutionnelle de ses acteurs, lettrés souvent employés dans des chancelleries. Cette indivision entre écriture officielle et personnelle est également conforme à une logique de 'non-personnalisation' relative de la production épistolaire du bas Moyen Âge qui a été masquée par la mise en avant de quelques 'stars' du onzième et du douzième siècle comme Hildebert de Lavardin ou Pierre de Blois (Cott), et qui s'affirme tout particulièrement dans les productions des grands praticiens italiens de l'*ars dictaminis* au XIII^e siècle.²

2. Sur la non-personnalisation et le *dictamen*, cf. Grévin, "L'écriture du latin."

3. Sur les étapes de cette diffusion, voir à présent Turcan-Verkerk, "L'introduction."

4. Boncompagno da Signa, Guido Faba, Bene de Florence... Voir pour l'abondante bibliographie sur ces auteurs Turcan-Verkerk, "Répertoire chronologique," à compléter par Felisi et Turcan-Verkerk.

Les caractéristiques du champ de production textuelle dominé par l'*ars* n'apparaissent en effet pas pleinement avant 1200. Durant le premier siècle de son histoire (1080–1180), l'*ars dictaminis* se présente comme un ensemble de théories en cours de structuration, qui tentent de régler une activité de communication médiolatine foisonnante allant de pair avec la mutation rapide de la société et des pouvoirs européens. Ce n'est que progressivement que ces théories, d'abord cantonnées à l'Italie, puis étendues à la France et au reste de l'Europe occidentale après 1140,³ sont devenues une véritable idéologie de l'écriture, susceptible d'affecter en retour les productions qui suivaient ses préceptes. Or la pensée du *dictamen* qui se développe au fil de l'enrichissement des productions théoriques, jusqu'à l'apogée des années 1190–1250, avec la génération des grands maîtres bolonais,⁴ n'est pas qu'une simple rhétorique de l'épistolaire orné. Elle

se caractérise plutôt comme une pensée globale de la communication latine, dont le vecteur principal, mais non unique, serait la lettre/acte.

Pour comprendre à quels niveaux l'*ars dictaminis* 'préclassique' (1170–1200) puis classique (1200–1300) se rattache à d'autres théories (et pratiques) d'écriture traditionnellement étiquetées comme plus 'littéraires' (une distinction méthodologiquement problématique), il faut en effet envisager les liens conceptuels et didactiques que la discipline entretient alors avec d'autres 'arts' de la communication contemporains. L'*ars* est en effet associée dans la pensée et l'enseignement des XII^e et XIII^e siècles à l'ensemble des arts de la rédaction dans une pensée de la communication en latin orné qui inclut aussi bien la poésie rythmique et métrique que la prose. Une partie des traités présentent ainsi le *dictamen* comme l'ensemble des procédés de composition en latin, métrique, rythmique, prosaïque. Il ne s'agit pas là d'un simple artifice. Le développement et l'épanouissement du genre des *artes poetriae* s'est ainsi fait, particulièrement en Angleterre, en symbiose avec celui de l'*ars dictaminis*. La *Poetria nova* de Geoffroy de Vinsauf a été utilisée dans différents contextes pour enseigner la rédaction prosaïque épistolaire (Woods 169–72, 230), tandis que le treizième siècle a vu la création de manuels mixtes tels que la *Parisiana poetria* de Jean de Garlande (John of Garland, éd. Lawler), qui contient d'importants développements sur la rédaction des lettres. Cette indivision relative de l'enseignement poétique et prosaïque latin dans les classes des XIII^e et XIV^e siècles se reflète dans la pratique. Des témoignages montrent la poursuite d'activités conjointes de composition en *dictamen* prosaïque et en poésie rythmique latine aussi bien à la cour de Sicile (Delle Donne, *Il potere*) que dans des écoles de l'Ouest de la France (Turcan-Verkerk, "Le Formulaire") entre 1200 et 1350.

Si l'enseignement de l'*ars dictaminis* avait pour but premier la formation de techniciens du langage versés dans l'art de rédiger une correspondance politique ou administrative, il restait donc conditionné par un ensemble de *stimuli* didactiques qui s'étendaient à la poésie. Le *dictator* devait être capable de jongler entre les trois formes possibles d'écriture médiolatine complexe (le vers rythmique, le vers métrique, la prose rythmée), voire de les associer (Turcan-Verkerk, "Le *prosimum*"). Cette culture du *dictamen* global est déjà présente dans l'enseignement d'Albéric du Mont Cassin au XI^e ou de Guido de Bologne au XII^e siècle.⁵ Elle explique pourquoi des praticiens fameux de l'*ars* ont pu participer à l'invention de formes nouvelles de

5. Voir sur ce dernier Felisi et Turcan-Verkerk, n° 34, ainsi que Turcan-Verkerk, "Le *Liber artis*."

poésie vulgaire, comme Pierre de la Vigne et son cercle à la cour de Frédéric II pour le *volgare illustre* (Di Girolamo). Elle suggère en fonction de quelles logiques un théoricien tel qu'Antonio da Tempo intitule son traité, le premier à décrire – en latin – les formes fixes de la poésie italienne en 1332 *Summa artis rithimici dictaminis*. Il précise en effet dans son introduction que le *dictamen* rythmique vulgaire est une subdivision du *dictamen*, au même titre que ses trois composantes latines.

Pour saisir à quel point cette association conceptuelle et didactique entre prose et poésie a pesé sur le champ textuel du *dictamen*, entendu dans le sens restreint d'art d'écrire en prose orienté vers l'épistolaire qu'on lui attribue souvent, il faut se souvenir que l'un des traits structurants de l'*ars* en tant que technique de rédaction épistolaire était l'importance accordée à l'ornementation rythmique. Pour rendre leurs textes prosaïques comparables en dignité et en 'artificialité' à leurs contreparties rythmiques et métriques, les *dictatores* devaient obligatoirement respecter des règles d'ornementation imposant la récurrence de trois schèmes rythmiques principaux avant les ponctuations faible ou forte.⁶ Ce culte de l'ornementation du *cursum rhythmicum*, dans ses trois variantes du *cursum velox*, *tardus* et *planus*, existait avant les débuts théoriques de l'*ars*. Un Pierre Damien en joue magistralement. C'est toutefois grâce à l'émergence de cette discipline qu'il a été théorisé pour la première fois, dans les traités des années 1180–1230 (Grévin, "De l'ornementation"). Le respect toujours plus strict de ces schèmes d'ornementation⁷ dans une documentation toujours plus importante au fil du temps forme le meilleur témoin de l'emprise croissante d'une *ars dictaminis* en cours de structuration à travers l'Europe des XII^e et XIII^e siècles.

Cet art d'écrire en prose ornée était donc conditionné par une esthétique de l'ornementation rythmique s'étendant potentiellement à l'ensemble du texte. On s'explique dans ces conditions qu'il se soit durablement appuyé sur un apprentissage couplé de la rédaction poétique (métrique et rythmique) et prosaïque. Pour créer un texte en prose ornée, le *dictator* devait obligatoirement maîtriser les règles de l'accentuation latine (et des longueurs dont son calcul dépendait en partie). Ces règles, il les apprenait dans des manuels de poésie rythmique et métrique, et, surtout, à travers la mémorisation et la rédaction d'innombrables poèmes. Cette logique d'apparence contreproductive – apprendre à écrire en prose en s'appuyant sur la poésie – dépendait des formes d'apprentissage du latin qui donnaient un poids déterminant – à l'instar des habitudes didactiques

6. Le *cursum* était également intensivement utilisé dans d'autres passages du texte, mais avec une plus grande marge de choix.

7. Respect fortement dépendant de la réintroduction et de la systématisation graduelle de techniques d'ornementation anciennes par les techniciens de la chancellerie papale.

d'autres sociétés traditionnelles – à la poésie. Tout comme l'art de la prose ornée arabe classique (*ilm al-inšā'*: Roemer) recourait à un ensemble d'ornementations (rimiques et rythmiques) qui dépendait d'une éducation poétique, de même les techniques de rédaction de l'*ars dictaminis* dépendaient de la symbiose des cultures poétiques et prosaïques caractéristique du monde des écoles latines des XII^e–XIV^e siècles. Ces procédés d'enseignement rédactionnel ont contribué à façonner une écriture du pouvoir rythmée intégrant un semis de citations bibliques et classiques 'rythmiquement recomposées' passées au rang d'automatismes. Et ces habitus, loin de n'influencer que la rédaction de textes catalogués comme 'littéraires,' ont débordé sur l'ensemble des champs textuels conditionnés par l'*ars*. On verra que la récurrence des ornements rythmiques a en fait contribué à structurer les *dictamina*⁸ de manière radicale, à travers la création progressive d'une véritable logique de composition 'semi-formulaire.'

8. C'est-à-dire les textes écrits selon les règles du *dictamen*. Il s'agit d'une qualification médiévale courante pour des lettres, des actes ou d'autres textes, prise dans le sens de 'modèles rhétoriques valables,' notamment quand ils sont inclus dans des *summae dictaminis* (recueils de *dictamen/dictamina*).

2 Les *summae dictaminis* papales et siciliennes et leur milieu de production

Les meilleurs reflets de l'idéologie du *dictamen* classique, telle qu'elle apparaît constituée au début du XIII^e siècle, ne sont probablement par les traités purement théoriques (par convention, *artes dictandi*, souvent confondus par la recherche secondaire avec l'*ars dictaminis* en tant que telle), bien que quelques-uns d'entre eux, comme la *Rhetorica novissima* de Boncompagno (*Boncompagni Rhetorica novissima*, éd. Gaudenzi), forment des témoins exceptionnels pour étudier plusieurs aspects fondamentaux de la pensée du *dictamen* (rapports avec le droit, avec l'exégèse, avec la culture politique...). Les recueils scolaires présentant des textes créés *ad hoc*, éventuellement munis d'introductions, se révèlent déjà plus utiles pour comprendre l'idéologie et le rôle structurant du *dictamen*. Les *Dictamina rhetorica* de Guido Faba (Gaudenzi), les lettres d'invitation aux étudiants de son *studium* de Vyšehrad créées par Enrico da Isernia, ex-étudiant des classes de dictamen du *studium* de Naples émigré en Bohême après 1268 (Schaller, "Der Traktat," Psík *et al.*), ou encore les *dictamina* en prose et en vers du formulaire latin de Tréguier (Turcan-Verkerk, "Le Formulaire"), inspirés aussi bien par les structures de la société bretonne que par la littérature parodique en langue d'oïl (et notamment par la chanson d'Audigier),⁹ sont trois exemples de telles collections

9. Sur Audigier, voir en dernier lieu Lazzarini.

scolaires. Ces textes permettent à la fois d'étudier les techniques d'enseignement du *dictamen* par l'imitation mises en œuvre dans les classes de Bologne, d'Orléans ou de Prague vers 1220, 1270 ou 1320, et de pénétrer dans le jeu d'interactions complexes qui régissait cet apprentissage et la pensée de la société. Une bonne partie des lettres de ces collections se présentent en effet comme des modélisations des rapports sociaux, orientées en fonction des revendications et attentes des maîtres et des étudiants. D'autre part, le statut textuel ambigu de fictions qui se veulent souvent les pastiches d'actes et de lettres réellement échangés dans le monde extérieur aux écoles mérite d'être questionné: si les enseignants et étudiants des classes de *dictamen* participaient à une 'littérisation' du réel en créant des lettres et actes parodiant la communication épistolaire ordinaire ou extraordinaire, cette littérisation n'a pu qu'avoir un effet en retour sur les modes de composition des *dictatores* à l'extérieur des *studia* – dans les chancelleries par exemple. La frontière entre lettre (ou acte) fictionnel(le) et 'authentique' recoupe ici partiellement celle qui court entre enseignement et professionnalisation, suggérant l'existence d'un espace intermédiaire entre exercice communicationnel et fiction.

C'est toutefois un troisième ensemble textuel, d'origine essentiellement italienne, qui illustre le mieux le caractère amphibie du *dictamen* à son apogée: celui des grandes *summae dictaminis*¹⁰ élaborées à la cour de Sicile (D'Angelo, *L'epistolario*) et à la Curie pontificale (Thumser, "Les grandes collections") au cours du XIII^e siècle. On l'a déjà souligné: en aval, ces collections se sont trouvées à partir des années 1270 au centre de la pratique du *dictamen* européen. En amont, leur histoire est tout aussi déterminante, car elles recueillent les fruits d'une tradition séculaire, impliquant les sommets politiques de la Chrétienté. C'est en effet à la cour papale des Honorius III, Grégoire IX, Alexandre IV ou Clément IV et dans la *Magna curia* sicilienne de Frédéric II, Conrad IV et Manfred que l'idéologie de l'*ars dictaminis* trouva sans doute son illustration la plus éclatante. Depuis les origines de l'*ars*, liées à la réforme grégorienne et à la querelle des investitures, la Curie avait assumé un rôle moteur dans la constitution de la discipline. Les références au modèle papal, omniprésentes dans les traités théoriques du XIII^e siècle (e.g. *Bene Florentini Candelabrum* 3; Heller) confirment une centralité alors reconnue par les maîtres de l'Italie communale. La cour sicilienne des derniers Hohenstaufen avait également élaboré sa grande rhétorique de combat, magnifiée dans le *Frédéric II* d'Ernst Kantorowicz, par imitation

10. Le terme est ici utilisé par convention pour parler des recueils de *dictamina* issus du monde des chancelleries, par opposition aux traités. Les usages médiévaux sont plus flottants.

des lettres papales. Les personnels des deux chancelleries rivales provenaient d'ailleurs du même bassin de recrutement, la *Terra Laboris*, entre Naples, Capoue et Mont Cassin, berceau de l'*ars* à l'époque d'Albéric du Mont-Cassin.

Le *dictamen* papal et 'siculo-impérial' du XIII^e siècle était très loin d'être une pratique administrativo-politique dénuée de réflexivité littéraire. Si peu de traités théoriques issus de ces milieux ont été conservés (cf. toutefois l'*ars dictandi* de Thomas de Capoue éditée par Heller), les personnels des chancelleries papale et sicilienne échangeaient en marge de leurs activités de rédaction plus strictement politico-administrative des correspondances "intra-notariales," hautement littérisées, qui ont été souvent véhiculées avec leurs autres productions dans les *summae dictaminis*. Ces échanges 'intra-notariaux' forment l'un des ensembles textuels les plus riches concernant l'idéologie de l'*ars dictaminis* au XIII^e siècle. Fulvio Delle Donne a naguère édité les correspondances ludiques et familiales des membres de véritables dynasties de lettrés campaniens, disciples directs ou indirects du logothète de Frédéric II, Pierre de la Vigne, avant et après la chute des Hohenstaufen.¹¹ Ces textes représentent une mine sur l'auto-représentation de leur activité d'écriture par ces techniciens du *dictamen*, de même que le *certamen* rhétorique entre le vice-chancelier pontifical Giordano da Terracina et le notaire papal Giovanni da Capua jadis édité par Sambin.

Dans ces *certamina*, les lettrés campaniens déposent temporairement leurs charges rédactionnelles politico-administratives pour s'affronter dans des duels épistolaires parodiant d'autres combats, comme le jeu d'échec ou, implicitement, le tournoi. Ils doivent y démontrer leur capacité à multiplier les tours de forces stylistiques. Ces textes sont révélateurs de la manière dont leurs rédacteurs conceptualisaient l'exercice de leur travail en chancellerie, en sublimant leurs pratiques d'écriture ordinaires. Dans un échange avec Nicola da Rocca *senior*, Pierre de la Vigne insiste ainsi sur le miracle que représente la capacité de son disciple à développer son génie rhétorique en dépit des fatigues auxquelles son travail en chancellerie l'expose (Nicola da Rocca 10–12, n° 3). Giordano da Terracina et Giovanni da Capua exaltent quant à eux la vacance de la chancellerie papale qui leur permet de se livrer à ces joutes (Sambin 33–34, n° 11).

Loin de ne former que des jeux, ces *certamina* sont en fait représentatifs de l'indivision idéologique entre écriture politico-administrative et composition littéraire qui caractérisait le *dictamen* à son apogée. Ils forment parfois le centre caché des *summae dictaminis*,

11. Nicola da Rocca; Delle Donne, *Una silloge*. Ces textes sont en particulier contenus dans le ms. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF), 8567.

12. Petrus de Vinea III 37-42; Grévin, *Rhétorique* 345-57.

13. Voir la nouvelle édition D'Angelo, *L'epistolario*, ainsi que sur l'organisation de la *Summa* Schaller, "Zur Entstehung" 231-50 et Grévin, *Rhétorique* 45-58.

14. Les *litterae consolationis* forment un genre par excellence ambigu, tenant de la communication politique et sociale autant que de l'orfèvrerie rhétorique. Voir Moos, et pour celles des *Lettres* de Pierre de la Vigne Delle Donne, "Le *consolationes*."

15. Petrus de Vinea III, 45; Nicola da Rocca 29-34, n° 15.

comme dans le cas du long échange humoristique entre l'archevêque Jacques de Capoue et Pierre de la Vigne, parodie de duel judiciaire placée au centre de la collection classique des *Lettres* de Pierre de la Vigne.¹² Dans cette culture du *dictamen* des grandes cours du XIII^e siècle centre- et sud-italien, il est en fait impossible de dissocier la production des textes isolés de l'organisation de ces collections. Véritables Janus textuels, les principales *summae dictaminis* papales et siciliennes ont été créées dans des conditions d'autant plus complexes qu'elles ont probablement dépendu d'un travail collectif s'étendant parfois sur plusieurs générations (Thumser, "Les grandes collections;" Schaller, "Studien" et "Zur Entstehung"). Elles proclament la fusion des deux faces 'littéraire' et 'politico-administrative' du *dictamen* que dit également à sa manière la rhétorique des *certamina*.

La somme dite de Pierre de la Vigne (D'Angelo, *L'Epistolario*) a été organisée dans sa version classique après la mort du logothète de Frédéric II, sans doute à partir d'un prototype élaboré par Nicola da Rocca *senior* sous Manfred. Elle met en scène la continuité entre les grandes lettres de propagande élaborées dans les décennies 1220-1254 pour Frédéric II et Conrad IV, les jeux lettrés des notaires et juristes de leur cour, et les actes de l'administration sicilienne ordinaire (mandats, *litterae responsales*...) et extraordinaire (privilèges).¹³ Le premier livre de la collection classique regroupe ainsi les encycliques et lettres anti-papales, le second les bulletins militaires, le quatrième les lettres de consolation pour la mort de grands personnages ou de familiers des *dictatores*,¹⁴ le cinquième les mandats et actes judiciaires divers, le sixième les privilèges solennels. Au centre de la collection, le troisième livre est un pot-pourri qui se caractérise par la proportion importante de jeux rhétoriques échangés entre notaires et juristes, côtoyant un éloge de Frédéric II par Pierre de la Vigne (Delle Donne, *Il potere* 59-97) et un autre de Pierre de la Vigne par Nicola da Rocca. Derrière la complexité des stratégies de compilation et d'agencement à l'œuvre (avec leurs jeux de codes et de miroir entre les trois autorités de l'empereur, de Pierre de la Vigne, et, en retrait, de Nicola da Rocca),¹⁵ la structuration de cette *summa dictaminis* établit comme un dogme le *continuum* entre la rédaction des lettres politiques ou personnelles, celle des actes ordinaires et extraordinaires (assimilés par l'*ars dictaminis* à des lettres) et celle de jeux rhétoriques qui possèdent parfois une dimension politique, mais n'en sont pas moins plus strictement littéraires. Or ces caractéristiques ne sont pas propres aux seules *Lettres* de Pierre de la Vigne dans leurs diffé-

16. Voir pour leur variété Schaller, *Handschriftenverzeichnis*.

17. Peter Herde prépare une édition de cette *summa* pour les MGH.

18. Par l'omission des protocoles et eschatocoles, par exemple.

19. Sur la réflexion sur le statut fictionnel des textes épistolaires médiévaux, voir Høgel and Bartoli.

rentes versions.¹⁶ Elles se retrouvent également dans la *summa dictaminis* 'papale' dite de Thomas de Capoue. Cette *summa* a été élaborée à partir d'un fond de *dictamina* écrits par ce vice-chancelier d'Innocent III, encore actif sous Honorius III et Grégoire IX. Elle a été organisée, peut-être par le cardinal Giordano da Terracina, en dix livres, dont les divisions recoupent en partie celles des *Lettres* de Pierre de la Vigne (Schaller, "Studien;" Thumser und Frohmann; Delle Donne, "Tommaso di Capua"). La correspondance personnelle de Thomas de Capoue (et, par fragments, de Giordano) s'y trouve inextricablement mêlée à des lettres papales officielles du début du XIII^e siècle sélectionnées en fonction de leurs genres et de leur exemplarité rhétorique. Cette logique se retrouve partiellement dans la *summa dictaminis* de Richard de Pofi. Ce *scriniarius* apostolique a composé un ensemble de *dictamina* retravaillés à partir de lettres papales ou de ce qui aurait pu être des lettres papales des décennies 1250–68. La *summa* résultante a été lancée sur le marché du livre européen dans les mêmes années que les versions classiques des *Lettres* de Pierre de la Vigne et Thomas de Capoue, durant le dernier tiers du XIII^e siècle (Batzer, à compléter par Herde).¹⁷

Le statut des textes contenus dans ces collections est aussi ambigu que celui des exercices scolaires des classes bolonaises ou françaises de *dictamen*. Infiniment variable de texte à texte, il place la recherche dans une dimension qui n'est pas plus celle de la documentation administrative archivistique que celle de la production 'purement' littéraire. Les *summae dictaminis* sont toutes contenues dans des manuscrits de travail, et leurs *dictamina* ne sont presque jamais les copies exactes des rares lettres ou actes originaux conservés, dont ils forment un reflet rhétoricisé. Ces textes originaires produits dans le cadre des échanges politiques, administratifs ou ludiques d'un milieu curial ont été altérés par des opérations plus ou moins abouties d'impersonnalisation¹⁸ et par toutes sortes de modifications rhétoriques. Ils ont ainsi rejoint cette zone intermédiaire entre 'authenticité' et 'fiction'¹⁹ qui est celle des *dictamina*-modèles, textes dont la valeur rhétorique est d'une certaine manière plus importante que le contenu historique ou politique.

Sur le plan formel, ce décalage par rapport aux lettres et actes conservés en archive est toutefois difficile à étudier, en l'absence d'originaux souvent non conservés au XIII^e siècle (Herde). Il place la nébuleuse textuelle des *summae dictaminis* dans une dimension à la fois pragmatique, rhétorique, mémorielle et didactique. Cette équation est trop complexe pour qu'il soit possible de mettre la créa-

tion, la copie et l'utilisation de ces *summae* sur le même plan que celle de simples formulaires, même s'il existe une zone d'intersection entre les deux genres (Thumser, "Les grandes collections"). Les grandes *summae dictaminis* du XIII^e siècle, une fois autonomisées par rapport à leurs milieux de production, ont en effet fonctionné comme des assistants à la création rhétorique, d'ailleurs souvent interconnectés. Ce sont d'abord elles qui ont assuré le maintien et la continuité de l'idéologie du *dictamen* aux XIV^e et XV^e siècles.

3 La nébuleuse des *summae dictaminis* et sa réutilisation: une logique de composition semi-formulaire

Si les sommes dites de Pierre de la Vigne, Thomas de Capoue et Richard de Pofi sont importantes pour l'histoire textuelle du bas Moyen Âge, ce n'est en effet pas seulement en raison de leur valeur intrinsèque. Il existe plusieurs autres ensembles textuels analogues, certains créés dans le même milieu (somme de Bérard de Naples, lettres de Clément IV...).²⁰ Ce qui différencie les trois grandes *summae*, c'est l'ampleur de leur diffusion d'un bout à l'autre de l'Europe. Ce succès suggère la centralité de ces collections pour reconstituer l'histoire de l'écriture du pouvoir et de l'épistolaire à l'automne du Moyen Âge (Schaller, *Handschriftenverzeichnis*; Thumser, "Les grandes collections"). On donnera une idée des modes de diffusion de ces instruments de travail à partir de 1280 en soulignant que les collections 'classiques' de ces *summae* ne représentent que la partie émergée d'un véritable iceberg textuel. Non seulement les trois sommes ont souvent été recopiées dans les mêmes manuscrits, parfois toutes les trois ensemble, formant ainsi de gigantesques 'super-*summae*'.²¹ Non seulement elles ont eu tendance à s'agréger selon le même mécanisme d'autres collections, parmi lesquelles se distinguent un miroir du XIII^e siècle à forme épistolaire, le *Morale Somnium Pharaonis* de Jean de Limoges,²² les *Lettres* de Pierre de Blois (D'Angelo, "Le sillogi") et les différentes collections de lettres dites de Transmundus (Heathcote) – trois œuvres étroitement liées à l'histoire du *dictamen*. Surtout, le mélange textuel représenté par les textes des trois grandes sommes a été décomposé et recomposé avec d'autres textes dans un nombre presque infini de manuscrits de 'collections alternatives'.²³ Il faut donc imaginer l'univers textuel des compilations de *dictamina* circulant entre 1280 et 1500 comme une

20. Thumser, "Les grandes collections" et "Zur Überlieferungsgeschichte."

21. Voir sur ce point Grévin, *Rhétorique* 40–41, 585, 606, 625.

22. Voir *Johannes Lemovicensis* [...] *Opera omnia* 3.69–126.

23. Des instruments de catalogage commencent à paraître: voir Schaller, *Handschriftenverzeichnis*; Stöbener und Thumser.

nébuleuse en constante expansion (Delle Donne, “Una costellazione”). Le noyau en serait formé par les *dictamina* des *summae* ‘classiques’ de Richard de Pofi, Pierre de la Vigne et Thomas de Capoue (quelques mille deux-cent textes). La première enveloppe serait constituée d’un nombre trois fois plus grand de *dictamina* du XIII^e siècle historiquement ou génériquement liés à ces textes. Enfin, la périphérie serait représentée par un réseau de textes, généralement épistolaires, de toutes origines, gravitant autour de ces deux premières couches dans les manuscrits.

Cette gigantesque ‘base de données épistolaire’ n’avait donc pas vraiment de limites, même si elle possédait une logique de structuration et un centre bien défini. Elle a été exploitée pendant deux siècles et demi par toute sortes de lettrés, avant tout par des techniciens des chancelleries, du notariat et de l’administration, à travers toute l’Europe, avec un pic d’intérêt qui correspond en gros aux deux premiers tiers du XIV^e siècle. L’*ars dictandi* d’un maître oxfordien, John Briggs (Camargo, *Medieval rhetorics* 88–104), témoigne que dans la pensée des professeurs des années 1340, la lecture des *artes* théoriques n’était qu’une propédeutique à l’apprentissage de la rédaction par l’imitation des textes contenus dans ces sommes. L’incidence de la constitution de ce répertoire textuel sur la culture médiévale commence à être appréhendée grâce à la progression des travaux d’édition de ces collections et des œuvres qui en dépendent. L’analyse de ces ‘réseaux d’écriture’ dévoile la nature, à certains égards plus littéraire qu’administrative, des techniques de ‘rédaction assistée’ qui s’appuyaient sur les *summae*.

Un premier niveau de réutilisation consiste en la reprise de fragments massifs de textes injectés avec quelques modifications dans de nouvelles compositions, souvent de genre analogue à celles dont les extraits sont tirés.²⁴ Ce mécanisme de réemploi pouvait prendre des formes aussi génériques (réutilisation de séquences de lettres de consolation pour de nouvelles lettres de consolation) que particulières (réutilisation de motifs contenus dans des lettres d’insultes à des cardinaux lors d’une vacance papale pour en forger de nouvelles dans les mêmes circonstances...: Grévin, *Rhétorique* 646–48). La sélection ‘polyphonique’ opérée par Georges, ‘notaire du château de Cracovie,’ représente un bon exemple, encore en cours d’analyse, de l’ampleur de ces procédés. Ce lettré a composé au seuil du XV^e siècle une *summa dictaminis* formée par cent dix-huit *dictamina* reflétant les rapports, tensions et aspirations de la société polonaise (Górski). Il a extrait pour ce faire des motifs rhétoriques tirés du *Morale som-*

24. On se souvient que les *dictamina* inclus dans les *summae dictaminis* le sont selon une logique en grande partie thématique.

nium Pharaonis, des *Lettres* de Pierre de la Vigne et de Richard de Pofi, des collections de Transmundus et de Pierre de Blois... Le statut de ses *dictamina*, suspendus entre fiction littéraire et formalisation politique, peut être résumé par le texte qui ouvre la collection. Il s'agit d'une lettre programmatique, à haute teneur symbolique, exaltant la conception d'un héritier du trône par la reine Hedwige d'Anjou (1399), adressée à l'ensemble des habitants du royaume par... le mois de mai (Górski 1–3).²⁵ Ce texte reprend notamment un fragment du *dictamen* chantant les louanges de Frédéric II qui se trouve au centre de la collection classique de Pierre de la Vigne.

Les *dictamina* de Georges de Cracovie tirent leur exemplarité de la relative rareté des productions témoignant de la réutilisation de l'ensemble des six *summae dictaminis* les plus diffusées dans une même série textuelle. De nombreux textes latins d'origine française, anglaise, italienne ou allemande, souvent composés en chancellerie, présentent en revanche des exemples de réutilisation de deux ou trois sources textuelles différentes à l'intérieur d'un même acte ou d'une même lettre. On assiste à la juxtaposition de fragments de *dictamina* différents issus de la même somme (deux extraits de deux lettres de Pierre de la Vigne), ou de deux sommes différentes (un extrait de Pierre de la Vigne, et un autre de Richard de Pofi...), voire, dans certains cas, d'une série de trois, quatre, cinq ou six fragments des trois sommes de Richard de Pofi, Pierre de la Vigne et Thomas de Capoue (Grévin, *Rhétorique* 582–720; Barret et Grévin 257–311 et 577–623). Ce phénomène est en partie dû à la forme des instruments de travail des notaires. Ils disposaient souvent des 'super-*summae*' déjà mentionnées,²⁶ et, à l'intérieur des *summae*, consultaient des séries de textes analogues (privileges de fondation d'université, lettres de grâce, bulletins de victoire...), dont différents extraits thématiquement semblables pouvaient être facilement jointoyés. Cette tendance a été mise en valeur pour les lettres et actes des chancelleries anglaise, française et impériale, en particulier pour les préambules solennels créés dans certaines circonstances à la chancellerie française. Celui de l'acte solennel de fondation de leur propre confrérie par les notaires et secrétaires du roi en 1351 (Lusignan 109–10, à compléter par Barret et Grévin n° 114) est par exemple un montage complexe, composé d'un passage central original, encadré par deux fragments remaniés de *dictamina* de Richard de Pofi, et clos par un exorde de privilège de Pierre de la Vigne. Ici, les textes utilisés ne sont pas typologiquement analogues au texte recomposé. C'est la sacralité rhétorique de *dictamina* d'inspiration papale parlant de missions

25. Voir sur ce texte Kocerzka. L'analyse des réutilisations présentes dans la lettre du mois de mai ainsi que d'autres phénomènes d'intertextualité liés à ce recueil sera présentée en détail dans une publication prochaine.

26. Voir *supra*, seconde section.

d'apostolat, et leur place contigüe dans le recueil de Richard de Pofi, qui a conduit à leur sélection par des rédacteurs désireux de se peindre en apôtres de la parole royale.

La mise en évidence de ces techniques de composition par patchwork ou mosaïque conduit à souligner un problème d'analyse textuelle crucial pour notre compréhension des procédés de rédaction à l'œuvre dans l'*ars dictaminis* classique et tardif. En effet, plus l'extrait dont la réutilisation immédiate (ou médiata...) est postulée est court, plus augmentent les chances qu'une séquence formellement analogue existe dans un autre *dictamen* que celui qui a été le premier mis en valeur au moment de l'analyse du texte-cible.²⁷ Si les parallèles se limitent à une cheville rhétorique relativement banale (e.g. *sub ovina pelle, lupus rapax, leo fortissimus, sanguine maculatus*), il devient scientifiquement impossible de prouver une exploitation d'un texte précis par le notaire qui compose le nouveau texte en s'aidant des formules offertes par le (ou les) recueil(s) de *dictamina* utilisé(s). Ces chevilles coexistent en effet dans de nombreux *dictamina*, tous potentiellement modèles. Certains textes permettent toutefois d'analyser ces modes de 'micro-réutilisation' élusifs. C'est le cas quand le rédacteur reprend à différents endroits de sa lettre des formules rhétoriques brèves mais dont l'originalité relative dévoile la source, comme dans certaines imitations de la rhétorique frédéricienne par Cola de Rienzo (Grévin, *Rhétorique* 803–22).

L'échelle des réutilisations s'étend donc du plagiat massif jusqu'à l'emprunt ponctuel. Leur analyse permet de reconstituer l'ensemble des logiques de 'reformatage' des *dictamina* contenus dans les grandes sommes pour alimenter les textes créés entre 1280 et 1450.²⁸ Ces logiques de retraitement peuvent également être étudiées en contournant les apories méthodologiques liées à la recherche des liens entre texte-source et texte-cible. Il faut pour cela mettre en évidence des récurrences sérielles de motifs à travers l'ensemble des *dictamina* potentiellement impliqués dans ces jeux de recomposition. On repère ainsi l'existence de 'chaînes de substitution' de termes sémantiquement voisins, et de structure rythmique analogue. Les combinaisons 'sémantico-rythmiques' ainsi définies semblent avoir été employées de manière interchangeable, afin de varier différentes séquences d'une lettre ou d'un acte. Ce constat conduit à supposer que de nombreuses séquences des *dictamina* étaient rythmiquement, mais aussi sémantiquement 'formatées' par les schèmes du *cur-sus rhythmicus*, selon des procédures de composition analogue à certains types de formalisation poétique. Ce conditionnement ryth-

27. Pour employer le langage de la traduction.

28. Voire 1500 dans différentes régions, en particulier dans la Mitteleuropa germano-hungaro-slave où l'*ars dictaminis* s'est épanouie jusqu'à la fin du XV^e siècle.

mique aurait en quelque sorte favorisé chez les notaires des XIII^e et XIV^e siècles un mécanisme de composition semi-formulaire (Grévin, “De l’ornementation”).

La reconstitution de ces jeux de substitution est relativement simple quand le formulaire est itératif et banal (comme dans le cas de préambules stéréotypés):

Cursus velox (modèle simple, pp 4p): o X o o o X o:

29. En l’absence d’une édition de la *Summa* de Richard de Pofi, les numéros renvoient au registre donné dans Batzer; les séquences sont extraites de transcriptions personnelles opérées en majeure partie sur le ms. Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (BAV), Barb. lat. 1948.

30. Les numéros renvoient au corpus de cinq cent cinquante préambules édités dans Barret et Grévin.

Pierre de la Vigne V 76:	... (ut) <i>prómpitius animéntur...</i>
Pierre de la Vigne V 105:	... <i>strictius animéntur...</i>
Richard de Pofi ²⁹ 210:	... <i>fórtius animéntur...</i>
Richard de Pofi 240:	... <i>fervéntius animéntur...</i>
Richard de Pofi 244:	... <i>efficácius animéntur...</i>
Richard de Pofi 456:	... <i>frequéntius animéntur...</i>
Richard de Pofi 93:	... <i>fervéntius exciténtur...</i>
Richard de Pofi 429:	... <i>prómpitius accingántur...</i>
Chancellerie de Jean II le Bon 10: ³⁰	... <i>fervéntius animéntur...</i>
Chancellerie de Jean II le Bon 11:	... <i>fervéntius solidéntur...</i>
Chancellerie de Jean II le Bon 12:	... <i>fórtius exciténtur...</i>
Chancellerie de Jean II le Bon 13:	... <i>fórtius inciténtur...</i>
Chancellerie de Jean II le Bon 149:	... <i>fervéntius animéntur...</i>
Chancellerie de Jean II le Bon 183:	... <i>fervéntius animéntur...</i>
Chancellerie de Jean II le Bon 394:	... <i>prómpitius animéntur...</i>
Chancellerie de Jean II le Bon 405:	... <i>fervéntius animéntur...</i>
Chancellerie de Jean II le Bon 408:	... <i>fervéntius animéntur...</i>
Chancellerie de Jean II le Bon 416:	... <i>fervéntius animéntur...</i>
Chancellerie de Jean II le Bon 424:	... <i>curiósius inciténtur...</i>
Chancellerie de Jean II le Bon 456:	... <i>fervéntius animéntur...</i>

Les deux séquences précédentes sont respectivement extraites, l’une du répertoire formé par les grandes *summae dictaminis* du XIII^e siècle, l’autre d’un choix de préambules de la chancellerie royale française presque tous écrits entre 1350 et 1365. La continuité entre les deux groupes suggère que les notaires royaux avaient intériorisé ces modes de variation formulaire à partir de leur connaissance des *summae* de leurs prédécesseurs papaux et siciliens. Elle laisse également supposer que ces derniers, au XIII^e siècle, procédaient déjà en partie en fonction des mêmes logiques de substitution.

Ces jeux ne se restreignaient toutefois pas aux parties les plus itératives et banales des textes. L’exploration des *dictamina* contenus dans les trois grandes *summae* permet ainsi de mettre en valeur des

procédés de substitution entre verbes de signification voisine dans un contexte symbolique et métaphorique stratégique. Les verbes du premier groupe à infinitif quadrisyllabique *rubricáre*, *saturáre*, *purpuráre* ('rougir,' 'saturer,' 'empourprer') formaient ainsi un répertoire sémantico-rythmique interchangeable, qui pouvait être utilisé en association avec l'ablatif *sanguine* ('sang'), en cas de description de bataille, ou dans un tout autre ordre d'idées, pour évoquer la rédemption de l'humanité par le sang du Christ. Ils composaient le noyau d'un ensemble plus vaste de chevilles rhétorico-rythmiques partiellement interchangeables, dont les quelques exemples suivants ne forment qu'un extrait:

Pierre de la Vigne II 1:	<i>gladios sángine rubricárun...</i>
Pierre de la Vigne II 1:	<i>... secures sángine saturávit...</i>
Pierre de la Vigne II 2:	<i>... nostrorum sángine maculátus...</i>
Thomas de Capoue I 8:	<i>... sángine cancelláret...</i>
Thomas de Capoue II 31:	<i>... suo roseo sángine purpurávit...</i>
Richard de Pofi 88:	<i>... sángine rubricátus...</i>
Richard de Pofi 266:	<i>sanctorum sanguine rubricata...</i>
Richard de Pofi 322:	<i>... sángine consecrávit...</i>
Richard de Pofi 470:	<i>... sángine consecráta...³¹</i>

31. Pour une analyse plus extensive des traitements rythmiques autour du terme *sanguine* dans le corpus des *dictamina* des XIII^e et XIV^e siècles, voir Grévin, "De l'ornementation" 91–96.

32. En dépit de leur dimension rhétorique souvent immédiatement perceptible...

33. Non leur équivalence stricte!

Il est encore difficile de jauger les implications de ces techniques de substitution de termes à la structure rythmique analogue et à la valeur sémantique tantôt équivalente, tantôt voisine, tantôt éloignée. Tout porte à croire que ce qui était un *habitus* chez des notaires du XIV^e siècle respectant les enseignements rythmiques du cursus et ayant intériorisé le contenu des collections de *dictamina* du XIII^e siècle, existait déjà, sous la forme de techniques peut-être plus souples, chez les *dictatores* papaux ou siciliens du début du XIII^e siècle. Les hypothèses proposées à partir de la mise en évidence de ces séquences demandent encore à être étayées. Si elles se révèlent exactes, la rédaction d'une masse considérable de textes tardo-médiévaux de tout genre, parfois étiquetés comme 'littéraires,' mais le plus souvent, rangés dans la catégorie des productions politico-administratives,³² aurait dépendu de techniques de rédaction 'semi-formulaires' en partie analogues à celle de diverses poésies traditionnelles. Le choix du terme 'semi-formulaire' vise en effet à souligner à la fois la souplesse de ces jeux de substitution, et leur analogie³³ avec les procédés de composition formulaire mis en valeur pour les poèmes homériques (Parry), les chansons de geste (Duggan), ou les odes arabes antéislamiques (Toelle). À la différence de ces textes

34. Il s'agit donc concrètement des séquences finales des différents membres de phrases.

strictement poétiques, entièrement conditionnés par la forme de leurs vers, les proses rythmées des *dictatores* bénéficiaient en effet d'un cadre formel plus libre, puisque seules les séquences précédant les ponctuations faibles ou fortes³⁴ devaient être *obligatoirement* rythmées. La tentation de recourir à ces procédés de substitution devait donc être particulièrement grande dans une partie statistiquement importante du texte, en conformité avec son caractère 'para-poétique' de prose rythmée.

Avec cet art de la 'composition semi-formulaire' se dévoile une dimension des écritures du pouvoir de la fin du Moyen Âge généralement ignorée par les études sur le langage politique et administratif du bas Moyen Âge. Des techniques d'écriture que l'on imagine volontiers déjà marquées par le rythme procédurier d'administrations en cours de constitution se révèlent en fait encore très dépendantes de recettes rhétoriques, rythmiques, métaphoriques, proches de la composition poétique. Cet 'archaïsme' ne concorde guère avec les clichés volontiers véhiculés par les historiens de l'État à propos de la naissance des procédures de contrôle de l'État moderne. Il est vrai que ces règles d'ornementation n'étaient pas appliquées avec la même rigueur par les rédacteurs et notaires royaux à tous les types de document administratif. Les modèles de composition rhétorique de l'*ars dictaminis* étaient particulièrement utilisés, dans la France, l'Angleterre, l'Aragon ou la Bohême du XIV^e siècle, quand le notaire éprouvait le besoin de parer son texte d'une inventivité rhétorique majeure, par exemple pour un préambule solennel. Il a pourtant existé des temps et des lieux où l'obsession rythmique du *dictamen* avait pour ainsi dire contaminé l'ensemble des procédures d'écriture de l'institution. Dans les chancelleries pontificale et sicilienne du XIII^e siècle, la tendance à rédiger même les textes les plus banals en recourant à ce formatage avait ainsi atteint un paroxysme. Les instructions techniques données par les notaires de Charles I^{er} d'Anjou pour gérer l'avancement de ses chantiers de construction napolitains sont en partie conditionnées par la recherche d'ornementations rythmiques (Houben – Sthamer), tout comme le sont les mandats de thèmes variés écrits à la chancellerie de Frédéric II et conservés dans le registre de 1239–40 (Carbonetti Vendittelli). Il s'agit là d'exemples extrêmes, mais ce sont bien les deux cours papale et sicilienne qui ont fourni les modèles rhétoriques dominant dans toute l'Europe au XIV^e siècle. Dans l'histoire de la croissance des institutions politiques européennes, il a donc existé un moment où la volonté obsessionnelle de créer un continuum stylistique, la formation saturée de

mètres et de rythmes des techniciens du langage et le développement du gouvernement par l'écrit ont abouti à musicaliser jusqu'aux plus simples routines de l'État.

4 Au-delà de la lettre et de l'acte: la contamination des genres textuels par l'*ars*

Ces variations chronologiques et institutionnelles dans l'emprise des carcans formulaires de l'*ars dictaminis* classique suggèrent enfin de s'interroger sur les conditions dans lesquelles cette idéologie rhétorique a pu s'appliquer à des champs et des genres textuels dépassant son noyau épistolaire et para-épistolaire (actes). La recherche de ces zones d'extension 'extra-épistolaires' du *dictamen* forme un vaste champ d'enquête, encore peu exploré. À partir du moment où elle a trouvé sa vitesse de croisière avec la stabilisation relative des théories et l'homogénéisation des pratiques, l'*ars dictaminis* a en effet influencé une grande partie des techniques d'écriture européennes, mais à différents degrés. Il est notamment nécessaire aux XIII^e et XIV^e siècles de distinguer entre la production d'écrits non-épistolaires intégralement 'formatés' selon les modes de compositions rhétorique de l'*ars*, et d'autres textes qui en subissent plus ou moins l'influence. La présence de nombreux automatismes de composition liés à l'emploi du cursus rythmique dans une œuvre telle que la Chronique de Salimbene de Parme suggère par exemple plus un rayonnement générique exercée par l'*ars* sur les modes de rédaction prosaïque dans l'Italie du XIII^e siècle qu'un respect volontaire de la doctrine. Salimbene adopte en effet un style relativement simple et perméable à l'influence de la langue vulgaire, loin de l'emphase rhétorique du 'haut style' papal ou sicilien.³⁵

Si l'on se limite aux textes non-épistolaires où l'*ars dictaminis* classique³⁶ a exercé une emprise plus directe, on relève de fortes divergences géographiques et chronologiques. Dans l'Italie des années 1200–1340, le nombre et la diversité générique des œuvres intégralement ou partiellement composées en suivant les préceptes rythmiques de l'*ars* sont frappants. Dans le reste de l'Europe, une telle emprise se constate plus ponctuellement, et l'impact de l'*ars* atteint son apogée avec un décalage chronologique par rapport à la péninsule parfois considérable. L'utilisation privilégiée des techniques de l'*ars* dans la composition d'œuvres de genre divers a en effet dépendu du prestige idéologique assumé par cette forme d'expression, lui-

35. Ce qui ne l'empêche pas d'être remarquablement inventif: voir Segre; Guyotjeannin 98–112.

36. Après 1200.

même variable selon les époques et les lieux.

Un premier ensemble textuel qui peut être analysé selon les critères de l'*ars* semble *a priori* à l'opposé des champs traditionnels de la recherche littéraire, puisqu'il s'agit de certaines zones ou formes de la production juridique européenne (traités théoriques, codifications...). La rédaction des compilations juridiques pontificales ou siciliennes du XIII^e siècle s'est ainsi faite sous l'emprise rythmique de l'*ars* (Grévin, "La retorica del diritto"). Les *Constitutiones Regni Siciliae* (Stürner) de 1231 forment en particulier un ensemble de textes intégralement rythmé et assonancé qui évoque une dimension presque entièrement oubliée de la formalisation du droit européen. Ernst Kantorowicz avait ainsi relevé comment l'influence des *dictatores*-juristes d'origine sud-italienne à la cour d'Édouard I^{er} avait conduit le rédacteur du prologue du grand commentaire de la common law *Fleta* à recourir au style emphatique sicilien (Kantorowicz, "The prologue"). L'association de l'enseignement du droit et de l'*ars dictaminis* à Bologne, Naples ou Orléans explique en partie cette tendance à la rhétoricisation de certaines productions juridiques du bas Moyen Âge.

Dans l'Italie du XIII^e siècle et du début du XIV^e siècle, l'emprise des techniques de rédaction prosaïques du *dictamen* classique a toutefois trouvé à s'exercer bien au-delà du pôle juridico-rhétorique. Dans les milieux notariaux urbains du nord, comme dans les milieux lettrés gravitant autour de la Curie pontificale et de la cour sicilienne, la prose rythmée du *dictamen* était alors revêtue d'un prestige équivalent à celui qu'assumerait plus tard le latin cicéronien. Ce rayonnement conduisit à transposer un ensemble important de textes dans une enveloppe formelle qui ne présente pas de solution de continuité avec le type de rhétorique alors employé en chancellerie dans la rédaction des lettres et actes. Ce mouvement affecte particulièrement la rédaction de chroniques auxquelles on voulait conférer soit un caractère de lisibilité maximale, par opposition au genre métrique, soit de grande solennité. Le premier cas se retrouve dans la *Chronica Marchiae Trivixianae* de Rolandino da Padova. Son auteur, fils de notaire et professeur de grammaire et de rhétorique, explique avoir choisi la prose du *dictamen*, par opposition à la forme métrique, pour toucher un plus large public.³⁷ Il s'adresse en effet aux élites lettrées du nord-est de la péninsule, marquées par l'enseignement bolonais. La recherche d'une solennité emphatique, recourant à un type de *dictamen* surchargé en partie analogue aux productions de la chancellerie sicilienne sous Pierre de la Vigne et ses successeurs, ca-

37. Rolandino 14: "Scribo quoque prosayce hac de causa, quia scio que dixero posse dici a me per prosam plenius quam per versus, et cum sit his temporibus dictamen prosaicum intelligibilius quam metricum apud omnes."

ractérise en revanche plusieurs chroniqueurs du Mezzogiorno, que ce soit le rédacteur anonyme de la Chronique dite du Pseudo-Iam-silla (Delle Donne, “Gli usi”), ou le calabrais Saba Malaspina, auteur de la *Chronica Siciliae* (Koller und Nitschke) qui raconte de manière théâtrale les règnes de Conrad IV, Manfred et Charles I^{er} d’Anjou. Ces productions historiographiques sophistiquées furent probablement conçues pour être lues dans des milieux tels que la cour papale ou la cour sicilienne. Elles doivent être analysées dans une optique de continuum stylistique et culturel avec l’univers textuel des grandes *summae dictaminis*, dont elles citent certains passages, sur le mode des ‘reprises semi-formulaires’ présenté plus haut (e.g. Koller und Nitschke 121).

Dans le milieu gravitant autour de la *Magna Curia* sicilienne et des pôles d’activité littéraire qui lui survécurent après la mort de Manfred en 1266, c’est en fait un mouvement de ‘dictaminisation’ de toutes sortes de genres considérés comme franchement littéraires par la recherche traditionnelle qui eut lieu entre 1220 et 1290. Martin Camargo a ainsi montré à quel point la rédaction, puis l’utilisation de la très populaire *Historia destructionis Troiae* du messinois Guido delle Colonne³⁸ relevait du monde de l’*ars*. Il s’agit en fait d’une ‘mise en prose de *dictamen*,’ entièrement rythmée selon les principes du cursus rythmique, d’un remaniement de l’*Histoire de Troie* de Benoît de Sainte-Maure. Cette idée s’explique par le milieu dans lequel évoluait Guido. Il déclare lui-même dans sa conclusion (Guido de Columnis 276) avoir entrepris ce travail sous l’impulsion de Matteo da Porta. Fulvio Delle Donne a mis en valeur le rôle de cet archevêque de Salerne dans la troisième génération de l’école campanienne d’*ars dictaminis* (Nicola da Rocca 104–15). De fait, le succès européen de la *Historia destructionis Troiae* n’a pas eu qu’une dimension strictement littéraire. Cette œuvre était encore utilisée et recommandée, un siècle après sa composition, par les maîtres d’*ars dictaminis* oxfordiens (Camargo, “Beyond the *Libri Catoniani*” 176–81). En dépit de la différence générique apparemment radicale de cette latinisation d’un roman d’inspiration classique avec les grandes *summae dictaminis*, le *continuum* du cursus rythmique en faisait un matériau de choix pour apprendre l’*ars* dans l’Angleterre du XIV^e siècle.

Certains textes suggèrent d’ailleurs que la ‘mise en prose du *dictamen*’ de textes originellement écrits en langue vulgaire avait sans doute atteint des proportions notables dans ce milieu. La survie de deux lettres latines inspirées de laisses du *Roman de Renart* dans certains manuscrits suggère des essais de transposition des romans co-

38. Guido de Columnis; Camargo, “Beyond the *Libri Catoniani*.”

miques en langue d'oïl (Muller; Flinn 542–48). Si l'on se souvient que le *Formulaire* de Tréguier, composé en Bretagne au début du XIV^e siècle, contient parmi de nombreux *dictamina* en prose une transposition en vers latins rythmiques de la *Chanson d'Audigier* (Turcan-Verkerk, "Le Formulaire"), on prendra la mesure de ces interactions entre la littérature de langue d'oïl (ou franco-italienne) et l'univers du *dictamen* latin à son apogée. À l'exception de la *Historia destructionis Troiae*, seuls quelques témoins mineurs de ce phénomène ont été retrouvés, mais ces adaptations ont pu représenter une dimension non négligeable des logiques de transposition textuelles dans l'Europe des années 1200–1320.

Après la littérature juridique, annalistique, et romanesque, il faudrait encore évoquer plusieurs dimensions des textualités latines médiévales qui ont reçu l'empreinte de ces modes de composition semi-formulaire. Tous les problèmes concernant les limites de cette influence sont d'ailleurs loin d'être résolus. L'une des questions les plus épineuses concerne les interactions plausibles entre certaines formes de sermon et la pratique du *dictamen*. Quelques textes créés dans l'orbite de la chancellerie papale dans la seconde moitié du XIII^e siècle attestent bien l'existence d'un style de rédaction emphatique proche de la rhétorique épistolaire de chancellerie papale ou sicilienne.³⁹ Il a donc existé une zone d'intersection entre les deux champs. Le petit nombre des témoins pour l'instant mis en évidence suggère toutefois que les logiques de composition typiques de l'*ars praedicandi* ont contribué à maintenir une certaine distance entre l'univers du sermon scolastique et celui du *dictamen*.

Un dernier (?) champ potentiel d'extension des recettes formelles de l'*ars* au-delà de la lettre est enfin représenté par le latin 'scolastique' des traités spéculatifs. Cet univers textuel était *a priori* régi par des règles stylistiques très différentes de celles de l'*ars*. Le latin des traités théologiques, politiques ou didactiques était en effet dominé par un souci de concision et de technicité, à l'opposé de l'emphase métaphorique et rythmique du *dictamen*. Le conditionnement pédagogique, esthétique et mémoriel imposé par l'*ars* était pourtant tel dans l'Italie de la fin du XIII^e et du début du XIV^e siècle, qu'on assiste alors pour deux ou trois générations à l'émergence d'un style hybride. On pourrait qualifier ce registre de '*dictamen* scolastique.' Des traités aussi divers que la *Summa artis rithimici dictaminis* d'Antonio da Tempo, le *De vulgari eloquentia* de Dante ou le *Defensor Pacis* de Marsile de Padoue sont ainsi en partie conditionnés, malgré

39. Sermon de Stefano da San Giorgio et *rescriptum* de Giovanni di Castrocielo dans Delle Donne, *Una silloge* 86–92.

leur propos technique, par des recherches rythmiques qui les font rentrer dans la dimension textuelle de l'*ars*.

Une typologie n'est pas une fin en soi, même si on espère avoir donné une idée de la manière dont l'*ars* a pu rayonner à partir de son noyau politico-épistolaire dans différents champs de production textuelle aux XIII^e et XIV^e siècles. Il y a pourtant plus à tirer de la mise en valeur de ces correspondances qu'une simple cartographie. Un dernier exemple suggérera ce qui pourrait être fait dans le domaine de l'histoire textuelle à partir de la mise en évidence de ces propriétés communes à des textes d'ordinaire étudiés séparément. L'une des œuvres les plus connues de l'histoire littéraire du XIV^e siècle européen est certainement le *Philobiblon* de Richard de Bury, méditation 'héroïco-comique' sur l'amour des livres à peu près unique en son genre achevée en 1345 (Thomas). Ce traité n'a guère manqué d'analyses, mais elles ont rarement porté sur sa forme. Il est en fait écrit selon des normes, dans une structure, et grâce à des procédés qui sont, intégralement, ceux du *dictamen* classique 'à la sicilienne,' tel qu'il avait été enseigné dans les classes d'Oxford à partir de la fin du XIII^e siècle (Camargo, *Medieval Rhetorics* 10–20). Or Richard de Bury a également laissé deux autres témoins de son activité textuelle. L'un sort *a priori* totalement du domaine littéraire, puisqu'il est constitué par les vestiges de son activité administrative.⁴⁰ Le second est un objet ambigu, à mi-chemin entre champ littéraire et écrit pragmatique. Il s'agit en fait d'une *summa dictaminis*. Richard de Bury avait en effet créé une anthologie personnelle de *dictamina*, pour une bonne part siciliens et papaux, éditée sous le nom de *Liber epistolaris* par Denholm-Young. Des trois productions, la première (le *Philobiblon*) apparaît régulièrement dans les histoires de la littérature médiévale, la seconde est utilisée par les historiens du politique et de l'administration, la troisième (la *summa*) n'est guère convoquée. Elles relèvent en fait toutes trois de la même dimension formelle, et offrent un terrain de choix pour effectuer une 'micro-histoire' stylistique. Combien des chevilles rhétoriques formatées par le cursus rythmique, présentes dans les *dictamina* du *Liber epistolaris* se retrouvent-elles dans la correspondance politico-administrative de Richard de Bury et dans les périodes du *Philobiblon*?

40. Voir l'édition Richard d'Aungerville.

Conclusion

Certains des liens entre les méthodes d'écriture des grandes chancelleries du XIII^e siècle et les différents textes non-épistolaires évoqués *supra* avaient déjà été mis en lumière. De même, la centralité du cursus rythmique dans la théorie et la pratique du *dictamen* a reçu une certaine attention, liée à l'intérêt des philologues médiolatins pour le cursus en tant que critère d'analyse stylistique (Grévin, "De l'ornementation"). C'est la perspective globale, redonnant à cette mouvance textuelle du bas Moyen Âge son poids dans la structuration d'un ensemble éclaté mais cohérent de textes, gravitant autour du noyau des *dictamina* regroupés dans les *summae*, qui n'a pas encore été dégagée. Si une collection de lettres polonaises du début du XV^e siècle, un traité sur l'amour des livres terminé en Angleterre en 1345 et une chronique sud-italienne achevée en 1285 dépendent d'un même ensemble de sources et de techniques de composition, cela n'est en effet pas dû à la simple influence d'une 'théorie' du *dictamen*. Ces convergences résultent d'un ensemble d'habitus de rédaction, dont l'existence définit une dimension de la production textuelle médiévale encore sous-explorée. Cette dimension, celle du *dictamen*, transcende en effet les modes de définition du 'littéraire' ou du 'non-littéraire' qui continuent malgré les apparences de conditionner le champ de la recherche en histoire textuelle médiévale. L'exploration de ces territoires du *dictamen* offre une excellente occasion pour dépasser ces frontières en suggérant, loin des déclarations programmatiques, d'innombrables possibilités d'enquêtes concrètes dans une dimension textuelle englobant l'administratif, l'épistolaire, le politique, aussi bien que l'annalistique, le pur jeu rhétorique et bien d'autres choses encore: une dimension avant tout structurée par le rythme.

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Translatio studii e translatio imperii

Appunti per un percorso

Abstract

The essay reconsiders in a broader framework the theme of *translatio studii* already studied by Etienne Gilson. This broader context moves from the ancient biblical model (Daniel's dream) to the sketch of a progressive understanding of historical events drawn from the theories concerning the succession of earthly kingdoms and their eras, derived from Roman historical thought. In the Early Middle Ages this idea was interpreted in a contradictory and even negative way, since Christian thought tended to reduce the autonomy of human history as governed by its own principles. However, after the experience of the Carolingian Empire the theory of the succession of kingdoms was revived. It was fully developed in France in the following centuries, in order to exalt the French kingdom as taking up the legacy of Greek and Roman civilization. This interpretation had strong nationalistic connotations, which were opposed by the great cultural utopia of the Italian humanism and its 'dream' (as Rico called it), and its greatest and most tireless interpreter, Petrarch.

Il tema che qui vorrei riconsiderare è di grande interesse, ed è assai complesso per l'ampiezza dell'orizzonte e la ricchezza delle sue articolazioni: da una parte sprofonda nella remota antichità delle bibliche profezie di Daniele; dall'altra si arriva alle moderne ipotesi circa la *translatio* di là dall'Atlantico dei saperi dalla 'vecchia' Europa. Proprio questo, rifacendosi alle profezie di Daniele, affermava George Berkeley in una lirica composta nel 1736, che portava dapprima il titolo *America or the Muse's Refuge. A Prophecy*, poi mutato nella stampa in *Verses on the prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America* (Berkeley 6: 369–71; Southern 208 ss.). Ma Berkeley, scrivendo che "Westward the Course of Empire takes its Way" (v. 21), non faceva che adattare ai suoi tempi quanto sosteneva a metà del XII secolo Ottone di Frisinga nel Prologo alla sua grande *Chronica sive Historia de duabus civitatibus*, riassumendo quanto le sue fonti di fatto già indicavano:

Et notandum quod omnis humana potentia seu scientia ab oriente cepit et in occidente terminatur, ut per hoc rerum volubilitas ac defectus ostendatur. (*Ottonis Episcopi Frisingensis Chronica* 8)

1. Jongkees lo cita proprio nelle prime righe di un importante saggio al quale dovrò più volte ricorrere.

E il medesimo tema ancora ricompare nel pieno della seconda guerra mondiale in prospettiva storica aggiornata in un libro di Eric Fischer dal titolo altrettanto eloquente: *The Passing of the European Age: A Study of the Transfer of Western Civilisation and Its Renewal on Other Continents*.¹ Ma a questo punto, appena varcato un così seducente ingresso, il panorama che ci si spalanca davanti è troppo ampio, sì che è necessario procedere con un minimo di ordine, per tentare una sorta di abbozzo fortemente selettivo delle remote origini del motivo e del suo sviluppo attraverso il Medioevo.

1 Gli incunaboli della *Translatio*

Risalenti più o meno allo stesso torno di tempo, diciamo tra il 190 e il 165 a.C., due sono le antiche testimonianze che riguardano la teoria della successione degli imperi. La prima consiste in un frammento tratto dall'opera perduta *De annis populi romani* di un Emilio Sura, riportato da Velleio Patercolo, *Hist. Rom.* 1.6.6:²

2. Sull'identità di Sura e sul tema di questo passo cfr. Cotta Ramosino, con ricca bibliografia. Secondo la studiosa, Plinio in vari passi della sua opera (4.33 e 39; 5.76) avrebbe rimeditato e ricomposto tradizioni diverse: quella di Sura, quella risalente a Pompeo Trogo (in Giustino 30.4), e quella polibiana e catoniana che aveva la sua data chiave nel 168 a.C., quando Lucio Emilio Paolo sconfisse Perseo a Pidna. Per quanto si accenna circa la successione degli imperi è fondamentale il volume di Goetz, nel quale è raccolta una imponente e pressoché esaustiva ricerca dei testi che attraverso i secoli hanno toccato il tema della *translatio imperii*.

Aemilius Sura de annis populi romani: Assyrii principes omnium gentium rerum potiti sunt, deinde Medi, postea Persae, deinde Macedones, exinde duobus regibus Philippo et Antiocho, qui a Macedonibus oriundi erant, haud multo post Carthaginem subactam devictis, summa imperii ad populum Romanum pervenit. Inter hoc tempus et initium regis Nini Assyriorum, qui princeps rerum potitus, intersunt anni MDCCCXCV.

Con la sconfitta di Antioco III a Magnesia, nel 190 a.C., 1995 anni dopo la nascita del primo impero universale, quello dell'assiro Nino, e dopo essere passata per Medi, Persiani e Macedoni, la *summa imperii* sarebbe dunque giunta in mani romane (e lì, presumibilmente, avrebbe dovuto restare).

Alla stessa tradizione di Sura ha probabilmente attinto anche l'autore del *Libro di Daniele*, che si ritiene composto tra il 168 e il 165 a.C., mentre era in corso la guerra degli Ebrei contro Antioco IV. E proprio da Daniele è opportuno cominciare, perché sono state le sue

3. Cfr. soprattutto Gerolamo, *Commentariorum in Daniele liber*, in *PL* 25.503–04 e 528–30. Questa interpretazione dei quattro regni è affine a quella di Eusebio, nella sua *Demonstr. Evang.* 15 fr. 1, in *PG* 22.793 (= Eusebius *Werke* 434). Diverso è lo schema di Orosio, *Hist.* 2.1.2–6 e 7.2.1–16, che, seguendo l'orientamento dei quattro punti cardinali, pensa a due imperi universali, quello di Babilonia e quello di Roma, fra i quali si intromettono due imperi minori di transizione, quello dei Macedoni e quello dei Cartaginesi. Al proposito è ancora molto utile il bel saggio di Swain, che chiarisce lo sfondo storico e i problemi di cronologia, e illustra le principali questioni relative alle varianti con le quali la sequenza compare presso autori diversi. Ma, entro l'ampia bibliografia relativa alle profezie di Daniele, cfr. soprattutto Inglebert, *Interpretatio* 342–64, che dedica all'argomento un ricco e fondamentale paragrafo che ricostruisce le vicende e la fortuna del motivo nell'area greco-cristiana, giudaica e siriana, e infine considera la tarda ripresa nella tradizione occidentale, a partire dalla traduzione della *Cronaca* di Eusebio da parte di Gerolamo (circa 380), alla *Cronaca* di Sulpicio Severo, per concludere con la 'variante' di Origene e con tre tavole sinottiche che riassumono le varie versioni della teoria nella tradizione orientale, in quella occidentale giudaica e greco-cristiana, e in quella occidentale latina.

4. Oltre a tante precenti applicazioni, muove dalla citazione biblica anche Giovanni di Salisbury, *Policraticus* 4.12, cap. *Ex quibus causis transferantur principatus et regna* (730–37).

profezie, insieme all'interpretazione che ne ha dato Gerolamo e che Agostino ha confermato (*De civ. Dei* 20.23) a godere di lungo prestigio. In breve, nel sogno che Nabucodonosor si fa spiegare da Daniele (*Dan.* 2.1–45) la straordinaria statua dalla testa d'oro, il petto e le braccia d'argento, il ventre e i fianchi di bronzo, le gambe di ferro e i piedi di argilla che si frantumano facendo crollare tutto il resto rappresenterebbe le successive sorti dell'impero dello stesso Nabucodonosor che passa via via ad altri popoli in un percorso di progressiva decadenza e infine di rovina. Analogamente, nel sogno di Daniele medesimo (*Dan.* 7.1–28), le quattro grandi bestie che escono dal mare rappresentano la successione di quattro regni che, nell'interpretazione che ha fatto testo, ancora quella di Gerolamo, sarebbero il babilonese, persiano, greco-macedone e romano, ai quali seguirà l'universale dominio di Cristo su questa terra.³

Tralascio qui molti elementi anche importanti, per osservare l'essenziale contraddizione che anima le varie interpretazioni di quei sogni, divise al loro interno tra una visione metastorica di tipo negativo e una visione progressiva e positiva, per quanto sommaria e rudimentale, del corso della storia. Per tutto il medioevo ha conservato valore centrale la sentenza contenuta nello stesso libro di Daniele (2.21), che riferisco qui con il commento di Gerolamo (*PL* 25.500):

Et ipse mutat tempora et aetates, et transfert regna atque constituit. Non ergo miremur, si quando cernimus et regibus reges et regnis regna succedere, quae Dei gubernantur et mutantur et finiuntur arbitrio. Causasque singulorum novit ille qui conditor omnium est et saepe malos reges patitur suscitari ut mali malos puniant.

In altri termini i regni di questa terra si affermano e crollano attraverso le epoche per il semplice fatto che la loro esistenza deriva per intero dall'arbitrio di Dio, che finisce per abbandonarli all'inevitabile tramonto loro destinato dall'accumulo delle colpe degli uomini. Altra direzione o senso della storia non esiste, fuori dal fatto che "Regnum a gente in gentem transferetur propter iniustitias et iniurias et contumelias et diversos dolos" (*Eccli* 10.8).⁴ Quasi una ripetizione continua dell'esperienza della perdita, della distanza che ogni volta divide l'uomo da un'età dell'oro irrecuperabile; un tramonto continuo all'insegna di una visione della storia che potremmo compendiare nelle amare sentenze di molti secoli più tardi: "Il mondo invecchia / e invecchiando intristisce" (Tasso, *Aminta* 2.2.71–72), oppure: "Declina il mondo, e peggiorando invecchia" (Metastasio, *Demetrio*

2.8.20). Donde appunto un insieme di concezioni che da un lato affidavano la successione dei regni a un disegno dominato dalla vanità del tutto e dalla fondamentale ingiustizia sulla quale ogni potere terreno si regge, e dall'altro non potevano fare a meno di porre alcune premesse che andavano nella direzione opposta, e cioè aiutavano a ravvisare almeno un filo conduttore, un'ipotesi interpretativa in chiave provvidenziale e storica.

Torniamo un attimo indietro. In Daniele, e in particolare nel sogno della statua, è chiara una progressione negativa nella successione dei regni da quello d'oro a quello di ferro e d'argilla, e nel secondo la progressione negativa è ulteriormente confermata dall'accumulo di spaventosa ferocia che finisce per caratterizzare la quarta bestia, quasi una somma delle più paurose qualità delle altre tre. Nello stesso tempo questa *climax* discendente e che però termina con un regno di ferro, ch'è il più forte di tutti, è bruscamente corretta e propriamente rovesciata dalla profezia del quinto e ultimo regno, quello di Cristo, la cui immagine non può non agire all'indietro, per dire così, e non imprimere ai regni terreni che lo precedono almeno il senso di un percorso unitario, ordinato quanto meno allo scopo realizzato dal quarto regno, quello romano. Il quale, infatti, per lo stesso Gerolamo è qualcosa che ingloba e supera tutti gli altri, come ha scritto nel citato commento a Daniele: "in uno imperio Romanorum omnia simul regna cognoscimus, quae prius fuerunt separata," creando condizioni affatto nuove e qualitativamente superiori rispetto a quelle dei regni precedenti, come torna a puntualizzare altrove:

Ante adventum Christi unaquaeque gens suum habebat regem et de alia ad aliam nullus ire poterat nationem. In romano autem imperio unum facta sunt omnia,

si che la sua rovina travolge il mondo intero, come ancora Gerolamo scrive nel 410 piangendo la morte di Marcella, uccisa dagli stenti durante il sacco della città da parte di Alarico:

Postquam vero clarissimum terrenorum omnium lumen extinctum est, immo Romani imperii truncatum caput et, ut verius dicam, in una Urbe totus orbis interiit.⁵

Così Gerolamo partecipa al grande motivo dell'universalità e della eternità dell'impero, che ha il suo centro radiante in Virgilio, *Aen.* 1.274–78 e 6.851, e dal quale sono sortite molte affermazioni del tutto analoghe alla sue.⁶ E soprattutto affronta il grande e complesso tema che sarà centrale nella visione dantesca (oltre che nella *Com-*

5. *Prol. ai Commentariorum in Ezechielem prophetam libri quatordecim*, in *PL* 25.16, e *Comm. a Isaia* 19.23, in Hieronymus, *Commentariorum* 199. Per un lungo commosso elogio funebre di Marcella, una delle animatrici del 'circolo dell'Aventino' cfr. ancora, di Gerolamo, l'*Epist.* 127.

6. Sui famosi versi di Virgilio e sulle polemiche e sulle interpretazioni che hanno suscitato nei secoli seguenti (specie in Agostino) cfr. le ricche pagine di Courcelle 1.74–81. Ma a proposito delle parole di Gerolamo vedi pure *Ret. ad Herennium* 4.13: "Imperium orbis terrarum, cui imperio omnes gentes reges nationes [...] consenserunt;" Ovidio, *Fast.* 2.684: "Romanae spatium est Urbis et orbis idem;" Rutilio Namaziano, *De reditu* 1.66: "Urbem fecisti quod prius orbis erat;" Plinio, *Nat. hist.* 3.40: "Italia una cunctarum gentium in toto orbe patria;" ecc.: cfr. la sintesi di Hidalgo de la Vega, e qui in particolare l'analisi dell'*Elogio di Roma* di Elio Aristide.

7. Cfr. Grant; circa i testi di Eusebio, abbondantemente riferiti da Grant, mi limito a ricordare *Praeparatio evangelica* 1.4.1–6, ove dimostra che è frutto di una forza divina il fatto che l'avvento di Cristo sia avvenuto in un momento in cui la razza umana era stata liberata dalla molteplicità dei regni per opera della monarchia di Augusto (Eusèbe 118 = PG 21.37). Ma per un panorama vasto e preciso di un nodo così importante rimando in particolare a Inglebert, *Les Romains e "Les causes."*

8. Cosma infatti intende che l'ultimo regno, quello che Dio 'suscita' dopo che la statua sognata da Nabucodonosor è stata distrutta, sia insieme quello di Cristo e quello romano: "Daniel dit: 'Le Dieu du ciel suscitera un empire qui ne sera pas détruit à travers les siècles' (*Dan.* 2.44). Ici, tout en parlant du Seigneur Christ, Daniel inclut aussi en une allusion l'empire des Romains qui s'est élevé an même temps que le Seigneur Christ [...] L'empire des Romains participe donc des dignités de l'empire du Seigneur Christ; il surpasse, autant qu'il se peut en cette vie, tous les autres et demeure invincible jusqu'à l'accomplissement des siècles." Per questa ragione, "J'exprime donc la conviction que, même si pour la correction de nos péchés les ennemis barbares se dressent de temps en temps contre la Romanie, l'empire demeurera invincible par la puissance souveraine, afin que le monde chrétien ne se réduise pas, mais qu'il s'étende. En effet, cet empire crut le premier en Christ, avant tous les autres, et il est le serviteur des dispositions concernant le Christ; pour cette raison Dieu, le Seigneur universel, le garde invincible jusqu'à l'accomplissement des siècles" (*Topographie chrétienne* 2.74–75; cito dalla traduzione a fronte del testo greco in Cosmas Indicopleustès 1.388–91).

9. In particolare, vedi Prudenzio, *Contra Symm.* 1.541–90, ove torna, con precise riprese da Virgilio, *Aen.* 1.274–78, la teologia imperiale di stampo eusebiano (per Fontaine, "De l'universalisme" 34, Prudenzio sarebbe "le dernier témoin, presque caricatural, de la grande illusion d'un Empire chrétien, à qui le Christ aurait garanti une nouvelle théologie de la victoire impériale"); Jordanes,

media, in *Conv.* 4.4–5, e in tutto il *Monarchia*), della natura provvidenziale dell'impero romano, attraverso il quale si sarebbero realizzate le condizioni migliori di natura politica, sociale e linguistica per la diffusione della parola di Cristo. Il pensiero di Gerolamo, in particolare, è in sintonia con quello di Eusebio che poneva l'intimo nesso tra la pace di Cristo, il monoteismo biblico e l'impero romano, e concepiva l'intero processo della civilizzazione, a partire dalla selvatica condizione primitiva, come un processo indirizzato dalla provvidenza verso la monarchia universale.⁷ In ciò, Eusebio metteva la sua impronta personale su un'idea che nelle sue linee essenziali era diventata predominante nel corso del secondo secolo d. C., per quanto attraversata da contraddizioni e opposizioni. Qui basta ricordare come quell'idea, con sfumature diverse, prendesse corpo attraverso Ireneo di Lione, Melitone, Teofilo d'Antiochia, Teodoreto di Ciro e avesse raggiunto formulazioni estreme in Cosma Indicopleuste,⁸ e come il cosiddetto 'eusebismo cristiano' informi l'opera di Prudenzio e Orosio, e poi quella di Cassiodoro e Jordanes, per i quali l'esistenza dell'impero romano sino alla fine dei tempi era un'evidenza garantita dallo stesso *Libro di Daniele*. E papa Leone Magno dalla crisi dell'impero svilupperà un'ideologia pontificale 'di sostituzione,' mentre il legame che governa il passaggio dall'impero romano ormai finito a quello cristiano è del tutto scontato per Gregorio Magno.⁹ Ma, ai fini del mio discorso, merita una sosta particolare Isidoro, che produce un'interpretazione originale di *Dan.* 7. Anch'egli, sulla traccia di Gerolamo, identifica la quarta bestia con l'impero romano, ma contemporaneamente fa i conti con la sua avvenuta dissoluzione, ricavandone che ad esso si deve la civilizzazione universale e che, seppure politicamente scomparso, resta l'unico supremo modello di riferimento: così, i regni particolari (quello visigotico sarebbe uno dei dieci corni della bestia di Daniele) sarebbero vincolati a una sorta di *imitatio imperii* che dovrebbe garantire la libertà delle *genti* non più sottomesse.¹⁰ Di fatto, insomma, quella di Isidoro è la nuova cornice ideologica che dovrebbe presiedere a una serie multipla di *translatio-nes*: ed è allora specialmente significativo, vedremo, che tale idea di una naturale pluralità dei regni nati dalle ceneri dell'impero torni e si sviluppi con forza nella Francia capetingia, che insieme rivendicherà in forme altrettanto esplicite il privilegio della *translatio studii*.

Siamo forse arrivati, sia pur per pochi e sommari esempi, a un altro snodo importante. Dovendo riassumere, porrei l'accento sul fat-

rispondono a Pietro e Paolo; i martiri sono i nuovi trionfatori; l'*arx imperii* diventa *caput orbis*, ecc.). Per Gregorio Magno, vedi Markus, "Gregory."

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Romana 5.1 ss. (cfr. Goetz 49–52); Leone Magno, *Serm.* 69, che sviluppa all'estremo il motivo della Roma pagana quale prefigurazione della cristiana (Romolo e Remo cor-

10. Sulla visione storica di Isidoro fa un lungo e ricco discorso Reydellet, "La signification" 345–46. Leggiamo qui, p. 342: "Cette représentation d'une humanité une par l'origine,

mais éclaté en *gentes*, laisse reconnaître l'influence du moment où Isidore écrit, et, plus précisément, on y retrouve l'écho des conceptions de Grégoire le Grand. Ce dernier est en effet le témoin privilégié de la faillite de l'universalisme imperial et de la reconnaissance des *regna* qui trouvent droit de cité dans un nouvel ordre du monde où l'Église se substitue à l'Empire comme principe d'universalité et d'unité;" e ancora, p. 348, mettendo in risalto la componente più nuova e personale di Isidoro: "Isidore ne cherche pas seulement à transmettre un savoir passé, mais à imposer au lecteur une nouvelle image du monde. Cette image est celle d'un monde où la diversité des *gentes*, voulue par Dieu, est acceptée sans nostalgie de l'Empire, tout en se conciliant avec un nouveau principe d'unité qui est l'Église." Vedi anche Fontaine, "De l'universalisme" 42–45, che puntualizza l'isidoriana dissociazione dello spazio romano e l'unificazione ideologica di uno spazio 'provinciale,' il *regnum gentis Gothorum*; Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville. Génèse* 217–33 (cap. 11); Reydellet, "La conception," che tra l'altro analizza i capitoli isidoriani sortiti dal IV Concilio di Toledo, nel 633 (*Sent.* 3.47–51: *PL* 83.537–738), in cui è tracciato il profilo del principe ideale. Su quest'opera, vedi anche Cazier 374–77. Vedi avanti, nota 33.

to che due sono le correnti profonde che non hanno mai smesso di confrontarsi e dialettizzarsi anche drammaticamente nel corso della storia dell'occidente: la corrente che ha trasmesso al medioevo (e poi alla modernità, quale potente lievito delle sue rivoluzioni) una visione integralmente pessimista e addirittura malvagia e satanica sull'origine e la natura del potere, e l'altra che affrontava il problema di capire come si fosse passati dalla brutale e criminale semplicità del dominio diretto – Nembroth, per semplificare – alla costruzione grandiosa dell'impero romano e a quella altrettanto mirabile di un modello di diritto universale che pareva disegnare per sempre l'unico orizzonte entro il quale si riuscisse a pensare la società umana e, in particolare, qualsiasi forma di legittimazione di nuove e possibili strutture di governo. Da questo punto di vista, credo che ancor oggi noi si sia entro la dimensione di 'eredi dell'impero:' ma non è questo, evidentemente, il punto. Piuttosto, e sempre in termini assai generali, direi che le due visioni siano opposte e però indissolubilmente intrecciate, sì che ognuna di esse s'alimenta e vive della sua possibile negazione. E se l'una cancella nella ripetizione dell'identico ciclo di catastrofi storiche il valore di qualsiasi *translatio* che non consista nella continuità del giudizio divino e della umana colpevolezza, l'altra per contro non può che prefigurare l'intero corso della storia *sub specie translationis* e addirittura alla *translatio* affida la possibilità stessa che una storia esista, e pone tale concetto al centro della propria speculazione e s'interroga sulle speranze che suscita e sui modi della loro realizzazione. Ed è allo spessore storico-antropologico di questo quadro, per quanto qui malamente abbozzato, che le *translationes* delle quali resta da parlare vanno riportate.

2 La *Translatio* come storia

Un passo ancora è necessario per arrivare alle nostre *translationes*, e per farlo occorre scendere qualche gradino e rientrare nella più appropriata dimensione culturale e letteraria entro la quale qui ci si deve contenere. E osserviamo subito che il concetto cristiano di *translatio* resta estraneo e in linea di principio ostile all'idea di un legame tra la trasmissione del potere e quella del sapere (il famoso sogno di Girolamo in fondo estremizza l'accettazione di questa dicotomia). In esso, infatti, il saldo dei vari crolli di regno in regno è pur sempre negativo, e il sapere è in ogni caso fissato nella Rivelazione, onde il 'progresso' verso il regno di Cristo è anche, intrinsecamente, un pro-

gresso nella comprensione, nella diffusione e nell'attuazione delle Sacre Scritture: e l'impero romano troverebbe appunto la sua trascendente giustificazione e la sua gloria nell'essere stato al servizio di tale diffusione. Ma all'interno del mondo romano e del suo universalismo tanto politico quanto filosofico già vive l'essenziale e per vari aspetti dirompente novità per cui quel legame tra potere e sapere è in verità strettissimo, e propriamente di consustanzialità. Né potrebbe essere diversamente, perché, se è la corruzione umana che produce le catastrofi dei vecchi regni, è la *virtus* che edifica e mantiene l'impero. Se dunque spostiamo l'attenzione verso il mondo romano, spicca evidente non solo l'enorme forza di impatto del mito della missione dell'impero, specie nella veste poetica e religiosa che Virgilio ha saputo conferirgli, ma anche risulta come fosse precisamente romana la visione in chiave progressiva delle *translationes* storiche, e come appaia al proposito esemplare la massima di Sallustio che dalle stesse premesse cristiane – sono i misfatti e le ingiustizie che distruggono i regni – ricavava la possibilità di un'interpretazione della mutabilità della storia come progressiva rifondazione ed incremento dei valori:

Verum ubi pro labore desidia, pro continentia et aequitate
lubido atque superbia invasere, fortuna simul cum moribus
immutatur. Ita imperium semper ad optimum quemque a
minus bono transfertur. (*De Catilinae con.* 2.5–6)¹¹

11. Tornando alla *virtus* edificatrice dei romani, Enghelberto di Admont, citerà ancora nei primi anni del '300 le eloquenti parole di Sallustio, *De Catilinae con.* 32.19–21, e aggiungerà: “quia non fuissent illi tales viri, nisi habuissent tales mores, neque apud Romanos tunc fuissent tales mores, nisi Roma tunc habuisset tales viros” (*Speculum virtutum* 6.8: Engelbert von Admont 245).

Il punto è fondamentale. Se davvero l’“*imperium semper ad optimum quemque a minus bono transfertur,*” ciò può avvenire solo in nome di un altro tipo di ‘trasferimento:’ quello che sposta il fuoco del discorso dall’*imperium*, e cioè dal potere e cioè dalla violenza, ai *mores*, e cioè, nel caso, alla dimensione etica che riveste il potere e lo legittima. Nelle parole di Sallustio la *translatio* riguarda in prima istanza *labor*, *continentia*, *aequitas*, mentre il potere, alla fine, le segue e le premia, condannando senza appello *desidia*, *lubido* e *superbia*. Tutto ciò corrisponde al nucleo profondo dell’ideologia romana sin dalla sua versione repubblicana, e alle sue rappresentazioni: basterebbe ricordare il celebre passo nel libro IX delle *Storie* di Livio nel quale gli eserciti romani guidati da Papirio Cursor sono contrapposti a quella massa informe di ubriaconi che avrebbe costituito l’esercito di Alessandro Magno, oppure al binomio *pietas-virtus* che sarebbe stato all’origine di tutti i futuri successi. E ci rimanda perciò alle qualità di fondo attraverso le quali i romani sono stati degni di realizzare la grande *translatio* che per tutto il medioevo e l’età moderna

ha sempre conservato un ruolo archetipico: quella del sapere, da Atene a Roma. Al proposito, sempre si allega la formulazione oraziana, *Epist.* 2.1.156–67, che stringe in un sol nodo conquista militare e *translatio* ed esalta la natura del popolo romano in quella sua rustica e vittoriosa maniera di procedere, che mette al primo posto i doveri più duri e solo dopo averli compiuti (“post Punica bella quietus”) si apre a un’esperienza di progresso spirituale pur sempre posta sotto il segno dell’*utile*, com’è del resto da aspettarsi da chi l’affronta con la stessa serietà e determinazione con le quali ha affrontato la guerra. Ma di questa stessa capacità è buon testimone anche Cicerone, che non solo esalta il ‘genio’ romano nell’appropriarsi della cultura greca, ma anche l’esigenza di conservare e incrementare il patrimonio culturale: “Hoc autem loco consideranti mihi studia doctrinae multa sane occurrunt, cur ea quoque arcessita aliunde neque solum expetita, sed etiam conservata et culta videantur” (*Tusc.* 4.2), e dunque il buon diritto di una appropriazione che salva e incrementa quanto, dall’altra parte, stava andando in rovina. I greci, infatti, non avevano saputo conservare non solo il loro sapere, ma neppure quello che a loro volta avevano ereditato da altri: “nati in litteris, ardentis iis studiis, otio vero diffluentes, non modo nihil adquisierint, sed ne relictum quidem et traditum et suum conservarunt” (*De orat.* 3.131), sì che quello dei romani nell’impadronirsi della loro ‘filosofia’ non è solo un diritto, ma un dovere: “hortor omnis qui facere id possunt, ut huius quoque generis laudem iam languenti Graeciae eripiant et transferant in hanc urbem” (*Tusc.* 2.5). Come si vede, i greci sconfitti si avviano a produrre già presso lo stesso Cicerone (vedi almeno *De orat.* 1.47 e 221, ma poi soprattutto Giovenale), la caricaturale figura dei *graeculi*, cioè quei verbosi e petulanti chiacchieroni che insieme alla libertà hanno visto crollare anche una ‘parola’ che ha perduto ogni rapporto con la realtà e ne è dunque riuscita ipertrofica e irresponsabile:¹² quei *graeculi*, aggiungo, che rimarranno a lungo tali, almeno sino a Petrarca, e che finiranno per far stringere le loro caratteristiche su un’altra categoria di illustri sconfitti, gli italiani. Per contro, l’apparente grossolanità romana ha saputo distinguere l’esercizio della forza da quello del potere, ed ha fatto dell’espansione imperiale un vettore di appropriazione e incremento di saperi fondato sull’apertura universalizzante di quella medesima *virtus* che ha assicurato la vittoria (ed è stupefacente vedere – altra irresistibile anticipazione – con quanta forza tornino questi stessi motivi nel ‘500 francese, combinando l’esaltazione del vecchio incorrotto *bon naturel* nazionale con quella della *translatio* che sull’onda delle vittorie militari ha restitui-

12. Si veda al proposito Socas, che pone giustamente l’accento sulla *Sat.* 9, e, in essa, sull’esaltazione di una rozzezza romana (nella presa di Corinto gli ignoranti soldati romani fusero splendide statue di bronzo per farne strumenti di guerra) in verità caricata, come del resto in Orazio, di valori positivi: “La rudeza romana es un defecto, per si bien se mira es un valor sólido. El arte es siempre un reblandecimiento y un artificio que equivale a engaño. El valor concencional y excesivo de una rebuscada pieza de orfebrería se transforma en el valor auténtico e instrumental de una lanza o una espada. El objeto de arte es un objeto falaz y moralmente nocivo. Pero la mentira reside ante todo en la palabra [...]”

13. Vedi, per la *translatio sapientiae*, le indicazioni di Goetz 117 ss.

14. Dice bene Hidalgo de la Vega 283: “los romanos se habían helenizados y en este proceso fue redefiniendo su propia identidad como conquistadores.”

15. Significativamente Fontaine, “De l’universalisme” 38 commenta: “La relativité spatiale et temporelle de l’Empire romain se trouve ainsi appuyée sur l’antique théorie des ‘quatre Empires’ remontant au chapitre 7 du *Livre de Daniel*” (ma qui si vedano anche le considerazioni che seguono).

16. È di Seneca, *Nat. quaest.* 7.30.5, questa bella riflessione volta al futuro: “Multa venientis aevi populus ignota nobis sciet; multa saeculis tunc futuris, cum memoria nostri exoleverit, reservantur.” Per il ‘senso della storia’ quale carattere fondante e specifico della romanità, vedi le pagine di Dumézil, *Naissance* 182 ss. e 208 ss.; e *L’héritage* 170 ss.

to alla Francia il suo primato).

L’essenza della *translatio* è qui limpida, e ne è altrettanto limpidamente distinta la specie particolare della *translatio studii*, e la sua importante funzione nei confronti dell’altra, alla quale sin qui abbiamo prestato esclusiva attenzione: la *translatio imperii*.¹³ Ed evidentemente, è solo per averle distinte che le si possono far collaborare e che può prendere forma un discorso nuovo.¹⁴ Sinteticamente, si può ora precisare meglio che la mera successione degli imperi di per sé non fa storia perché il suo approdo – il regno di Cristo e l’autosufficiente totalità del sapere che esso realizza – in ogni caso la trascende: il che sta a dire che il potere terreno è sempre uguale a se stesso e, come avvertiva Agostino, in esso non c’è né progresso né salvezza: “Ille igitur unus verus Deus, qui nec iudicio nec adiutorio deseruit genus humanum, quando voluit et quantum voluit Romanis regnum dedit, qui dedit Assyriis vel etiam Persis” (*De civ. Dei* 5.21).¹⁵ Ma se la *translatio* del potere rivela al proprio interno un filo di continuità e di arricchimento propriamente umani, ecco che il ferreo meccanismo della ripetizione dell’identico è superato, e le vicende stesse del potere ne sono riscattate alla luce della difficile e nascosta ma intrinseca moralità che le anima. Insomma, descrivere le *translationes imperii* nei termini di una sequela di prepotenze e catastrofi non basta a fondare una storia: semmai, cristianamente, la esclude. Ma rintracciare entro di esse le vie della *translatio studii* la fonda, perché ne fa un percorso di civiltà.¹⁶ Così, è vero che andranno probabilmente sfumate e modificate caso per caso, ma le parole che Reydellet ha scritto a proposito di Isidoro e che definiscono la visione della storia che sarà propria di un’età ‘passionale e antistorica’ (Mazzarino, “L’era costantiniana” 21–24) come quella cristiano-barbarica conservano un’indubbia portata generale nel definire lo schema profondo dell’approccio cristiano nei confronti degli imperi terreni:

Isidore n’a, à aucun degré, le sens d’une évolution créatrice de l’histoire. Ou plus exactement, il y a chez lui deux plans: l’un est celui de la Révélation qui se déroule progressivement selon les six âges repris d’Augustin, l’autre, celui des vicissitudes des empires qui se succèdent les uns aux autres, sans que, de l’un à l’autre, progrès puisse être marqué: *Regnum universae nationes suis quaeque temporibus habuerunt, ut Assyri, Medi, Persae, Aegyptii, Graeci, quorum vices sors temporum ita volutavit ut alterum ab altero solveretur.* Tout, dans ce texte, jusqu’au choix des expressions, révèle le scepticisme en

17. Reydellet, “La conception” 464; dello stesso autore si veda anche “La signification” 345–46 e *La royauté, passim*.

18. Discute del decreto e porta una aggiornata bibliografia Mathisen 1014–15. Ad esso rimando dispiacendomi di non poterne raccogliere, per ragioni di spazio, tutti gli spunti che, tra altre cose, convergono e danno spessore storico a una conclusione attualizzante che, isolata dal contesto, rischia di sembrare – e non è per nulla – futile: “Since the fall of the western Roman Empire, no nation has been so grand that it could claim to encompass the whole world or attempt to create a form of universal citizenship that was open to all comers. But now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, there is again much discussion of the different forms that universal citizenship could take. In spite of, or perhaps because of, the chronological gap between the ancient and modern phenomena of world citizenship, it may be that the Roman model for dealing with issues of ethnicity, identity, and religion in the context of legal definition of citizenship has much to teach us. In particular, the time may have come once again for a form of citizenship unburdened by the baggage of nationalism or political allegiances.”

19. Sono molte le parti che si dovrebbero citare, ma l'abbondanza stessa dei materiali mi rende difficile farlo: in ogni caso, raccomandando, per il suo valore fondante, la parte essenzialmente dedicata a Cicerone e al concetto di *humanitas*: Novara 1.163 ss. Tornando per un attimo al tema propriamente politico dell'imperialismo romano, ho trovato utile il denso saggio di Raaflaub.

présence de ces bouleversement: à se fier à ce seul jugement l'établissement de la monarchie wisigothique e Espagne ne saurait être que l'œuvre d'un hasard capricieux.¹⁷

Per contro, non è invece un paradosso il fatto che le premesse e i contenuti di una storia terrena distinta da quella divina siano maturate entro un impero come quello romano che si concepiva ed era percepito come tale per la sua natura essenzialmente inglobante tanto del potere che del sapere – l'impero *era* la sua stessa forza inglobante – e che dunque configurava in sé, nel suo destino, la ‘fine della storia.’ Perché si tratta, appunto, della storia terrena che solo l'immanenza di una ‘fine della storia’ altrettanto terrena può rendere, a cose fatte, riconoscibile (così come per Marx, vien voglia di dire, è lo scheletro dell'uomo che spiega, a ritroso, quello della scimmia). E del resto, solo la pervasiva grandiosità di un progetto universale che apparve sostanzialmente realizzato – specie quando, nel 212, la *Constitutio Antoniniana* diede la cittadinanza romana a tutti gli uomini liberi dell'impero¹⁸ – poteva affrontare alla pari l'altro progetto, quello cristiano, e insieme drammaticamente distinguersi e scontrarsi e anche mescolarsi con esso in forme e modi del tutto espliciti, almeno sino alle straordinarie formulazioni dantesche del *Monarchia* che faranno perno sulla reciproca, intima necessità di quei *duo ultima* (poche espressioni sono state così pregnanti!) per dare un senso alla vita dell'uomo.

Naturalmente, l'idea di progresso non è patrimonio esclusivo di Roma, perché è senz'altro vero che “Epicureanism, Skepticism, and Stoicism, the three dominant philosophical schools, all embraced progressivism in some form or other,” come ha scritto Edelstein concludendo il suo classico libro, orientato in prevalenza verso il mondo greco (178–79). Ma è altrettanto vero che è tutta romana l'idea pervasiva di una *humanitas* quale patrimonio vivente di civiltà e cultura che si espande nel tempo e nello spazio, così come lo è la convinzione, né potrebbe essere altrimenti, che proprio la potenza di Roma, prima repubblicana e poi imperiale, fosse insieme fondamento e funzione di una tale espansione. Anche questo è un argomento troppo grande e troppo battuto, e qui posso solo sfiorarlo al riparo di guide eccellenti, com'è un'altra ricerca, davvero monumentale, alla quale rimando: i due volumi di Antoinette Novara sulla nozione latina di progresso.¹⁹ E torno invece a Cicerone, e in particolare a una citazione dalla *Pro Flacco* 26.62, là dove Cicerone indica ai giudici i membri della legazione ateniese giunti a Roma per testimoniare a favore del suo difeso: “Adsunt Athenienses unde *humanitas*, doctrina,

religio, fruges, iura, leges ortae atque in omnis terras distributae putantur.” Prima di tutto qui parla l’avvocato, è indubbio. Ma ciò non toglie la sostanziale verità dell’omaggio, né l’evidente sottinteso con il quale i giudici sono invitati a riconoscere, attraverso la presenza degli ateniesi, ciò che essi stessi ora sono: i rappresentanti di una *humanitas romana* ch’è perfettamente in grado di ricostruire la propria storia e che è chiamata ad agire perché ha assunto su di sé e moltiplicato quella originale forza distributrice. Il motivo profondo, insomma, è quello di una sorta di partita doppia, o di una *translatio* di ritorno, dai vincitori verso i vinti. E ciò definisce precisamente la dimensione storica entro la quale tale *translatio* sviluppa la propria dinamica: prima come capacità di appropriazione garantita dalla forza della conquista, e poi come capacità tendenzialmente illimitata di moltiplicazione e distribuzione garantita dall’esercizio del potere.

Un tale schema si è consolidato per secoli attraverso l’immagine di una *translatio imperii et studii* da Atene e Roma, ch’è diventata prima che un tenace, frequentatissimo *topos* culturale, un vero e proprio varco epocale. Ho detto: *imperii et studii*, ma l’ordine andrebbe mutato perché, nel caso, è il sapere che fa aggio sul potere, è l’*humanitas* colta nel suo divenire che soppianta la bestiale successione biblica dei regni. E, occorre dirlo subito, davanti alla potenza di un siffatto modello la tradizione cristiana non ha potuto opporre che una mezza soluzione, fatta insieme di accettazione e di rifiuto: una *translatio* di quella natura e qualità non le appartiene né, geneticamente, può appartenere. I piani sono troppo diversi, e la questione è semmai diventata sin da principio quella delle condizioni per una possibile e però difficile modalità di rapporto. Tertulliano è un buon esempio di ciò. Da una parte esalta sino all’iperbole le condizioni politiche e sociali create da un impero ch’è più dolce del giardino di Alcino e del roseto di Mida (*De anima* 30.3 e *De pallio* 2.7), e dall’altro dà la nota definizione: “haereticorum patriarchae, philosophi” (*Contra Herm.* 8.3: *PL* 2.204). Tertulliano non è il solo, tutt’altro, nell’esprimere questo senso di raggiunta compiutezza, che non può che confermare l’accettazione piena dell’idea tutta romana di progresso. Ma una esaltazione siffatta non può neppure escludere la somma materiale di saperi che una simile situazione trasforma in concreta esperienza di vita, sì che proprio in virtù della forza di quell’idea Tertulliano tende a limare l’espressione dell’assoluta e alternativa verità del cristianesimo, e a definirne la superiorità in termini di compimento, di ultimo traguardo (ciò che distingue il cristiano è anche il perfetto possesso di tutte le qualità civili che l’impero richiede ai cittadini, e

20. “Scimus dici posse: si docere litteras dei servis non licet, etiam nec discere licebit, et, quomodo quis institueretur ad prudentiam interim humanam vel ad quemcumque sensum vel actum, cum instrumentum sit ad omnem vitam litteratura? Quomodo repudiamus saecularia studia, sine quibus divina non possunt?” Il passo, famoso, dal *De idolatria* 10.4, è stato variamente commentato: cfr. in particolare Fredouille 418–23 (ma tutto il volume è bello e importante per l’argomento).

21. Markus, “The Roman Empire” 347: “Looked at from this point of view, the theme of the work is a radical and sustained rejection of the Eusebian type of view of the Empire.” Qui, vedi anche una sintetica analisi dell’impatto provocato nelle coscienze dal sacco di Roma del 410, per la quale si vedano anche le numerose indicazioni contenute in Frensdorff (specialmente nei saggi 13 e 15, ove è ben messo in rilievo, nel confronto, il particolare pessimismo storico di Agostino, del quale sono tra l’altro ricordati i *Sermones* 81, 105 e 296). Sul ruolo centrale del *De doctrina christiana* nel delineare un progetto di recupero della cultura classica intesa come propedeutica al sapere cristiano mi limito a rinviare alle limpide pagine di Marrou (in particolare il cap. 3 “La formation de l’intellectuel chrétien:” 387–413).

22. L’ampia schedatura di testi di Folliet conferma la frequente associazione delle due immagini e la prevalenza dell’interpretazione di tipo origeniano, ma rileva anche l’esistenza di altre varianti.

poiché la fine dei tempi è vicina, per il mantenimento dell’impero il cristiano deve pregare e operare). In questo quadro di fondo, allora, come comportarsi verso la cultura classica? Rifiutarla è impossibile: altre non ne esistono.²⁰ La si deve usare, invece, per progredire nella giusta direzione. In pratica, se ne eliminino le parti inaccettabili e si assuma quanto più possibile di quello che resta, secondo una sorta di progetto di politica culturale di lungo respiro che si articola in una scelta strategica. Le lettere pagane vanno imparate ma non insegnate, scartando l’ipotesi rigorista secondo la quale, se non devono essere insegnate, non possono neppure essere apprese. Ora, una tale proposta, in sé estremamente significativa della difficoltà del problema, ha senso se la si intende protratta nel tempo, sì da opporre una specie di filtro generazionale che eviti uno scontro diretto e perdente, e però di fatto ottenga di eliminare seppur lentamente le scorie dell’idolatria. Resta comunque che non esistono soluzioni migliori, e che si tratterà in altre parole di promuovere una *translatio* affatto speciale, che va promossa nel momento stesso in cui viene censurata. Da questo punto di vista si potrebbe dire che il suggerimento di Tertulliano aspira a una sorta di concretezza politica: che non ha comunque séguito, mentre, sul piano dei principi se non nella pratica, si perpetua il compromesso, la mezza misura. Ed è singolare che più o meno duecento anni dopo, quando tutto è cambiato: il bel giardino descritto da Tertulliano non c’è più, la devastazione e la paura avanzano e nel crollo dell’impero proprio i cristiani sono sotto accusa e l’eusebianesimo politico sembra ormai fallito, ebbene, Gerolamo e Agostino non possano, seppur in modi diversi, che riproporre tal quale la sostanza di quel compromesso, nell’aggravato quadro di una radicale presa di distanza dalla ‘città terrena’ che ha la sua più alta espressione nel *De civitate Dei*.²¹

Gerolamo e Agostino: anch’essi affascinati da quella bellezza, certo, ma anche e prima di tutto testimoni di una città e di una bellezza tutt’affatto diverse. Come rispondono al problema già posto da Tertulliano? Riprendendo entrambi due diverse immagini di Origene: Gerolamo quella della ‘bella prigioniera’ e Agostino quella dell’‘oro degli Egizi.’ Origene infatti, come ha mostrato Henri de Lubac (1.1.290–304),²² a proposito della legge del *Deuteronomio* 21.10–14, che ordinava di strappare ai nemici la donna bella e desiderabile, di tagliarle i capelli e le unghie, di tenerla per trenta giorni vestita a lutto e poi di farla propria, aveva commentato:

23. Cfr. *Epist.* 70.11, a Flavio Magno: “Legerat in *Deuteronomio* Domini voce praeceptum mulieris captivae radendum caput, supercilia, omnes pilos et unguis corporis amputandos, et sic eam habendam in coniugio. Quid ergo mirum, si et ego sapientiam saecularem propter eloquii venustatem et membrorum pulchritudinem, de ancilla atque captiva Israelitica facere cupio? Et si quidquid in ea mortuum est, idolatriae, voluptatis, erroris, libidinum, vel praecido vel rado et mixtus purissimo corpori vernaculos ex ea genero Domino Sabaoth? Labor meus in familiam Christi proficit;” *Epist.* 66.8, a Pammachio: “Christum facimus sapientiam. Hic thesaurus in agro Scripturarum nascitur, haec gemma multis emittitur margaritis. Sin autem adamaveris captivam mulierem [...] et eius pulchritudine captus fueris, decalva eam,” ecc.; *Epist.* 21.13, a papa Damaso: “Huius sapientiae typus et in *Deuteronomio* sub mulieris captivae figura describitur, de qua divina vox praecipit ut, si Israelites eam habere voluerit uxorem, calvitium ei faciat, unguis praeseceat, pilos auferat et, cum munda fuerit effecta, tunc transeat in victoris amplexus.”

24. Cfr. anche Marrou 393–94. Il passo di Origene è in una lettera a Gregorio (forse il Taumaturgo, vescovo di Cappadocia), che è giunta a noi perché compresa nella *Philocalia* origeniana di Gregorio di Nazianzo (per maggiori notizie, vedi Origene, *Philocalie* 399–404). Vedi per il testo greco Crouzel. Vedi anche Naudin 155–61, ove la lettera è tradotta e annotata. Nella lettera, indirizzata a Gregorio che per studio deve andare ad Alessandria, Origene ricorda la vicenda biblica di Ader l’Idumeo (3Reg. 11.14–22) che, recatosi in Egitto fece carriera e sposò la sorella della moglie del Faraone, e quando tornò in Israele era un perfetto idolatra: “Et cependant la divine Écriture sait que pour certains ce fut un malheur de descendre du pays des fils d’Israël en Égypte, en donnant à entendre que c’est un malheur pour certains de séjourner chez les Égyptiens, c’est-à-dire dans les sciences de ce monde, après avoir été élevé dans la loi de Dieu” (Naudin 159). Agostino riprende ampiamente l’immagine dell’oro

Quaecumque enim bene et rationabiliter dicta invenimus apud inimicos nostros, si quid apud illos sapienter et scienter dictum legimus, oportet nos mundare id et ab scientia, quae apud illos est, auferre et resecaere omne quod emortuum et inane est – hoc enim sunt omnes capilli capitis et ungulae mulieris ex inimicorum spoliis adsumptae. (Origène, *Homélies* 7.6: 1.347–49)

e Gerolamo riprende più volte l’immagine di questa *ensoria translatio* applicandola al pericoloso fascino delle lettere classiche, da sequestrare e da usare, appunto, con cautela espurgatoria.²³ L’altra immagine, che Agostino riprende da una lettera di Origene soprattutto nel *De doctrina christiana*, 2.40.60–61 (ma vedi anche *Conf.* 7.9.15) si rifà alle ricchezze rapite dagli Ebrei agli Egiziani al momento della loro partenza (*Ex.* 12.35 ss.), ed è un’immagine più semplice e più forte, e si presenta con l’aspetto di un vero e proprio ordine: è per volontà di Dio che ai pagani deve essere sottratto il patrimonio del loro sapere, perché sia messo al servizio della verità.²⁴

Siamo a un altro snodo. Nell’un caso e nell’altro, come si vede, abbiamo a che fare con ‘prede,’ o ‘spoglie’ sottratte più o meno violentemente al nemico, e questo tratto che, in altro contesto, durerà a lungo, sino a tutto il sedicesimo secolo, quando specialmente caratterizzerà la versione francese della *translatio*, induce a sottolineare un aspetto nuovo che la *translatio* ha finito per assumere in questa età difficile: essa non è più reversibile e generalizzabile, com’era nel disegno ideale dell’*humanitas* proprio dell’universalismo romano, e davvero si oggettiva in un bottino, cioè in qualcosa ch’è semplicemente sottratto e trasferito altrove e impiegato ad altri usi. E seppur in maniera tendenziale una *translatio* siffatta in qualche modo cessa d’essere tale, e appare attratta, piuttosto, nell’orbita di quella stessa visione che riferiva le successioni dei regni a un piano metastorico. In questo senso, ‘bella prigioniera’ oppure ‘oro’ che sia, direi che ci si trovi dinanzi a un irrisolto stato di necessità che dai tempi di Tertulliano si è fatto più duro, e dunque a un blocco. Poco meno di altri duecento anni dopo, infatti, è evidente come il blocco permanga e si sia fatto sempre più rigido, ed abbia finito per soffocare l’esigenza alla quale da Tertulliano a Gerolamo e Agostino si era cercato di dare voce. Penso naturalmente al ‘barbaro’ Gregorio Magno, all’odiato dell’antichità, al nemico della grammatica: accuse tutte dalle quali Henri de Lubac (2.1.53–98) e poi Riché (*Éducation* 123 ss.) intelligentemente lo sollevano, almeno nei termini di invecchiati atteggiamenti polemici. Ma non è questo il punto.²⁵

quaest. 53.2.92; *En. in Psalmos* 104.28.1; *Serm.* 8.14.322–23; ecc.).

25. Vedi anche, un po’ meno convincente perché troppo interno alla logica di Gregorio Magno, Dagens 31–34. Tra i accusatori di Gregorio, vedi, particolarmente duro, Lot 331.

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degli Egizi’ nel *De doc. chr.* 2.40.60–61, e a questa sua ripresa rimanda nel *Contra Faustum man.* 22.91 (ma vedi anche 71). Un cenno appena è anche in *Conf.* 7.9.15 (ma vedi ancora *De div.*

Anche Gregorio, come gli altri prima di lui, dovendo affrontare – e rifiutando – una implicita *translatio*, ha scritto qualcosa su cui i lettori si sono a lungo impuntati. Il passo assai discusso, ricavato dalla lettera di dedica a Leandro di Siviglia dei suoi *Moralia in Job*, si chiude con la forte affermazione: “indignum vehementer existimo ut verba caelestis oraculi restringam sub regulis Donati” (Grégoire le Grand 114–34).²⁶

Queste parole, che arrivano alla fine di una lettera per altro assai bella, mostrano una forte ma non inattesa polemica verso forme di idolatria formale che riprende una linea ben presente nella tradizione cristiana (per esempio in Agostino). Fa pensare semmai un'altra lettera che, questo sì, non può non condizionare almeno un poco l'interpretazione della precedente. Si tratta del severo rimprovero mosso al vescovo di Vienne, Didier, al quale Gregorio scrive allarmato:²⁷

Pervenit ad nos, quod sine verecundia memorare non possumus, fraternitatem tuam grammaticam quibusdam exponere. Quam rem ita moleste suscepimus ac sumus vehementer aspernati, ut ea quae dicta fuerant in gemitum et tristitiam verteremus, quia in uno se ore cum Iovis laudibus Christi laudes non capiunt. Et quam grave nefandumque sit episcopis canere quod nec laico religioso conveniat, ipse considera [...] Unde si post hoc evidentem haec quae ad nos perlata sunt falsa esse claruerint neque vos nugis et saecularibus litteris studere constiterit, et Deo nostro gratia agimus, qui cor vestrum maculari blasphemis nefandorum laudibus non permisit. (*Gregorii* [...] *Reg. Epist.* 2.303: 11.34)

Che Gregorio abbia le sue ragioni e che, tutto considerato, non faccia altro che ribadire doverosamente la necessità di una serie di obblighi e cautele sui quali esisteva un larghissimo accordo, non toglie che quanto egli afferma abbia un importante significato, quanto meno sintomatico in un'epoca di devastante ignoranza che, per le concordi diagnosi degli storici, ha visto ogni forma di cultura e di semplice alfabetizzazione raggiungere il suo punto più basso. Che per lui papa, attorno al 600, la *grammatica* brutalmente equivalga alle *laudes Iovis*, e che un vescovo nel dilagare dell'analfabetismo tra gli stessi appartenenti al clero debba ignorare o mostrare di ignorare o evitare di partecipare ad altri i fondamenti del suo linguaggio, della sua cultura e infine di quel tanto o poco di concreta civiltà sulla quale pur sempre appoggia il suo mondo, ebbene, ciò sta quanto meno

26. Mohrmann 339–42 la inquadra entro l'esigenza di un rinnovamento linguistico in senso antiletterario e le affianca opportunamente un'analogia citazione di Gregorio di Tours, nella *Praefatio* al suo *Liber de gloria confessorum* (PL 71.827–30). Anche per Riché (*Éducation* 128–29 e 463–64) le frasi di Gregorio sono in linea con la tradizione, come mostra un passo singolarmente simile di Cassiodoro, *Inst.* 1.15.7.

27. La Mohrmann ricorda che ai vescovi era esplicitamente proibito insegnare, ma che Didier era evidentemente obbligato a farlo, considerate le penose condizioni di ignoranza dei suoi preti.

28. Di nuovo, assai più sfumata è la posizione di Isidoro, pure ufficialmente in linea con Gregorio Magno: al proposito non si può che rimandare a Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville et la culture, passim*. Ma vedi in particolare il cap. 6 “Bilan de la rhétorique isidorienne” (1,322–37), ove si indica senza mezze misure il decisivo patronato di Cicerone e Quintiliano, e si parla, rispetto ai rigorismi altrui, di “ambigüité” e “timidité” di Isidoro.

29. Vedi pure Mazzarino, “L’era costantiniana,” che in sintonia con Markus e altri, accenna ai caratteri ‘orientali’ della visione di Gregorio Magno, e ne indica la prospettiva tutta ecclesiastica e sacrale.

30. Il discorso è in verità complesso, ma, scusandomi per ritagliarne solo alcune affermazioni, ecco cosa scrive Leonardi quando sottolinea come tra mondo gentile e mondo cristiano esista frattura e divergenza; ridimensiona la portata di un supposto ‘umanesimo’ di Agostino, e per contro dichiara l’umanesimo scomparso dall’Occidente: “Non è possibile parlare di umanesimo quando la cultura, dalle arti alla filosofia, è concepita come uno strumento alla comprensione teologica; o quando si pensa la teologia (e la Chiesa) come diverse dalla cultura (e dalla storia). Nella storia post-origeniana non si dà dunque propriamente umanesimo” (Leonardi, “Alcuino” 470–71).

a significare che quel blocco non si è affatto sciolto, al contrario. Bene o male, la *grammatica* Didier la sa e *deve* saperla, così come deve sapere qualcosa della letteratura secolare: solo, non può insegnarla. Di là dai pretesti formali, la lacerazione è più che mai aperta, a dispetto di tutta l’intelligenza e gli sforzi spesi nei secoli precedenti per definire una possibile via mediana.²⁸ E ciò spicca e turba ancor più, quasi una smisurata schizofrenia, in un papa del quale è stato detto: “His political imagery saw the Empire as grounded in the hierarchical order of the world, an integral part of the cosmic hierarchy. This is the old image of a world dominated by Rome, whose universal Empire was part of the fixed order of things” (Markus, “Gregory” 23).²⁹ Si ammetterà che tra l’ordine cosmico e la guerra alla *grammatica* c’è il gran salto di una *translatio* mancata e di una *humanitas* smarrita. Forse la *translatio* non era mai stata davvero tra le opzioni possibili, certamente non è avvenuta ed anzi, proprio in quanto tale, e cioè nei termini archetipici e modellizzanti riassunti nei poli di Atene e Roma, è stata stravolta e avversata.³⁰ Che nella pratica si possano portare vari esempi che mostrerebbero il contrario, e cioè un inevitabile flusso di saperi e di modi e tecniche specificamente letterarie dalla cultura classica e pagana alla cristiana, non modifica di una virgola le cose. Del resto, anche la successione dei regni tra Assiri e Medi e Persiani e Greci e Romani ha comportato una storia reale che esorbita e resta essenzialmente estranea e indifferente alla visione trascendente che ne dà Daniele e l’esegesi cristiana, ma ciò non intacca il senso e il valore profondi di un’*altra* storia di cui quella visione non può rinunciare a dare testimonianza. Ciò che in ogni caso importa, a questo punto, è che questa dura, difficile e differita *translatio* quanto più appare lontana tanto più incombe, e si trasforma nel nodo che l’Occidente *deve* assolutamente sciogliere. Ma può cominciare a farlo solo quando sembrerà che si possa sciogliere insieme anche l’altro nodo, il nodo gemello, quello del potere, che per ora ha ancora un solo nome: l’impero. E infatti il punto di svolta oltre il quale gli uomini del medioevo potranno finalmente rivendicare qualcosa che ai loro occhi assomiglia alla *translatio* da Atene e Roma e che, per quanto da lontano, annuncia la coscienza di un’età nuova, è costituito dall’impero carolingio. È da lì, infatti, che di *translatio* si può cominciare a parlare.

3 La rinascita carolingia

Andiamo subito al punto. Étienne Gilson, in un saggio del 1930: *Humanisme médiéval et Renaissance*,³¹ ha individuato tanto il tema della *translatio*, quanto il momento in cui esso si pone in termini compiuti e coscienti (183–85):

Le moyen âge [...] il a accepté et revendiqué comme un honneur le rôle de transmetteur d'une civilisation qui lui était dévolu. Dès le temps de Charles le Chauve, et grâce à la présence de Jean Scot Erigène, ce qu'Alcuin n'avait encore considéré que comme un rêve, apparaît aux contemporains comme une réalité; l'Athènes du Christ existe, elle est en France, son fondateur n'est autre que le maître d'York et de Saint-Martin de Tours. Pour constater la réalité et la vivacité de ce sentiment, il faut suivre l'histoire d'un thème littéraire trop négligé, le *De translatione studii*.

“Dès le temps de Charles le Chauve,” dunque a partire dalla seconda metà del IX secolo, non prima: i secoli precedenti sono tagliati via, con un giudizio che lascia molte cose in sospeso, dato che in ogni caso Gilson non si spinge più indietro del ‘sogno’ di Alcuino. E la cosa va osservata, soprattutto se si accettano, come credo si debba fare, le parole di uno studioso come Santo Mazzarino, per il quale già da molto prima il “problema della fine del mondo antico” era diventato “un problema di *translatio*” (*La fine* 72), quella *translatio* che la Chiesa, appunto, non volle, o gravò di troppe ipoteche. Gilson muove in ogni caso dall'epoca di Carlo il Calvo perché a essa risale la più antica testimonianza ch'egli avesse trovato dell'emersione del tema, quella contenuta nei *Gesta Karoli* del Monaco di San Gallo, Notker le Bègue (c. 885), ed è infatti al regno di Carlo Magno che occorre retrocedere per trovarvi le radici della *translatio* e della *renovatio* insieme (il che sta a dire, di nuovo, la cosciente novità della cosa).³² Prima di farlo, vorrei però restare un attimo sui *Gesta Karoli* e citare non solo le parole, per altro davvero significative, alle quali Gilson si rifà – divenuto abate di San Martino in Tours, Alcuino lo trasforma in un centro di cultura, “cujus in tantum doctrina fructificavit, ut moderni Galli sive Franci antiquis Romanis et Atheniensibus aequarentur”³³ –, ma proprio le parole con le quali la cronaca comincia, a mio avviso essenziali:

31. Da queste pagine prende le mosse Jeaneau, dedicando al tema lo studio sin qui più ampio e ricco di riferimenti, al quale rimando per puntuali integrazioni.

32. L'aver riportato a Carlo Magno le radici della *translatio* costituisce l'apporto più importante del saggio di Jongkees.

33. Commenta Gilson 183: “Le fait est d'autant plus intéressant, que ce chroniqueur vivait hors de France et que son témoignage exprime par conséquent une opinion déjà largement répandue [...] Nous avons ici l'amorce du thème de la *translatio studii*. Puisque Athènes s'est transportée en France depuis la venue d'Alcuin, c'est donc que la science grecque, transmise jadis par la Grèce à Rome, a désormais été transmise par Rome à la France. À mesure que l'importance de Paris augmente, c'est naturellement Paris qui prend la place d'Athènes, mais on ne doute pas du résultat produit par l'enseignement d'Alcuin et nul ne se trompe sur sa portée véritable” (questa di Parigi è per la verità un'anticipazione...). Ma del tutto corretto è il commento di Pedersen 77: “Even if this pronouncement presupposed a serious ignorance of ancient culture, it gives a correct impression of the dream of its rebirth in the Carolingian age.”

Omnipotens rerum dispositio ordinatioque regnorum et temporum, cum illius admirandae statuae pedes ferreos vel testaceos comminisset in Romanis, alterius non minus admirabilis statuae caput aureum per illustrem Karolum erexit in Francis. Qui cum in occiduis mundi partibus solus regnare coepisset, et studia litterarum ubique propemodum essent in oblivione, ideoque verae deitatis cultura teperet, contigit duos Scottos de Hibernia cum mercatoribus Brittanis ad litus Galliae devenire, viros et in saecularibus et in sacris scripturis incomparabiliter eruditos. (“Monachi Sangallensis de gestis Karoli” 731)

34. Alcuino incontrò per la prima volta Carlo a Parma, nel 781, e l'anno seguente accettò l'invito a trasferirsi in Francia. Circa i dotti che fecero capo alla corte carolingia, molto si ricava dai densi inquadramenti di Leonardi, *Medioevo latino* 275–320.

35. *L'Admonitio generalis*, del 789, oltre a una lunga serie di disposizioni riguardanti la vita e l'organizzazione del clero, prescriveva, all'articolo 72, che presso i monasteri e le chiese cattedrali fossero istituiti regolari corsi scolastici per insegnare i salmi, la notazione musicale, il canto, la matematica e la grammatica; la contemporanea e famosa *Epistola de litteris colendis*, formalmente mandata all'abate Baugulf di Fulda ma in realtà indirizzata a tutto il clero di quell'articolo sviluppa i vari punti (vedi Brown 17 ss. e Roger). Cfr. Riché, “Instruments” e “La Bible” (per questa immagine di Carlo come dominatore teocratico, *rex et sacerdos*, cfr. anche Bezzola).

A parte alcune ingenuità,³⁴ queste frasi sono dense di significato. Il ritorno della profezia di Daniele – il sogno della statua – e dell'interpretazione di Gerolamo sta a dire che la successione dei regni, dopo il crollo dell'impero Romano, ha ripreso il suo corso: addirittura, con Carlo Magno il cammino riprende dal punto più alto, dal *caput aureum*. In secondo luogo, proprio perché siamo dinanzi a un salto epocale e un nuovo regno s'inaugura, è finalmente possibile porre il tema della *translatio*, fino a quel momento inconcepibile perché l'epoca precedente, nella quale gli studi sono stati dimenticati, non è altro che la lunga appendice di quel crollo: è quel crollo. *Translatio imperii* e *translatio studii*, insomma, sono, nel segno della novità, una cosa sola: e di colpo le contorte perplessità e ostilità del pensiero cristiano dei secoli precedenti, che forse con qualche ingenerosità, possiamo riassumere nel nome di Gregorio, cominciano a uscire dalla storia. O meglio, rimangono e cercheranno ancora varie volte d'imporci, ma la loro originale dimensione egemonica all'interno di uno spazio culturale unificato non la ritroveranno mai più.

Con ciò, l'identità cristiana del regno di Carlo Magno non solo non è in discussione, ma addirittura ne costituisce l'assoluto fondamento ideologico. Le grandi iniziative per la riorganizzazione e l'istruzione del clero,³⁵ l'opera di rassetatura e riordino dei testi sacri e il personale e profondo cristianesimo dei suoi intellettuali, Alcuino in testa, lo confermano in mille modi. Ma in nome di un impero ritrovato, può porre all'ordine del giorno la necessità di 'tradurre' per sé quella tradizione, senza timidezze e con un senso davvero nuovo dei propri diritti e doveri culturali. I *Gesta Karoli* affermano come nel campo del sapere i Franchi abbiano eguagliato gli Ateniesi e i Romani, offrendo dunque ai secoli che verranno la base del classico *topos*: Atene – Roma – Parigi, e lo fanno senza minimamente preoccuparsi di aggiungere cautelosi e cristianizzanti distinguo. Il che testimo-

nia di una certa naturale spregiudicatezza: della quale troviamo conferma se ci volgiamo indietro, là dove ci viene indicato d'andare, cioè alla corte di Carlo Magno.

Qui troviamo Alcuino, e qui troviamo un atteggiamento che suona libero e leggero, quando ci si trova dinanzi all'entusiasmo scevro di sensi di colpa con il quale Alcuino (il quale, si ricordi, ha assunto il nome poetico di *Flaccus*: e altri attorno a lui vollero chiamarsi Omero, Pindaro, Marone, Tirsi, Menalca...) continuamente parla del suo lavoro e, dentro di esso, della componente classica. Lo si vede, per esempio, nel lungo componimento *Versus de sanctis Eboracensis ecclesiae*, là dove fa un altissimo elogio dell'amico divenuto vescovo di York nel 767, Aelberto, grande maestro di scuola e avido cercatore di libri, che agli allievi insegna l'arte grammatica, la retorica, il diritto, e "illos Aonio docuit concinnere cantu, / Castalida instituens alios resonare cicutu, / et iuga Parnassi lyricis percurrere plantis," o là dove, poco avanti, s'esalta elencando i libri di cui la biblioteca della cattedrale era ricca e tocca proprio il tema della *trasmissione* dei testi e dei saperi dalla Grecia a Roma, implicandone quanto meno l'attuale continuità: "Illic invenies veterum vestigia patrum, / quidquid habet pro se Latio Romanus in orbe, / Graecia vel quidquid transmissit clara Latinis, / Hebraicum vel quod populus bibit imbre superno" (corsivo mio), e finisce appunto con un elenco di autori classici e con i retori e i grammatici antichi (vv. 1436–38 e 1535–38: "Alcuini Carmina" 201 e 203–04). Oppure là dove raccomanda attenzione e scrupolo di correttezza agli addetti allo *scriptorium*, con un senso vivo sia del valore della trasmissione dei testi che dell'oggetto, il libro medesimo (e si osservi l'immagine del 'volo' della penna): non siano 'frivoli,' dunque, "frivola nec propter esset et ipsa manus, / correctosque sibi quaerant studiosae libellos, / tramite quo recto penna volantis eat. / Per cola distinguant proprios et commata sensus, / et punctos ponant ordine quosque suos," ecc. (vv. 4–8: "Alcuini Carmina" 320).³⁶

36. Cfr. Ganz 795–96; ma in questo stesso volume rimando soprattutto a Contreni, con amplissima bibliografia. Vedi anche McKitterick, "Eighth-Century Foundations;" *The Frankish Kingdoms 140–68 e 200–27*; e *Carolingian Culture, passim*. Per l'attività di trasmissione dei testi, cfr. Bischoff e Reynolds-Wilson.

Non è il caso di discutere qui del concetto di 'rinascimento carolingio,' che ha trovato decisi oppositori, da Gaston Paris a Claudio Leonardi, ma di dire, piuttosto, che alcune importanti novità saltano agli occhi. Ci si ricordi di Gregorio Magno e del suo diffidente rapporto con la *grammatica*: ebbene, Alcuino, autore di un *De grammatica*, un *De ortographia* e un *De dialectica*, dice che si può pure rifiutare la grammatica degli antichi, ma si abbia almeno il coraggio, allora, di farne un'altra, perché una grammatica è indispensabile: "si nota et olim audita non licet inferre, quid faciemus de litteris syllabis etiam et verbis, quibus uti nobis necesse est cotidie, nisi novas gram-

37. Qui Alcuino risponde ad alcune obiezioni dello stesso Carlo Magno, si che si dovrebbe riportare il senso complessivo della questione al notevolissimo scambio di battute tra i due che è nel *De arte rhetorica dialogus*, noto anche come *Dialogus de rhetorica et virtutibus* (PL 101.919–46). Vedi Leonardi, “Alcuino” 475–79.

38. Questo testo è stato già citato da Jongkees 46–47, che giustamente vi ravvisa l’idea della *translatio* (ma in una traduzione, mi permetto di dire, che vela un poco proprio l’intenzione con la quale lo allega). Tra altre lettere che si potrebbero ricordare, segnalerei ancora la lunga *Ep.* 307 (“Alcuini Epistolae” 466–71), che si sofferma sulla disputa di Paolo con i sapienti greci narrato in *Act.* 17.18, e, toccando il tema dell’oro degli Egizi (si aggiunga dunque questa testimonianza di Alcuino a quelle elencate da de Lubac), dichiara di adottare le medesime armi dialettiche dell’avversario, “ut, suorum sauciatus armis, in catholici exercitus libens castra recurat” (corsivo mio).

maticae artis regulas excogitare incipiamus?” (*Ep.* 145: “Alcuini Epistolae” 232–33).³⁷ E ancora, rivolgendosi a Carlo Magno e parlando del suo insegnamento presso San Martino di Tours, sembra addirittura distinguere gli studenti per indirizzi e persino per sedi di studio:

Ego vero Flaccus vester secundum exhortationem et bonam voluntatem vestram *aliis* per tecta sancti Martini sanctarum mella scripturarum ministrare satago; *alios* vetere antiquarum disciplinarum mero inebriare studeo; *alios* grammaticae subtilitatis enutrire pomis incipiam [...]. (*Ep.* 121: “Alcuini Epistolae” 176; corsivi miei)

Ch’egli tranquillamente e senza ombra di auto-censura possa dire che s’ingegna di ‘inebriare’ col vino vecchio della cultura antica parte dei suoi studenti non mi pare, insomma, cosa da nulla, e per apprezzarne la novità non è necessario supporre un inesistente spirito laico, perché è ben chiaro ch’egli mette il tutto sotto il larghissimo ombrello della dimensione religiosa. Per esempio lo fa proprio là dove, anticipando i *Gesta Karoli*, già abbozza il tema della *translatio* verso quella nuova Atene ch’è la Francia cristiana: “si, plurimis inclitum vestrae intentionis studium sequentibus, forsan Athenae nova perficeretur in Francia, immo multo excellentior.” Prosegue infatti:

Quia haec Christi domini nobilitata magisterio omnem achademicae exercitationis superat sapientiam. Illa, tantummodo Platonicis erudita discipinis, septenis informata claruit artibus; haec etiam insuper septiformi sancti Spiritus plenitudine ditata omnem saecularis sapientiae excellit dignitatem. (*Ep.* 170: “Alcuini Epistolae” 279)³⁸

Così, non mancano i soliti diffusi avvertimenti a preferire le verità della Rivelazione alle favole dei poeti, e per esempio chiude una lettera a un discepolo lontano augurando: “Utinam evengelia quattuor, non Aeneades duodecim pectus compleant tuum.” Ma ecco, proprio qui molto graziosamente aveva insinuato: “Flaccus recessit, Virgilius accessit, et in loco magistri nidificat Maro,” e questa battuta disinvolta offre in verità una piccola chiave per entrare in una dimensione nella quale lo scrupolo cristiano si presenta del tutto privo di doppiezza e però riesce a non sacrificare l’intelligenza e a non rinchiudersi in grevi atteggiamenti di censura. Come racconta la *Vita* di lui, il vecchio Alcuino aveva proibito ai giovani allievi la *luxuriosa facundia* di Virgilio, e aveva rimproverato, ma anche benignamente perdonato, Sigulfo Vetulo che insieme ad altri ne aveva organizzato

una lettura clandestina. Ma l'episodio non ha nulla di cupo e semmai rimanda indietro, all'Alcuino giovane, che a sua volta, quasi novello Gerolamo, si rimprovera di preferire Virgilio ai Salmi ("Vita Alcuini" 193 e 185; cfr. Cilento). Ma il tono non è mai pesante, e semmai rimanda a un'oscillazione affatto prevedibile nella sua novità, e spinge a ricordare come egli avesse vivacemente protestato per l'assenza di Virgilio nei programmi d'insegnamento: "Quid Maro versificus solus peccavit in aula? / Non fuit ille pater iam dignus habere magistrum, / qui daret egregias pueris per tecta camenas?" (26.18–20: "Alcuini Carmina" 245; cfr. Garrison). Insomma, di là da tante possibili analisi si oserebbe quasi pensare che lo spontaneo calore con il quale Alcuino tratteggia la sua triadica amicale comunità – il maestro, gli studenti, i libri – suoni come una sorta di flebilissimo annuncio, quanto si voglia condizionato e formalmente approssimativo, di una futura comunità che si riconosce e comunica attraverso i libri, quella di Petrarca e i suoi amici (il quale Petrarca, non dimentichiamo, dovrà pure lui fare i conti tra Virgilio e i Salmi...).

La voce attenta e simpatica di Alcuino (che Elinando definirà "magister deliciosus") non è naturalmente la sola, ed è facile collocarla e in qualche modo completarla entro il coro nel quale risuonano inni assai più enfatici alla grandezza di Carlo Magno restauratore della grandezza della Roma antica. In essi s'alternano, com'è naturale, accenti posti sulla trascendente continuità dell'impero e accenti posti sulla carica di novità della *renovatio*, ma in ogni caso, anche se manca la parola, l'idea della *translatio* è ormai affatto acquisita, e Carlo Magno stesso, *summus apex regum* e sommo *sophista* e letterato e poeta incarna esemplarmente il nesso strettissimo tra la somma del potere e la somma del sapere. Così è, infatti, nei versi già molte volte citati (forse di Angilberto, o con maggiore probabilità di Modoino) del componimento *Karolus Magnus et Leo papa*, ove si allude alla costruzione del grande palazzo e della cappella Palatina di Aquisgrana (Aix-la-Chapelle), consacrata nell'805 (vv. 67–75 e 94–100: *Poetae latini* 1.367–68):

Grammaticae doctor constat praelucidus artis;
 nullo umquam fuerat tam clarus tempore lector;
 rethorica insignis vegetat praeceptor in arte;
 summus apex regum, summus quoque in orbe sophista
 extat et orator, facundo fame pollens;
 inclita nam superat praeclari dicta Catonis,
 vincit et eloquii magnum dulcedine Marcum,

39. È appena il caso di dire che a partire di qui diventa del tutto pervasiva la colorazione romana che assumono le lodi di Carlo Magno e dei suoi successori: per esempio, l'abate Abbone loda lui e il figlio Ludovico che "certe utriusque pro tempore ac ratione noverant *parcere subiectis et debellare superbos*," e dunque applica al regno carolingio quella ch'era la 'marca' sublime dell'impero romano ("Ex canonibus" 627). E più tardi Enghelberto di Admont lo metterà tranquillamente con Alessandro Magno, Ciro e Giulio Cesare: "qui precipue in rebus bellicis claruerunt, sicut ab Alexandro Magno in bellis Grecis et a Cyro in bellis Persicis et a Cesare Iulio in bellis Ytalicis [non *Gallicis*, si noti], a Karolo Magno in bellis Germanicis; in materia de virtutibus a Seneca et Tullio," ecc. (*Speculum virtutum* 10.17: Engelbert von Admont 344). Merita forse ricordare anche un tratto idiosincratico del ritratto di Carlo Magno sottolineato da Martino Polono: "Hic etiam solitus erat, cum se de nocte in lecto deponeret, ad caput suum pennam et incaustum cum pergamenone reponere, ut si in stratu aliquid utile futuro tempore faciendum cogitatu occurreret, ne a memoria laberetur, scriberet vel signaret" ("Martini Oppaviensis Chronicon" 461).

40. Sul tema della "seconda Roma," vedi ancora l'eccellente contributo di Hammer; lo studioso prende in considerazione sette città che si sono fregiate di quel titolo, Costantinopoli, Aquisgrana, Treviri, Milano, Reims, Tournai e Pavia, e discute dei famosi *Versus Romae* (nono o decimo secolo) a proposito di Costantinopoli (v. 9 "Constantinopolis florens nova Roma vocatur") che eccezionalmente configurano una *translatio* orientale, che resta in ogni caso secondaria (53–54).

atque suis dictis facundus cedit Homerus,
et priscos superat dialectica in arte magistros

[...] sed et urbe potens, ubi Roma secunda
flore novo, ingenti, magna consurgit ad alta
mole, tholis muro praecelsis sidera tangens.
Stat pius arce procul Carolus loca singula signans,
altaque disponens venturae moenia Romae.
Hic iubet esse forum, sanctum quoque iure senatum,
ius populi et leges ubi sacraque iussa capessant.

Mentre Modoino (Moduinus) d'Autun può parlare di una rinata e rinnovata *aurea Roma* (Ecl., vv. 24–27: *Poetae latini* 1.385):

Prospicit alta novae Romae meus arce Palemon,
cuncta suo imperio consistere regna triumpho,
rursus in antiquos mutataque secula mores.
Aurea Roma iterum renovata renascitur orbi,³⁹

fissando in una formula efficace il ruolo di Carlo Magno come 'rigeneratore' della grandezza antica, per cui Aquisgrana diventa una 'seconda Roma'.⁴⁰ Ma il campo delle lodi di Carlo è in verità sterminato. Restiamo dunque attaccati al filo della *translatio*, e citiamo ancora un passo assai significativo di Héric d'Auxerre, tratto dalla epistola dedicatoria, *Commendatio sequentis operis ad gloriosum regem Karolum per epistolam facta*, con la quale egli dedica nel 873 a Carlo il Calvo la sua *Vita metrica S. Germani* (*Poetae latini* 3.3.429; cfr. Bezzola 202 n. 1 e Jongkees 47–48):

[...] id vobis singulare studium effecistis, ut sicubi terrarum magistri florerent artium, quarum principalem operam philosophia pollicetur, hos ad publicam eruditionem undecunque vestra celsitudo conduceret, comitas attraheret, dapsilitas provocaret. Luget hoc Graecia novis invidiae aculeis lacescitur: quam sui quondam incolae iam dudum cum Asianis opibus aspernantur, vestra potius magnanimitate delectati, studiis allecti, liberalitate confisi; dolet inquam se olim singulariter mirabilem ac mirabiliter singularem a suis destitui; dolet certe sua illa privilegia (quod numquam hactenus verita est) ad climata nostra transferri.

Come si vede, il 'trasferimento' *ad climata nostra*, dalla Grecia alla Francia (Roma qui non compare) è tanto spirituale quanto materiale: si trasferisce la *filosofia* perché si trasferiscono gli uomini, e costo-

ro lo fanno perché cooptati entro un progetto epocale, quale appunto è quello della *translatio* medesima, irresistibilmente calamitata dalla forza attrattiva del nuovo regno.

Ripeto a questo punto che non è il caso di entrare nella polemica, che ha inevitabilmente qualcosa di nominalistico, sul 'rinascimento carolingio' (Liebeschutz), quand'è invece importante sottolineare l'essenziale. Nella coscienza dei contemporanei e in quella dei primi osservatori l'impero carolingio ha goduto di una rappresentazione ideologica fortissima che ne esaltava soprattutto il carattere unitario, inteso quale somma non contraddittoria di profonde e opposte tradizioni: era un impero che si aggiungeva quale reincarnazione del quarto alla serie dei regni del mondo non già nel segno del catastrofico percorso della corruzione e della vanità di ogni 'città' terrena, ma piuttosto quale erede di quella stessa egemonia politica e culturale della quale l'impero romano era rimasto esempio insuperato. Nelle parole dei suoi scrittori e poeti, insomma, cristianesimo e romanità riuscivano a comporsi in un quadro che ricominciava a disporre i propri elementi attorno a un'identità culturale che era *anche* un dato storico, e che scopriva nella *grammatica* il linguaggio del potere, e la possibilità di formazione di un'élite intellettuale. In termini forse grossolani ma efficaci, potremmo dire che il potere riscatta il sapere, tutto il sapere se davvero è tale, come lo è quello di Atene e dei filosofi antichi, e che il sapere riscatta e legittima il potere, in una sorta di corto circuito che riconosce e si piega alla preminenza della verità cristiana, ma nello stesso tempo, e sia pure per margini strettissimi, ritaglia lo spazio della propria autonomia. E questo è precisamente lo spazio nel quale la *translatio* riesce finalmente a trovare la dimensione sua propria. Così, Carlo Magno è *rex et sacerdos*, ma è anche 'filosofo' e quando in Aquisgrana rinnova l'*aurea Roma*, e quando è oratore migliore di Catone e poeta più dolce di Virgilio e più facondo di Omero, ecco che egli non usa di queste immagini per qualificare la sua potenza dinanzi al trascendente modello della Chiesa ma piuttosto dinanzi alla storia degli uomini: potremmo anche dire, più precisamente, dinanzi alla altrettanto trascendente idea di quella *humanitas* che ancora si specchiava e riconosceva nella storia di Roma. Certo, il nodo sembra ancora insolubile, ma non è veramente così, perché è intanto chiaro che si comincia a concepire un processo di *translatio studii* solo là dove una effettuale *translatio imperii* può promuoverlo e farlo proprio e piegarlo alle proprie totalizzanti esigenze di sovranità. Ed è proprio di qui, per come è stata parторita ed ha mosso i primi incerti passi nell'ambito dell'ideologia im-

periale carolingia, che quella *translatio* ha ricavato il tratto di fondo che ne ha fatto una delle funzioni più rappresentative del potere politico e delle sue lotte, come i secoli successivi inevitabilmente dimostrano.

4 Novella Atene o Cariath Sefer?

Dopo essersi affermato in ambito carolingio, il concetto di *translatio* non trova sviluppi immediati, quasi abbia subito la crisi stessa della dinastia alla quale era stato legato. Ne deriva una sorta di cesura che chi si è occupato del problema non ha colto o ha trascurato. Disinvolatamente, infatti, gli studiosi sono passati da quelle prime testimonianze alle successive, del XII e XIII secolo e oltre, e di ciò offre esempio lo stesso Gilson, nella sua veloce *translatio* da Aquisgrana a Parigi: “c’est donc que la science grecque, transmise jadis par la Grèce à Rome, a désormais été transmise par Rome à la France. À mesure que l’importance de Paris augmente, c’est naturellement Paris qui prend la place d’Athènes” (Gilson 183). Ma appunto, tra Aquisgrana e Parigi c’è un bel salto,⁴¹ e sembra proprio che il disfaccimento dell’impero carolingio e la mancanza di un centro politico che si proponesse in maniera organica quella politica di reclutamento di intelletti che aveva stupito e ammirato gli uomini dell’età di Carlo Magno, abbia privato il concetto della sua operatività tanto descrittiva quanto ideale. Così, mentre il fiume lento e almeno in parte sotterraneo della trasmissione del sapere antico continua il suo corso, la nozione che lo nomina e gli dà senso e direzione politica scompare, per riapparire, sì, a Parigi, nei primi decenni del secolo dodicesimo, ma in una prospettiva molto diversa.

In verità, si ha l’impressione che tutto ricominci daccapo, e che il discorso torni sostanzialmente ad assumere i toni dell’integralismo religioso, nella dimensione propriamente escatologica che aveva nel *Libro di Daniele* e in Gerolamo. Ciò è evidente, intorno al terzo o quarto decennio del secolo XII, in Ugo di San Vittore, che in linea di massima applica lo schema di Gerolamo alla trasmissione dei saperi e individua due *translationes*, dall’Egitto alla Grecia e dalla Grecia a Roma, la prima dovuta a Platone e la seconda ai ‘traduttori’ latini, quali Varrone e Cicerone.⁴² La cosa è in ogni caso degna di nota, ma la sua è la visione apocalittica e ‘finale’ (“ordo esse non potest ubi finis non est”) di una vicenda compiuta che fagocita la totalità del sapere umano entro coordinate di tutt’altra natura. Sulla stessa linea

41. Per cominciare a ridurlo, vd. ora Kretschmer 1102–16, come mi suggerisce Lars Boje Mortensen.

42. Cfr. *De arca Noe morali* 4.9: *PL* 176.677–78; e *De vanitate mundi* 2, in fine: *PL* 176.720, con forte accentuazione del carattere discendente del movimento che sempre più allontana dall’originale perfezione edenica; e, particolarmente interessante, *Didascalicon* 3.2, *De auctoribus artium*: *PL* 176.765–67: “Aegyptus mater est artium, inde in Graeciam, deinde in Italiam venerunt. In ea primum grammatica reperta est tempore Osiris mariti Isis. In ea quoque dialectica primum inventa est a Parmenide [...] Plato autem post mortem Socratis magistri sui, amore sapientiae in Aegyptum migravit, ibique perceptis liberalibus disciplinis Athenas rediit; et apud Academicam villam suam coadunatis discipulis philosophiae studiis operam dedit. Hic primum logicam rationalem apud Graecos instituit, quam postea Aristoteles discipulus ejus ampliavit, perfecit et in artem redegit. Marcus Terentius Varro primum dialecticam de Graeco in Latinum transtulit. Postea Cicero topica adjecit. Demosthenes Fabri filius, apud Graecos rhetorice princeps creditur. Tisias apud Latinos. Corax apud Syracusas. Haec ab Aristotele et Gorgia et Hermagora in Graeco scripta est, translata in Latinum a Tullio, Quintiliano et Titiano.” Questa è stata definita come l’esposizione più compiuta della teoria de *translatio imperii e studii* da Jongkees 43–44; vedi Goetz 111–22.

è Ottone di Frisinga, probabile allievo a Parigi di Ugo di San Vittore, che nella grande *Chronica sive historia de duobus civitatibus* citata in apertura (che si ferma al 1146) rilascia una rapida e però assai sintomatica dichiarazione che riconosce i meriti culturali dell'impero carolingio, là dove scrive che “translato ad Francos imperio cum imperiali gloria crescere simul cepissent et ingenia,” ma non sta precisamente entro questa dimensione quanto ancora diffusamente scrive nel *Prologo* e per tutto il l. VII. È vero che qui è precisamente questione della *translatio* congiunta del potere e del sapere, e questo è pur sempre un dato finalmente acquisito, ma la cornice che la stringe è di nuovo di tipo provvidenziale, non storico, e non ha nulla di quel senso puntuale e vivo che caricava l'esperienza dello studio delle lettere classiche con quella sorta di ottimismo 'progressivo' che caratterizzava il momento di Alcuino, celebrato dalle generazioni immediatamente successive. Che la sapienza venga originariamente dall'Egitto è un *topos* radicatissimo, e qui è affatto normale trovarlo. Il fatto è, però, che esso torna a completare lo schema successivo dei quattro regni di Daniele insieme ai suoi aggiornamenti, e tale schema, con il suo peso, soffoca l'esile e orgogliosa traccia della 'filosofia' che da Atene arrivava per diritta via alle aule della scuola palatina. L'ipoteca provvidenziale ed escatologica è troppo forte, insomma, e troppo radicale il disinteresse per la dimensione costruttiva e civile della 'filosofia' antica per poter intravedere qualcosa di proto- o paleo-umanistico in una *translatio studii* così biblicamente connotata.⁴³

43. Discute del possibile 'umanesimo' di Ugo di San Vittore Piazzoni, giungendo a conclusioni assai equilibrate: “Ugo di San Vittore non fu propriamente uno storiografo e il suo *Chronicon* risulta addirittura sterile se letto in questa prospettiva; fu piuttosto un teologo e un esegeta che sui dati storici e sulla loro comprensione seppe riflettere con acume” (500).

Ma la storia corre ora veloce e sfalda in àmbiti diversi l'universalismo escatologico, e il discorso si complica e non è facile inseguirne i molti fili. Per esempio, l'idea di *translatio* corre ora entro i diversi 'miti di fondazione' che cercano nella diaspora troiana le origini dei regni d'Inghilterra e di Francia, ove in questa chiave ripercorrono il peraltro mai smesso culto di Carlo Magno. Lo fa per esempio, riprendendo un motivo che era già della tarda età merovingia, Goffredo da Viterbo che torna ad esaltare Carlo Magno quale 'restauratore' di Roma e proclama che in lui sono tornati a riunirsi i due grandi rami nei quali s'era divisa la stirpe dei troiani: quello occidentale e teutonico che discende da Priamo il giovane, nipote di Ettore, per parte del padre Pipino, e per parte della madre Berta quello romano (“Gottifredi Viterbiensis opera:” *Speculum regum* 1.684–90 e 2.1450–52; *Pantheon, Particula* 23.11–13; *Memoria Seculorum* 95). Un altro elemento sarà invece quello che s'innerva in modi altamente complessi nei miti della 'materia di Bretagna' (nel *Roman de l'Estoire dou*

44. Non m'azzardo a dare una bibliografia su questi argomenti, e segnalo solo pochi testi, oltre le vecchie e sempre importanti ricerche di Lot, dai quali si trarranno altre indicazioni. A me è stato utile il denso volume di Boutet (in part. il par. "Translatio imperii' et transfert du Graal," 440–50). Ma si vedano almeno gli importanti lavori di Beaune, Giardina, Chazan. Per i Bretoni e l'Inghilterra in particolare, vedi Faral e Mathey-Maille, mentre un diffuso e chiaro racconto della leggenda di Bruto, il primo mitico re d'Inghilterra figlio di Silvio figlio di Enea e Lavinia, e un attento confronto delle fonti è in Montero Garrido 206–53. Circa il Graal, una fitta trama di *translationes* (*imperii, studii, religionis, gratiae*) trova una chiara esposizione in Girbea: la studiosa formula l'ipotesi che sia stata la corte dei Plantageneti, tagliata fuori dalla *translatio imperii* (Germania), dalla *translatio studii* (Francia), dalla *translatio religionis* (Santa Sede), a tentare di impadronirsi della leggenda arturiana e a farne un vettore di propaganda, come del resto risulta anche dal mito delle origini troiane in Geoffrey de Monmouth e Wace.

45. Insiste sui legami con la tradizione Nitze 467; le stesse cose scriveva Curtius 36–37: "Gilson ha creduto di cogliere in questi versi un'espressione dell'umanesimo medievale; ma evidentemente egli non ha tenuto conto di ciò che segue: 'Lenors qui s'i est arestee, / Deus l'avoit as autres preestee: / car de Grejois ne de Romains / ne dit an mes ne plus ne mains; / d'aus est la parole remese / et estainte la vive brese' [...]. Qui è espresso proprio il contrario di una concezione umanistica."

Graal di Robert de Boron, per esempio, sarà Cristo stesso ad ordinare che il Graal sia portato da oriente verso occidente).⁴⁴ Quanto abbiamo osservato resta tuttavia alla base di una *translatio* che proprio ora, tra dodicesimo e tredicesimo secolo, sembra rinnovarsi e, soprattutto, specializzarsi. Quasi il suo discorso fosse stato rilanciato dalla ripresa che Ugo da San Vittore e Ottone da Frisinga ne avevano fatto, essa tocca l'approdo che, nell'opinione degli studiosi che se ne sono sin qui occupati, più a lungo e con più forza la caratterizzerà come tale: voglio dire ch'essa ora diventa il blasone della superiorità francese e s'innerva, in particolare, nel nascente mito di Parigi, città unica in Europa sia per grandezza, ricchezza e intensità di vita e traffici, sia quale *caput studiorum*.

Il testo più antico in questo senso (1162–70) resta sin qui il famoso e citatissimo prologo di Chrétien de Troyes al *Cligès*:

Ce nos ont nostre livre apris
qu'an Grece ot de chevalerie
le premier los et de clergie.
Puis vint chevalerie a Rome
et de la clergie la some,
qui or est an France venue.
Dex doint qu'ele i soit maintenue
et que li leus li abelisse
tant que ja mes de France n'isse
l'enors qui s'i est arestee. (vv. 28–37)

In Chrétien il tema ha preso una direzione diversa, e se è vero che gli schemi di fondo rimangono quelli tipici della tradizione,⁴⁵ è anche vero che si dispongono ad assumere pieghe più fattuali e storiche. In fin dei conti, qui si esalta un fenomeno vero e concreto: il primato culturale al quale la Francia affida tanta parte della sua immagine, e dunque questi versi hanno di per sé un notevole significato. Anche se Chrétien non ne ha affatto l'intenzione, lasciano sullo sfondo ingombranti visioni di tipo escatologico, e puntano semplicemente il dito sulla cosa. La qual cosa è appunto un primato essenzialmente culturale, perché anche la concezione della *chevalerie*, ovviamente, è un fenomeno culturale. Potremmo dire, insomma, che fin che la *translatio studii* è rimasta strettamente vincolata alla *translatio imperii* – alla successione dei regni –, correva pur sempre il rischio di trovarsi chiusa in una dimensione provvidenziale e trascendente, mentre qui definisce i suoi contenuti in modo tale da cominciare, almeno, a metterli in mani umane. E se Chrétien non ne era del tutto consapevole,

ebbene, non ha importanza. E in ogni caso l'esaltazione della Francia quale terminale della *translatio* già passata da Atene a Roma con lui e dopo di lui dilaga, recuperando ancora i *Gesta Karoli* di Notker, in Giraut de Barri, Goussin de Metz, Vincenzo di Beauvais, e nelle *Grandes croniques de France*, ove appunto si legge che a partire da Alcuino “Tant multiplia et fructifia sa doctrine à Paris que, Dieu merci! la fontaine de doctrine et de sapience est a Paris aussi come elle fu jadis a Athenes et à Rome” (*Les Grandes Chroniques* 3.157–58; cfr. Gilson 185).

Parigi. Siamo a una nuova articolazione del discorso. Non è la Francia tutt'intera, infatti, ma Parigi che costruisce allora il proprio mito di nuova Atene e nuova Roma. Ma in verità neppure la città di Parigi nel suo insieme: la sua Università, piuttosto, la cui assoluta centralità entro il discorso sulla *translatio* è stata messa bene in luce da Serge Lusignan (“L'Université;” “La topique;” *Parler vulgairement* 162 ss.; cfr. anche Rico 57–59 e Jeuneau 51–54). Quando, nel XIII secolo e oltre, si celebra la supremazia che fa di Parigi l'Atene dei tempi moderni, non ci riferisce a una generica e per la verità taciuta produzione artistica e letteraria umanisticamente intesa. Nulla ci permette di piegare in questo senso l'idea di *translatio*, ma è appunto l'Università che ne è investita appieno, sullo sfondo di una città che lasciava a bocca aperta i visitatori per la qualità della vita e per le sue molteplici attrattive: eccezionali sono a questo proposito le testimonianze di Giovanni di Salisbury, Giovanni di Hauville, Filippo di Harvengt, Guido de Bazoches, Alessandro Neckam, Guglielmo di Nangis..., che per mere ragioni di spazio non è il caso di allegare in questa sede. Piuttosto, e in breve. Per quanto rimangano varie incertezze si sa che, dopo una lunga fase informale, l'Università di Parigi cominciò a svilupparsi e ad organizzarsi durante il regno di Filippo Augusto che in un famoso documento del 1200 assicurò la speciale protezione della giustizia reale verso gli *scholares Parisienses*. Nel 1219 i loro privilegi furono confermati e allargati, sì che “à la mort de Philippe Auguste, l'université de Paris était incontestablement parfaitement constituée, sa personnalité morale et juridique bien établie, ses privilèges fondamentaux acquis, ses premiers statuts rédigés” (Verger, “Des écoles” 830).⁴⁶ La crescita fu rapida e spettacolare, ed ebbe il suo momento decisivo tra il 1220 e il 1230, gli anni delle grandi bolle papali (la *Parens scientiarum* di Gregorio IX, nella quale Parigi è appunto la splendente città delle lettere e la madre delle scienze, è dell'aprile 1231: *Chartularium* 1.138–39, n° 79)⁴⁷ e di maestri come Guglielmo d'Auxerre, Guglielmo d'Auvergne, Alessandro di Hales, Al-

46. Cfr. Verger, *Les universités*; Rashdall 1.269–584 (in part. 540 ss.); Traver; Courtenay and Miethke; Weber 16–23.

47. Su una successiva lettera di Gregorio IX, la *Animarum lucra querentes* (gennaio 1237), seppure dall'angolazione particolare del ruolo dei Vittorini nell'origine dell'Università, vedi Crossnoe.

berto Magno, che ne fecero, insieme a Oxford, la roccaforte dell'aristotelismo (Bonaventura insegnò a Parigi dal 1253 al 1257, e Tommaso dal 1252 al 1259 e dal 1268 al 1272). Allora, Guglielmo il Bretonese poteva scrivere, riecheggiando molti altri, che sia l'Egitto, nel quale era nata ogni scienza, che Atene erano state ormai superate da Parigi, e dava quindi per compiuta sotto ogni aspetto la *translatio* del sapere (Verger, "Des écoles" 840 n. 88):

In diebus illis studium litterarum florebat Parisius, nec
legimus tantum aliquando fuisse scholarium frequentiam
Athenis vel Egypti, vel in qualibet parte mundi quanta locum
predictum studendi gratia incolebat.

L'immagine dell'Università come copiosa sorgente di sapienza che questi testi presentano diventa canonica, tornando a più riprese; per esempio in una lettera di Gregorio IX (1229): "Fluvius profecto est litterarum studium, quo irrigatur et fecundatur post Spiritus Sancti gratiam paradisi generalis ecclesie, cujus alveus Parisiensis civitas [...]" (*Chartularium* 1.127, n° 70); in una lettera di Alessandro IV (1256) ch'è tutto un intreccio di metafore celebrative, da quella del sole ("Parisius peritiae summe sinus de sue scientie plenitudine replens orbem et tanquam fulgidus sol doctrine per totum orbem clare intelligentie lumen fundens, depellit ignorantie tenebras, ruditis abstergit caliginem [...]" a quella della fonte ("rigat documentorum suorum fluentis Parisius omnem terram [...] De Parisius itaque fons limpidus scientiarum emanat, de quo potant cunctarum populi nationum. Ibi erumpit altus puteus scripturarum, de quo profunde intelligentie pocula mundus haurit [...]" (*Chartularium* 1.342–43, n° 296); in una lettera di Filippo IV (1313) nella quale gli studenti "sintientes ad aquas veniunt vivi fontis fluentia sumentes, ubique rivos derivant ex quibus mundus sui diversis partibus irrigatur" (*Chartularium* 2.160, n° 701); in una lettera di Giovanni XXI (1317):

Nostis etiam, cum nullum fere orbis angulum lateat, quot et
quantos viros luminosa scientia preditos ac honesta conversatione decoros Parisiense studium ad illuminationem
gentium divinitus institutum huc usque produxerit et
producere jugiter non desistit, qui sui fluentia diffundentes
eloquii universalem ecclesiam longe lateque diffusam multipliciter irrigarunt et irrigant [...]. (*Chartularium* 2.198, n° 738)⁴⁸

48. Per l'affluenza degli studenti di tutta Europa, vedi ancora per esempio *Chartularium* 1.194, n° 164; e 1.439–40, n° 398.

49. Per esempio si dice ch'essa "irrigat et fecundat" in un documento dell'Università stessa, con il quale essa dichiara di non essere responsabile se al suo interno "inveniantur aliqui delinquentes" (*Chartularium* 2.306, n° 870). Anche Guglielmo di Nangis, *Chronicon*, sub 1251: "Parisius ubi est fons totius sapientiae."

50. Per i dibattiti interni, già oggetto di numerosi studi, vedi Zimmermann.

Ora, è importante sottolineare che queste sono, tutte o quasi tutte, auto-celebrazioni fortemente interessate attraverso le quali la Chiesa afferma il proprio primato e monopolio dottrinale ed esalta la sua più illustre istituzione scolastica,⁴⁹ fatta segno, nel tempo, di significativi atti d'omaggio. Che poi dietro l'immagine della propaganda si agitatesse un mondo assai più complesso e problematico, e che la cappa della censura e del condizionamento pesasse molto, come ha ben mostrato Luca Bianchi,⁵⁰ è un altro discorso, che non intacca l'universale prestigio dello *studium* parigino e dei suoi maestri.

Ma se è l'Università, come Lusignan ha precisato, ad essere celebrata come l'insuperabile paradiso della *clergie*, ebbene, il discorso critico si riapre perché diventa impossibile nascondere il fatto che attraverso di essa si celebra essenzialmente non già un effettivo percorso attraverso il quale sarebbe stato realizzato il trasferimento della cultura classica entro i saperi moderni, ma si celebra piuttosto, e senza mezzi termini, il trionfo della scolastica sopra e *contro* quella cultura. *A posteriori* è facile, e direi inevitabile, fare d'ogni erba un fascio e applicare questa *translatio* ad ogni espressione della civiltà francese, magari attraverso le parziali aperture 'laiche' suggerite da Chrétien de Troyes o Goussin di Metz, ma nulla, ripeto, ci autorizza a farlo. Piuttosto, tutto sta a dimostrare che la *translatio* è diventata un'arma in più al servizio di una circoscritta affermazione di superiorità: che Parigi sia la nuova Atene, o meglio, che Parigi abbia soppiantato Atene, sta dunque semplicemente a dire che la filosofia scolastica e i laboriosi dogmi della teologia hanno finito di soppiantare il pensiero antico e le sue espressioni culturali. Si rilegga per esempio Philippe di Harvengt e in particolare la lettera nella quale egli invita Enghelberto a immergersi completamente negli studi: ebbene, di là dalla pur frequentata topica della *translatio* il sapere è, per Philippe, rigorosamente quello cristiano, e tutto biblico è l'orizzonte di riferimento, da Gerusalemme e Davide e Salomone... Le lettere sono le

sacrae litterae, quarum lectio juxta Paulum instruit ad salutem [...] In hoc tamen non falleris, quod non poetarum exigis fabulas et figmenta, non sophistarum laqueos, non decipientium argumenta, non denique aliud quo exultet vanitas, turbetur veritas et vacillet, sed quod tuam foveat et, ut ais, animam refocillet;

l'Università è un 'santuario' nel quale l'anima si sposa a Dio e frequenta gli angeli, e i contenuti dell'insegnamento sono già perfettamente definiti, senza sbavature, come in un catechismo:

Hunc [*Dio*] predicat, hunc attollit, non solum doctorum predicatio vel scriptura, sed omnium rerum creatio, mutabilitas, et natura, que omnia, cum iudicio evidenti mutabilitatis insite creata se ostendant, Creatorem increatum et immutabilem astruunt et commendant. (*Chartularium* 1.53–55, n° 53 a Enghelberto)⁵¹

51. Altrettanto significative le lettere n° 51 a Ergaldo e n° 52 a Richero (*Chartularium* 1.50–52).

52. L'oscura Cariath Sepher è la biblica 'città dei libri' o 'città degli archivi,' presso Hebron, fatta conquistare da Caleb: *Ios.* 15.15, "Dabir, quae prius vocabatur Cariath Sepher, id est, civitas litterarum;" *Iud.* 1.11, "abiit ad habitatores Dabir, cuius nomen vetus erat Cariath Sepher, id est, civitas litterarum."

In questo quadro c'è un elemento che a me pare straordinariamente importante per la definizione di un'intera 'politica culturale' (con un'espressione moderna che suona per altro inadeguata) e che non so se sia mai stato messo in evidenza: Parigi, si dice, è superiore ad Atene perché si presenta come la reincarnazione della biblica Cariath Sepher,⁵² la 'città delle lettere,' come due volte Philippe la chiama, e come, con scelta di gran significato, la chiama anche Gregorio IX nella prima riga della bolla *Parens scientiarum*: "Parens scientiarum Parisius velut altera Cariath Sepher, civitas litterarum [...]" Parigi è Cariath Sepher, non è Atene, e precisamente per questo è incomparabilmente superiore alla città greca.

Si ammetterà, così, che l'esaltazione di una *translatio* siffattamente intesa è una mossa che ripropone per intero la questione nel momento stesso in cui ne stravolge i termini, producendo una versione aggiornata e sofisticata del costante ostile atteggiamento della Chiesa verso la *translatio* del sapere pagano, e della assoluta rivendicazione, per contro, della propria epocale superiorità. Del resto, essa non avrebbe mai potuto ammettere un senso di 'mancanza,' per quanto parziale e condizionato, verso quel sapere, e non ha dunque mai impostato in termini propri il tema della ricerca di una qualche forma di integrazione delle proprie totalizzanti verità (certo non poteva riconoscere, come Orazio, la propria 'rusticità,' o addirittura giudicarla un disvalore: "Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit / et artes intulit agresti Latio"). Sì che mi sentirei di affermare che quel sapore diverso, quella minuscola scheggia di entusiasmo per gli antichi testi che animava i tempi di Alcuino è ora scomparsa entro la topica prepotente dell'autoaffermazione, e che l'idea di *translatio*, dopo l'apocalittica e totalizzante ripresa che ne ha fatto Ugo di San Vittore, ha perduto quel suo stretto margine di autonomia e di vita, ed è finita di nuovo in un imbuto senza uscita. Se non fosse così, infatti, troppe cose non si capirebbero: per cominciare, l'Umanesimo sarebbe tranquillamente stato cosa francese. Ma invece proprio là dove la si celebra come cosa fatta, e forse proprio per questo, essa è in verità assente, mentre è altrove – in Italia – che essa comincia davvero ad agire.

5 Realtà e utopia della *Translatio*

Volendo riassumere in modo certamente grossolano ma fedele quanto è stato delineato sin qui, direi che la Chiesa, prima dell'età carolingia, in linea di principio abbia rifiutato ogni ipotesi di *translatio*, e che dopo il Mille, nei secoli dell'egemonia culturale francese e parigina, se ne sia liberata dandola per compiuta. Ne emerge qualcosa di assolutamente dirimente nell'idea stessa di *translatio* che a questo punto va spiegato: qualcosa sin qui non osservato. E per farlo non trovo esempio migliore di questo che segue.

Retrocediamo ancora a Ottone di Frisinga, questa volta nelle vesti di cronista, il quale nei suoi *Gesta Friderici imperatoris* (2.29–30) racconta a suo modo l'incontro che il Barbarossa ebbe a Sutri con una delegazione romana pochi giorni prima di entrare in città per esservi coronato imperatore da papa Adriano IV, il 18 giugno 1155.⁵³ Tale delegazione, formata da *industres* e *litterati* (tale notazione ha la sua importanza), tiene un eloquente discorso, al quale l'imperatore risponde con il suo, particolarmente lungo e di grande effetto, che davvero mi spiace non poter qui analizzare come merita. In sostanza, la delegazione si produce in una esaltazione della maestà e della potenza di Roma e delle sue istituzioni alle quali l'imperatore dovrebbe restituire autorità e alle quali dovrebbe rendere omaggio. Ma è meglio lasciare la parola a Ottone, almeno per la conclusione:

Hospes eras, civem feci. Advena fuisti ex Transalpinis partibus, principem constitui. Quod meum iure fuit, tibi dedi. Debes itaque primo ad observandas meas bonas consuetudines legesque antiquas, mihi ab antecessoribus tuis imperatoribus idoneis instrumentis firmatas, ne barbarorum violenturabie, securitatem prebere, officialibus meis, a quibus tibi in Capitolio adclamandum erit, usque ad quinque milia librarum expensam dare, iniuriam a re publica etiam usque ad effusionem sanguinis propellere et haec omnia privilegiis munire sacramentique interpositione propria manu confirmare. (*Ottonis et Rahewini Gesta Friderici* 136: 2.28)

Così i romani. Ma il Barbarossa duramente interrompe il loro verboso e tutto italiano discorso (“*cursum verborum illorum de suae rei publicae ac imperii iusticia more Italico longa continuatione periodorumque circuitibus sermonem producturis interruptit*”), lo definisce insipido e arrogante e particolarmente sciocco nel suo rievocare le grandezze passate (“*Agnosco, agnosco, et ut tui scriptoris verbis*

53. La versione data da Ottone dell'episodio è basata sull'effettiva alleanza dell'imperatore con il papa contro il governo della città ispirato da Arnaldo da Brescia (espulso da Roma poco prima dell'arrivo del Barbarossa, fu catturato presso san Quirico d'Orcia e consegnato all'imperatore che a sua volta lo consegnò a un'ambasceria di cardinali che lo riportarono a Roma ove fu ucciso in circostanze non chiare durante i tumulti seguiti all'incoronazione), e sull'effettivo rifiuto da parte del Barbarossa di sottomettersi alle condizioni che tale governo voleva imporgli (in sostanza, di là da alcuni rituali atti di omaggio, il pagamento di una grossa somma di denaro). Una minuta analisi di quell'incontro, che illustra anche alcune, poi superate, difficoltà insorte tra il papa e l'imperatore per delicate questioni di preminenza, è in Munz 79–88. Si veda anche Bagge 356–66.

utar, fuit, fuit quondam in hac re publica virtus [Cic., in *Catil.* 1.1.3]. ‘Quondam’ dico [...]” *Ottonis et Rahewini Gesta Friderici* 137: 2.30); ricorda che tutto muta sotto il cielo, e che già “per quot annorum curricula ubera delitiarum tuarum Greculus esuriens suxerit,” finché “venit Francus” a strappare a Roma quanto rimaneva della sua nobiltà, sì che nulla le è rimasto. Tutto ciò che era suo è passato ormai all’impero germanico: “Penes nos cuncta haec sunt. Ad nos simul omnia haec cum imperium demanarunt. Non cessit nobis nudum imperium. Virtute sua amictuum venit. Ornamenta sua secum traxit. Penes nos sunt consules tui. Penes nos est senatus tuus. Penes nos est miles tuus [...]” Il discorso sarà ancora lungo, ma la sostanza non cambia e, facendo perno su una citazione di Macrobio, *Sat.* 5.3.16: “Eripiat quis, si potest, clavam de manu Herculis,” l’imperatore respinge con disprezzo tutte le richieste che gli erano state fatte, e con particolare collera, naturalmente, quella di pagare.

La *translatio imperii* non ha dunque lasciato nulla dietro di sé, ché il potere, passando da un popolo all’altro, s’è trascinato dietro le ‘virtù’ sulle quali era stato edificato e gli ‘ornamenti’ che lo abbellivano: in una parola, il sapere. La cosa è, se possibile, ancora più evidente nel lungo poema *Ligurinus* composto tra il 1181 e il 1184 da Gunther il Cistercense (o il Poeta, *der Dichter*), dove si ritrovano minuziosamente verseggiati i *Gesta Friderici* di Ottone, compresi quei capitoli con i due contrapposti discorsi (3.360–580). Gunther non si limita dunque a proclamare orgogliosamente sin dal primo libro che è ormai il Reno a dare ordini al Tevere, in versi famosi e spesso citati per essere assolutamente tipici del motivo della *translatio imperii*:

Nos, quibus est melior libertas, jure vetusto
 orba suo quotiens vacat inclyta principe sedes,
 quodlibet arbitrium statuendi regis habemus.
 Ex quo Romanum nostra virtute redemptum.
 hostibus expulsis, ad nos justissimus ordo
 transtulit imperium; Romani gloria regni
 nos penes est: quemcumque sibi Germania regem
 praeficit, hunc dives submisso vertice Roma
 suscipit, et verso Tiberim regit ordine Rhenus;⁵⁴ (1.246–54)

ma riprende e dà ampio spazio alla polemica filo-germanica nel terzo, ritraducendo piuttosto fedelmente il racconto di Ottone. Egli comincia con il sottolineare che i deputati romani arrivano dinanzi al Barbarossa “patriae mandata ferentes / conspicuo sermone quidem phalerata, sed astu / et tacitis perplexa dolis” (3.362–64). Il quale Bar-

54. L’episodio è verseggiato anche nell’anonimo *Carmen de gestis Friderici* 21 ss. (2.610), ov’è però più breve e più moderato nei toni polemici, e sciolto entro il corso della narrazione. Di esso parla anche, nello stesso giro d’anni, Goffredo da Viterbo nel *Pantheon, particula XV de gestis Friderici* 5–7: “Romanus populus antiquos expetit usus, / rex despexit eum, primatum milite tutus, / nil petit, immo iubet [...]” (*Gotifredi Viterbiensis opera* 311).

55. Anche Gunther mette in bocca al Barbarossa un accenno al *Greculus*, ma lo specifica attraverso l'allusione a Manuele I Comneno (1143–80) e a Ruggero II di Sicilia, morto l'anno prima, presunti difensori di Roma: "Ubi perfidus ille / Greculus et Sicule, vindex tuus [...]" (3.535–36).

barossa vede benissimo "dolos et infecta verba veneno" (3.453), e risponde a tono rivendicando con altrettanta e maggiore eloquenza i suoi diritti e la definitiva forza della *translatio* (tutto ciò che Costantinopoli ha lasciato a Roma "transtulit in Francos"), sino all'impenata finale (3.565–79)⁵⁵ che risponde alla richiesta di restaurare i poteri delle antiche magistrature ("Da libertatem sacrumque reponere senatum! / Iam redeat censor, redeat cum consule pretor / et redeant gemini cum dictatore tribuni", 3.437–39) e che merita d'esser riferita per intero:

Mea respice castra:
 omnia, que dudum quereris sublata, videbis
 nomine mutato sub eadem vivere forma:
 hic eques, hic pretor, hic consulis atque tribuni
 imperiosus honos et publica cura senatus.
 Aspice Teuthonicos proceres equitumque catervas.
 Hos tu patricos, hos tu cognosce quirites,
 hunc tibi perpetuo dominantem iure senatum.
 Hii te, Roma, suis – nolis licet ipsa – gubernant
 legibus, hii pacis bellique negocia tractant.
 Sed libertatis titulos antiquaque legum
 tempora commemoras: quas leges, improba, preter
 Teuthonicas aut que preter mea iura requiris?
 Que tibi libertas poterit contingere maior
 quam regi servire tuo? (3.565–79)

Questi, ora sono i patrizi. E *questi* i quiriti, e *questo* il senato... La *translatio* prevede vincitori e vinti, e in questo quadro gli italiani appaiono come quelli che hanno perso, per sempre. Tutto chiaro e semplice, dunque? Non proprio, perché, a ben vedere, la situazione ha qualcosa di paradossale.

Ho appena accennato, sopra, ad Arnaldo da Brescia, sacrificato da Barbarossa all'alleanza con il papa. I ritratti di Arnaldo sono ovviamente pessimi, in Ottone e in Gunther e in genere nei cronisti filo-imperiali (cfr. Frugoni), e marcati in modo pesantemente negativo sono i discorsi dei deputati romani. Ma tali discorsi, letti in controtuce, si rifanno precisamente agli ideali arnaldiani di liberazione di Roma dal dominio del papa e di restaurazione dell'antica repubblica, chiaramente vagheggiata con una sorta di passione antiquaria davvero non dissimile a quella che animerà quasi duecento anni dopo Cola di Rienzo. E il paradosso, allora, sta appunto in questo, che ci viene sceneggiato lo scontro tra due *translationes*: quella im-

periale e compiuta rappresentata dal Barbarossa, biblicamente caratterizzata come una pura traslazione di potere rimessa in ultima analisi nelle mani di un Dio che ha già detto la sua (“Eripiat quis, si potest, clavam de manu Herculis”), e l’altra, utopica e repubblicana, che non è caratterizzata nel senso del potere (che infatti non ha), ma piuttosto in quello eminentemente progettuale che muove da una visione attualizzante della romanità, della quale la *translatio* è propriamente l’anima. Ecco allora, da una parte, una idea di *translatio* quale quella vista sin qui, ove essa sempre compare come qualcosa di già realizzato e dunque come pretesto per celebrazioni adulatorie e affermazioni di superiorità, fondate o meno che fossero. E dall’altra l’idea profondamente diversa secondo la quale la *translatio* è piuttosto un obiettivo essenzialmente spirituale tutto da conquistare. In questo, sia pure detto in forme estremamente semplificate, consiste l’origine del cammino diverso che la *translatio* ha preso in Italia, ove sin dall’inizio, almeno a partire dal sogno di Arnaldo, essa ha assunto il carattere di un ‘desiderio,’ di una aspirazione all’antico che implica un progetto strettamente e direi tecnicamente intellettuale di studio e conoscenza del mondo romano, ed ha il suo *coté* politico nel mito che proietta l’esperienza comunale delle città italiane sullo schermo della Roma repubblicana.

L’Italia dunque, con le sue repubbliche cittadine, la sua contorta politica, la sua verbosità e le sue nostalgie... Ad essa l’idea di una *translatio imperii* in termini imperiali, appunto, è estranea (del tutto appartata, seppur sullo sfondo degli ultimi teorici dell’impero, è la posizione di Dante), e la politica assume forme particolari. Sin qui, abbiamo visto che è il trasferimento del potere a presumere di trascinare con sé quello del sapere. In Italia, invece, sembra prendere corpo il mito contrario, dal sapere al potere: è il sapere, la *translatio studii*, che assume profondo valore compensatorio e nutre il risorgente fantasma di un riscatto politico. E se la prima fase, quella ‘comunale’ e repubblicana, si riassume in un nome: Brunetto Latini, la seconda, che mette in qualche modo tra parentesi il momento direttamente politico e semmai lo trasforma in diplomazia, e mette finalmente a fuoco un progetto culturale di *translatio studii* di portata europea ha un altro nome: Petrarca. Sì che, in definitiva, della *translatio* resta ancora da parlare.

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From Founding Father to Pious Son

Filiation, Language, and Royal Inheritance in Alfonso X, the Learned

Abstract

1. Duchesne continued his criticism by asserting that Alfonso, “Heredó Alfonso X rey de Castilla y de Leon el valor y el celo de su padre por la extirpacion de los infieles; pero no heredó ni su virtud, ni sus talentos políticos: con que le faltó la mejor parte de la imitación para copiarle” (219; “[He] inherited the valor and zeal for wiping out the infidels from his father, but he did not inherit his father’s virtue or his political talents, and thus he lacked the better part of what it took to copy him”). Even José Amador de los Ríos, who sought to defend Alfonso’s legacy from his eighteenth-century critics, nevertheless attributed what he saw as Alfonso’s political successes to his father’s good model. Alfonso introduced “fundamentales innovaciones en la esfera de la política, procurando realizar en ella los grandiosos proyectos de su magnánimo padre” (3:482; “fundamental innovations in the sphere of politics, realizing in it the great projects of his magnanimous father”).

The influence of King Alfonso X of Castile (reg. 1252–84) has been so wide that modern historians have stressed Alfonso’s foundational role as a ‘father’ of many Castilian cultural institutions and areas of writing, including prose literature, science, the legal code, and vernacular historiography. This paper argues that the modern focus on Alfonso’s foundational, ‘fatherly’ role, while logical in the context of modern literary historiography, is at odds with Alfonso’s own medieval view of himself as a ‘son’ and heir, one who inherited rather than founded cultural institutions. It proposes that a reorientation of Alfonsine studies according to this medieval worldview, one focused less on Alfonso’s innovations and foundations and more on his continuity with and dependence on his forebears, will permit a clearer portrayal of Alfonso’s importance in medieval literary history. To this end, it explores Alfonso’s representation of himself as the son of his father, King Fernando III, in the prologues to his scientific translations, in his encomium of his father known as the *Setenario*, and in song 292 of his *Cantigas de Santa María*. A reading of these examples is offered as a first step towards the study of filiation and ‘sonship’ in the vast Alfonsine historiographical and legal corpora.

King Alfonso X of Castile (reg. 1252–84) has long been characterized in binary terms as a successful patron of science and culture and a political failure. In judging Alfonso’s performance as king, his eighteenth- and nineteenth-century critics often compared him negatively to his father, Fernando III, who united the kingdoms of León and Castile and who successfully led the Christians to victory in a number of key thirteenth-century battles against the Muslims of Iberia, culminating in the conquest of Seville in 1248.¹ By contrast, Alfonso’s intellectual pursuits were often judged as a major cause of his perceived political struggles and military failures. The Jesuit historian Juan de Mariana famously remarked in 1592 that

2. With the beginning of this assessment, “Erat Alfonso sublime ingenium, sed incautum, superbae aures, lingua petulans” (2:117; “Alfonso had a sublime but reckless genius, proud hearing and a petulant tongue”), Mariana seems to be alluding to Livy, *History of Rome* 24-5, “... superbae aures, contumeliosa dicta.” This statement by Mariana is discussed by Salvador Martínez (22).

3. In 1742, Father Flórez stated in his *Clave historial con que se abre al puerta a la historia eclesiástica y política...* that Alfonso, “mirando mucho al Cielo, no miró bastantemente por su tierra; y Político grande en lo especulativo, fue inferior en la práctica” (224; “Looking much at heaven, he did not look enough at the earth, and while he was a great politician in speculative terms, he was an inferior one in practical matters”). Feijóo cited Mariana’s judgment directly in his *Cartas eruditas y curiosas* of 1760 (prologue n.p.). Numerous other writers have repeated this judgment in some form.

4. For example, in 1741, French Jesuit Jesuit Jean-Baptiste Philippoteau Duchesne reused Mariana’s image in his *Abrégé de l’histoire d’Espagne*, which came to be very widely disseminated in Spain in the 1755 translation of fellow Jesuit José Francisco de Isla. In this translation, de Isla included a similar condemnation of Alfonso’s stargazing, written in the form of rhymed couplets: “Mientras observa el movimiento al Cielo,/ Cada passo un desbarro era en el suelo” (132; “While he was observing the movements of the stars,/ every step was a misstep on the earth”).

5. Although Salvador Martínez has recently affirmed that this contrast between political failure and intellectual success is no longer accepted by any scholars, it continues to appear in histories of literature and science. For example, Pedraza Jiménez and Rodríguez Cáceres stated in 1984 in their *Manual de literatura española*, “Al margen de sus fracasos políticos, la verdadera importancia de Alfonso X hay que buscarla en su papel como impulsor de la cultura y de la lengua castellana que, aunque no menos ambicioso, se vio coronado por el éxito” (369). Similarly, José Chabas stated in 2002 that “Hay acuerdo unánime en que el

litteris potius, quam civilibus artibus instructus: dumque caelum considerat, observatque astra, terram amisit (649; “He was better instructed in the arts of letters than of governing, and while contemplating the heavens and observing the stars, he lost the earth”).²

This rhetorical trope about Alfonso’s failure in politics resulting from distractedly “observing the stars” soon became a topos. Numerous writers repeated Mariana’s judgment, including Spanish Enlightenment intellectuals Enrique Flórez and Benito Feijóo³ as well as contemporary historians outside of Spain⁴ and, on occasion, twentieth- and twenty-first century critics both in Spain and abroad.⁵

As part of a broad attempt to vindicate Spain’s contribution to European cultural history, especially in reaction to the aspersions of writers repeating themes of the anti-Spanish Black Legend, historians since the nineteenth century have reacted against this paradigm and aimed to recuperate Alfonso’s image by stressing his foundational role in many areas of learning, even likening Alfonso’s cultural efforts to a kind of proto-Renaissance. Robert A. Anderson has mused hyperbolically that Alfonso

embodied traits that today we associate primarily with the “Renaissance scholar” [...] he was, in effect, directly responsible for several phases of that great period [...] perhaps eventually we shall come to think of him [...] as a man of vision whose thought and achievements in many respects actually foreshadowed the dawn of modern civilization (448).

Likewise, Américo Castro saw Alfonso as a harbinger of modern thought, for “without this lively humanism of the thirteenth century [in his work], that of the fifteenth would have been impossible” (LXV, my translation).⁶ Such sweeping pronouncements, although now less common, have not disappeared in recent scholarship. In the 1990s, Robert Burns praised Alfonso in exuberant terms, arguing that, “this farsighted, indefatigable king was a one-man renaissance” (*Emperor* 10).

As part of this image as a founder and forerunner of both the Renaissance and Humanism, scholars have also taken to naming him as the ‘father’ of everything from astronomy to Spanish law to the Castilian language itself. References to Alfonso as a ‘father’ became abundant in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century historiography, and this metaphor similarly persists today.⁷ Within the last few de-

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reinado de Alfonso, el Sabio, fue una sucesión de fracasos en lo político y de éxitos en lo cultural” (70). O’Callaghan stated, “one can only regret that Alfonso X, an admirable scholar, poet, legislator, historian,

scientist, a truly learned man, was not an equally gifted statesman and politician” (*A History* 381).

6. “Sin este humanismo vital del siglo XIII habría sido imposible el del XV.”

7. In 1782, Joseph de Várgas y Ponce

called Alfonso “el padre de la astronomía en nuestro continente” and “el padre de nuestra literatura” (33 and 42). In the nineteenth century, the American essayist Charles Dudley Warner praised Alfonso as “the father of Spanish literature and the reviver of Spanish learning” (1:386). More recently, Lynn Ingamells has said that the claim that Alfonso “is the father of the Spanish language... is an indisputable statement” (87).

8. Earlier biographers of Alfonso include Ballesteros y Beretta and González Jiménez. For the best overview of Alfonso’s cultural project and his concept of his own role as king, see Márquez Villanueva 25–40.

cares, Alfonso has been called “father of Castilian prose” (Elena Armijo 216) and even “father of the Spanish university” (Bustos Tovar 113). Historian Peter Linehan has granted Alfonso the title “founding father of Spanish historiography and the real wonder of the thirteenth-century world” (“The Mechanics” 26). Burns too called Alfonso the “father of Spanish prose as a literary tool” (*The Worlds* 14) and praised Alfonso’s “world role as father of Spanish law” (*Emperor* 13). As recently as a decade ago, Salvador Martínez called him the “father of the Castilian language” (16), an honor otherwise only conferred on Cervantes.⁸

I argue that this emphasis on Alfonso’s foundational role, whether meant to defend Spain’s role in intellectual history or to trace the origins of modern Spanish institutions of language and law, has come at a certain cost, that of minimizing Alfonso’s significant continuity with earlier literary models and ignoring his own view of his work as based primarily on reception and continuity rather than foundation and innovation. While it is not my goal to deny Alfonso his important foundational status as a founder of many things or to revive the debates of past centuries, I would like to propose a reconsideration of this modern, forward-looking emphasis on Alfonso’s role as founder by suggesting that we may gain an important new perspective by inverting it – that is, by considering Alfonso according to his own medieval worldview, one in which he depicted himself as a ‘son’ and ‘heir’ rather than a ‘father’ and ‘founder.’ I propose that we may use this new lens (or, given that Alfonso’s view of himself was rather typically medieval, perhaps it is better to say we may ‘reuse’ this ‘old’ lens) to view with fresh eyes what are considered some of Alfonso’s most important successes as a patron of culture, namely, his translation projects and his use of Castilian in his writing. In other words, I would like to consider how we might see the Alfonsine legacy differently if we view it not through a modern, periodized or nationalist paradigm but through a medieval, genealogical one.

Although I can here only begin to sketch out in concise terms what this conceptual reorientation in Alfonsine studies might entail, I will use this essay to explore one aspect of Alfonsine cultural production that might support this reorientation, the frequent conjunction of images of filiation, or what I will call ‘sonship,’ with those of language and translation. For reasons of space, I will focus on a few examples from Alfonso’s non-historiographical texts – the *Setenario*, one of the *Cantigas de Santa María*, and the prologues to a number of his scientific translations – offering a reading of these as a prelim-

inary exploration of the image of filial piety and a propaedeutic to its further elaboration in the study of Alfonso's vast historiographical and legal corpora. These examples will allow me to highlight the importance of the image of sonship and filial loyalty in Alfonso's conceptualization and promotion of his cultural projects, forming the basis of a rhetoric of reception that was an essential and foundational aspect of his work as king. Even more importantly, Alfonso's self-presentation in his works as the son of his parents, Fernando III and Beatrice of Swabia, served his propagandistic attempts to promote himself as the rightful Holy Roman Emperor, a post to which he was elected but never confirmed. This reorientation of the view on Alfonso's cultural achievements – seeing his role in intellectual history more in the way he saw it rather than as we have since the nineteenth century – can serve in future studies as a jumping-off point for a wider reconsideration of the role of reception and inheritance in Medieval Castilian literary history.

King Alfonso, Son of King Fernando

The view of Alfonso as a son rather than a father is a natural one, for Alfonso regularly represented himself in this way in his own writing. The image of himself as a son is so recurrent that it is legitimate to see it as a defining feature of Alfonsine cultural production. In the prologues to many of his works, especially his translations, he repeatedly names himself in genealogical terms as “King Alfonso, son of King Fernando,” (“rey don Alfonso, fijo del rey don Fernando”), an expression appearing in many of the texts written or ordered to be written by Alfonso. This identification appears in most of the surviving translations from Arabic commissioned by Alfonso, in which the nature of the translation and the filial relation of Alfonso, its patron, are expressed together, often in the same sentence.

The collection of texts in the *Libros del saber de astronomía* (“Books of Astronomical Knowledge”) contains numerous examples of this formula. The *Libro de la açafeha* (“Book of the Saphea/Universal Astrolabe”), part of the *Libros*, begins,

Et este libro sobredicho traslado de arabigo en romanço
maestre Fernando de Toledo por mandado del muy noble
Rey don Alfonso fijo del muy noble Rey don Fernando et
dela Reyna donna Beatriz (Madrid, Universidad Com-

9. Citations from Alfonso's relevant prose works are based on the online edition of Alfonso X, *The Electronic Texts of the Prose Works of Alfonso X, el Sabio*. Editions of texts are cited accordingly where available.

plutense BH MSS 156, 106v; "This above-mentioned book was translated from Arabic to Romance by Ferdinand of Toledo by order of the very noble King Alfonso, son of the very noble King Fernando and of the Queen Beatrice").⁹

In the *Libro dela esfera* ("Book of the Sphere," a Castilian translation of a tenth-century Arabic work by Qustā ibn Lūqā), another part of the *Libros*, the prologue tells us that

Este libro es el dell alcora ... que compuso un sabio de oriente que ouo nombre Cozta ... fizo este libro en arabigo. Et despues mandolo trasladar de arabigo en language castellano el Rey don Alfonso fijo del muy noble Rey don ffernando et dela Reyna donna Beatriz et sennor de Castiella (U. Complutense BH MSS 156, 24r; "This book is of al-kurah [ar. 'sphere'] ... that a sage from the East named Qustā composed ... he made this book in Arabic. And later King Alfonso, son of the very noble King Fernando and of the Queen Beatrice, ordered it to be translated from Arabic into the Castilian language").

A similar formula can be found in a number of Alfonso's other translations.

This conjunction is not limited to Alfonso's scientific texts, however, but can also be seen in his translation of wisdom literature, the frame-tale collection known as *Kalilah and Dimna*. The translation into Castilian of this mirror for princes, which was transmitted from India to Iberia via the eighth-century Arabic version of Ibn al-Muqaffa', was Alfonso's very first literary project, begun even before his father's death and his own accession to the throne. The Castilian version ends with a colophon very similar to the introductory words found in later scientific translations, offering a comment on translation and sonship that constitutes a simultaneous declaration of personal and literary pedigree.

Aquí se acaba el libro de Calina et Digna. Et fue sacado de arávigo en latín, et romançado por mandado del infante don Alfonso, fijo del muy noble rey don Fernando (Alfonso X, Calila 355; "Here ends the book Kalilah and Dimna. It was taken from Arabic [and translated] into Latin, and translated into Romance by Prince Alfonso, son of the very noble King Fernando").

To be sure, such expressions are largely formulaic, giving voice to a typical, medieval view of both authorship and kingship. The use of standard phrases to insert oneself into a chain of accepted tradition was commonplace for medieval writers, for whom, as Alastair Minnis explains, “to be ‘authentic,’ a saying or a piece of writing had to be the genuine production of a named *auctor*,” and, indeed, “no ‘modern’ writer could decently be called an *auctor* in a period in which men saw themselves as dwarfs standing on the shoulders of giants, i.e. the ‘ancients’” (11–12). In twelfth- and thirteenth-century literature, moreover, such a view was expressed most concisely and repeatedly in the prologues to works, the so-called *accessus ad auctores*, in which writers commonly expressed, in rather predictable order, the title, author, intention, subject matter, mode of writing, order, usefulness, and branch of learning to which a work pertained (Minnis 4). Alfonso’s prologues, in establishing himself as a modern author, similarly link him both intellectually to past *auctores* of venerable reputation and genealogically to a more venerable and past political model, his father. They combine an appeal to intellectual authorities – those Arabic authors who were recognized leaders in science – with the invocation of an unbroken heredity, portraying his father Fernando III as a kind of ‘giant’ on whose shoulders, both political and intellectual, he stood in his own reign.

Despite its formulaic nature, Alfonso’s evocation of his father stands out next to the prefatory language found in similar medieval texts, such as those produced by Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen (1194–1250), who was first cousin to Alfonso’s mother Beatrice, or those of Louis IX of France (1214–70), who was first cousin to Alfonso’s father Fernando III (making both figures Alfonso’s first cousins once removed). The prologue to Frederick’s work, *De arte venandi cum avibus* (“Art of Falconry”), written in the first person, directs the text to “vir clarissime M.E.” (*De arte* 1:1; *The Art* 3; “most illustrious of men, M.E”), a name usually understood to be his own illegitimate son Manfred, who later expanded the text and prepared a luxurious manuscript copy. It further states, “Auctor est vir inquisitor et sapientie amator Divus Augustus Fredericus secundus Romanorum imperator, Ierusalem et Sicilie rex” (*De arte* 1:2; *The Art* 4; “The author of this treatise, the divine [“of blessed memory”] and august Frederick II, Emperor of the Romans, King of Jerusalem and of Sicily, is a lover of wisdom with a philosophic and speculative mind”). Nowhere in this very personal text does Frederick present himself as a son or emphasize his own past genealogy. Similarly, Mi-

10. In the incipit of Michael's *Liber introductorius* (best preserved in Munich CLM 10268), he calls himself "astrologus Frederici imperatoris Romanorum semper augusti" (Edwards, "The Liber" 1; "The astrologer of Frederick, the ever illustrious emperor of the Romans"). Michael's translation of *Abbreviatio Avicenne* on Aristotle's *De Animalibus*, dedicated to Frederick and probably finished at his court, praises his patron as "Frederice domine mundi Romanorum imperator" (*Aristoteles Latinus* 4:942 [#1370]; "Frederick, lord of the world, emperor of the Romans").

11. For the instructions to Louis's son Philippe, see O'Connell, *The Teachings*. For his instructions to his daughter Isabelle, see O'Connell, *The Instructions*.

12. Cited in Rodríguez, "La preciosa transmisión" 308. An almost identical formula can be found in other privileges of the period, such as that to Uceda on 18 November 1250, Guadalajara on 13 April 1251, Castilian Extremadura on 09 July 1251, and Cuenca and Segovia on 22 November 1250. See also González, *Reinado y diplomas* III, docs 809 and 821, and others of this period.

13. Alfonso's lack of mention of his other family seems to stand out in a document in which Alfonso reaffirms an earlier privilege made by Fernando, first quoting his Father and then adding his own text: "Connoscida cosa sea a quantos esta carta uieren como yo don Alfonso, por la gracia de Dios Rey de Castilla, de Toledo, de León, de Gallizia, de Seuilla, de Córdoba, de Murcia et de Jahén, ui carta del rey don Fernando, mió padre, fecha en tal manera: Connoscida cosa sea a quantos esta carta uieren como yo don Fernando por la gracia de Dios rey de Castilla, de Toledo, de León, de Gallizia, de Seuilla, de Córdoba, de Murcia, et de jahén, en uno con la reyna donna Johanna, mi mugier, et con mios fijos, don Alfonso, don Frederic et don Enrric..." ("May it be known to all who see this letter that I, Don Alfonso, by the Grace of God King of Castile, Toledo, León, Galicia, Seville, Córdoba, Murcia, and Jaén, saw a letter of King Don Fernando, my father, made thus: May it be known to all who see this letter that

chael Scot, translator of Arabic texts at Frederick's court from 1227–35, calls his patron *Romanorum imperator* ("Emperor of the Romans") but makes no mention of his father or his role as son.¹⁰ Likewise, neither the father of Louis IX nor Louis's identity as a legitimate son and heir is ever mentioned in the writing ascribed to his name, even though his texts of "instructions" to his own children would have been a logical place to reiterate such filial genealogies.¹¹ In comparison to the royal rhetoric used by his close contemporaries, Alfonso's self-descriptive formulas in his prologues, albeit employing the repetition of stock phrases, stand out for their particular emphasis on Alfonso's filial relation to his parents.

One might also put these formulas in the context of the rhetoric of royal documents in Castile before and after Alfonso's reign. In a study of crown rhetoric in the first half of the thirteenth century, in the years preceding Alfonso's reign, Ana Rodríguez has shown that there is a notable increase in the emphasis on lineage and the transmission of royal power ("La preciosa transmisión" 308). This shift is palpable in the documents of Fernando III, who often emphasizes that his rulings were undertaken in the presence of or in consultation with his family members, including his sons, brother, and/or wife, and his counselors at the court. For example, in a privilege from April 1251, Fernando claims,

Oue mio conseio con Alfonso, mio fijo, et con Alfonso, mio hermano, et con don Diego López et con Don Nunno Gonzalez, et con don Rodrigo Alfonso, et con el obispo de Palençia, et con el obispo de Segouia et con el maestro de Calatraua et con el maestre de Uclés et el maestre del Temple et con el gran comendador del Hospital et con otros ricos omnes et caberos et omnes buenos de Castiella et de Leon. ("I took counsel with Alfonso, my son, and with Alfonso, my brother, and with don Diego López and with don Nuño González and with don Rodrigo Alfonso and with the Bishop of Palencia, and with the bishop of Segovia and with the Master of Calatrava and with the Master of Uclés and with other rich men and knights and good men of Castile and León." González, *Reinado y diplomas* III, doc 819).¹²

The list of names is interesting here in its variety as well as its lack of singular focus on Fernando's own parents. Alfonso, by contrast, rarely if ever mentions his children or other family members in his opening formulas, highlighting only his parents and especially his father.¹³

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I, Don Fernando, by the grace of God King of Castile, Toledo, León, Galicia, Seville, Córdoba, Murcia, and Jaén, together with Queen Doña Juana my wife, and with my sons, Alfonso, Fadrique, and Enrique...) Card dated 5 August 1252, Sevilla. (ACS, sec. IX, c. 4, doc 36/1. Printed in Ostos Salcedo and Sanz Fuentes, "Corona de Castilla" 249).

14. Similarly, in the prologue to the Castilian translation of the *Tesoro* of Brunetto Latini commissioned by Sancho, we read, “el muy noble don Sancho fijo del muy noble rey don Alfonso e nieto del santo rey don Ferrando el Vij rey de los que regnaron en Castilla e en León que ovieron assí nombre don Sancho, mandó trasladar...” (MS 13-3-8 of the Real Academia Sevillana de Buenas Letras; “The very noble Sancho, son of the very noble King Don Alfonso and grandson of the holy King Don Fernando, the seventh king of those ruling in Castile and León, who had the name Sancho, ordered to be translated...”). See also López Estrada 152. In the prologue to Sancho’s *Castigos y documentos para bien vivir*, we also read, “Este rrey don Sancho fue fijo del rrey don Alfonso que fizo las Siete Partidas, y nieto del rrey don Ferrando que ganó la muy noble çibdat de Seuilla” (MS BNE 6603, fol. 1; “This king Don Sancho was son of King Don Fernando who made the *Siete Partidas*, and grandson of King Don Fernando who won the noble city of Seville”).

15. The study of Alfonso’s many parallels and similarities to a particularly Almohad cultural model has been made by Fierro.

16. It is telling that Alfonso’s brother Fadrique, younger by three years, undertook the translation of a similar oriental frame-tale collection, *Sendebār* (*Syntipas*, or *The Seven Sages of Rome*), in 1253. It begins with similar language conflating sonship and translation: “El infante don Fadrique, fijo del muy noble aventurado e muy noble rey don Ferrando, [e] de la muy santa reina conplida de todo bien, doña Beatriz... plogo e tovo por bien que aqeste libro [fuese trasladado] de arávigo en castellano...” (63; “The Prince Fadrique, son of the very fortunate and very noble King Ferrando and of the very holy Queen Beatrice, paragon of all good qualities... was pleased and took as good that this book [be translated] from Arabic to Castilian”). For a study of the link between translation and royal power in Castile in this period, see Foz.

If Alfonso’s focus on his father stands out next to earlier royal prologue formulas, it sets a precedent for later documents, and thus we can see the subsequent repetition of this Alfonsine formula focused on the father in the documents of Castilian kings in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century. The late thirteenth-century *Lucidario*, compiled at the order of Alfonso’s son Sancho (who ruled after Alfonso as Sancho IV) begins,

Este libro es llamado *Luçidario* e fiçolo componer a muchos savios el noble e catholico rey don Sancho el seteno rey de los que fueron en Castilla e en León, fijo del muy noble rey don Alfonso e de la muy noble reyna Violante (Salamanca BS, MS 1958 fol. 1; “This book is called the *Lucidario* and the noble and Catholic King Don Sancho, the seventh king of those of Castile and León, son of the very noble King Alfonso and the very noble Queen Violante, ordered many wise men to put it together”).¹⁴

A similar formula appears in works by subsequent Castilian rulers including Fernando IV, Alfonso XI, Pedro I, and even Enrique II, despite his illegitimacy. Thus, in comparison with his immediate contemporaries ruling in France and Sicily, as well as with his own Castilian predecessors and successors, Alfonso’s focus on his father in his formulaic openings seems to constitute an important turning point in royal rhetoric. Viewed in this way, Alfonso’s formulaic prologues are significant as an index of his particular ideological focus – one that revolved unswervingly around the lodestar of his father, Fernando III.

Equally unique about Alfonso’s opening formulas is how they bring into close proximity the discussion of language and translation with his genealogical identity. Such juxtaposition of elements links the identity of the Alfonsine text as a new Castilian translation of an old original Arabic version with Alfonso’s identity as a ‘new’ heir of an ‘old’ lineage.¹⁵ Alfonso’s translations, undertaken within the first decade of his reign, show the significant symbolic overlapping between translation and filiation, and point to the way that Alfonso conflated his intellectual projects with his own status, asserted against his younger siblings, as Fernando’s son and heir.¹⁶ The mere name of his father is the foundation of the coherence of Alfonso’s identity, the means by which he inserts himself into his role as king. This entrance into the symbolic order of kingship is also tied directly to an assertion of the symbolic order of language – literally, the lan-

guage of the father, Castilian – and both kingship and sonship can be taken as twin elements of the symbolic order inscribed by Fernando’s name and its memorialization.

Sonship, Language, and Translation

This formulaic self-identification as “son of the noble King Fernando” also appears in the first surviving chapter of the *Setenario* (“Septenary”), an original (non-translated) work of uncertain dating that seems closely tied to Fernando’s own literary endeavors. The work, a sort of mirror for princes like *Kalila* but with a more legalistic focus, was – Alfonso claims – begun by Fernando who then asked Alfonso on his deathbed to finish it. Whether or not this claim is true – and some scholars have called it into question and preferred to see it as a literary embellishment rather than a verifiable fact – does not diminish its importance as a frame in which Alfonso wishes the work to be interpreted.¹⁷ As Joseph O’Callaghan has argued, “nowhere is the Learned King’s [Alfonso’s] admiration for his father stated more extensively than in the *Setenario*” (*Alfonso X* 42).

Although the opening folios have been lost, the text’s filial rhetoric is very much in line with a son-centered view of Alfonso’s writing, as he calls himself, “ffijo del muy noble e bienaventurado rrey don Ffernando e de la muy noble rreyna donna Beatrís” (7; “son of the very noble and fortunate King Don Fernando and of the very noble Queen Doña Beatrice”). Alfonso moreover repeatedly describes the text as a fulfillment of his father’s wishes and an expression of his obedience to his memory:

Onde nos, queriendo conplir el ssu mandamiento como de padre a obedecerle en todas las cosas, metiémosnos a ffazer esta obra mayormiente por dos rrazones: la una, porque entendimos que auya ende grant ssabor; la otra, porque nos lo mandó a ssu ffinamiento quando estaua de carrera para yr a paraíso (9; “Thus we, wanting to fulfill his commandment as a father and to obey him in all things, set ourselves the task of making this work, principally for two reasons: the first, because we knew there was great knowledge in it; and the second, because he ordered us to finish it when he was on the path toward paradise.”)

17. As he tells it, “onde, por todas estas e por todas otras muchas bondades que en él auya e por todos estos bienes que no ffizo, quisiemos conplir después de ssu fin esta obra que él auya començado en su vida e mandó a nos que la cunpliésemos” (10; “Thus for all these and many other good qualities that he had and for all of the good things he did for us, we set out after his death to finish this work, which he had begun and which he ordered us to finish”). Based on this passage, scholars have long assumed that the work came from early in Alfonso’s reign. However, this assumption has been called into question by Jerry Craddock, who demonstrated that portions of the work overlap with the late recension of parts of the *Siete Partidas*, concluding that the text was more likely produced in the last decade of Alfonso’s reign rather than the first. George Martin (“Alphonse X” and “De nuevo”), accepting Craddock’s theory, has read the text in light of dynastic politics late in Alfonso’s reign, taking the deathbed scene cited above as a legitimizing construction embellished by Alfonso. Gómez Redondo (1:304–30), on the other hand, supports the traditional thesis of the work’s early date, and his reading has been supported by Salvador Martínez (300).

While the second portion of the text describes some basic themes of canon law including the nature of faith and heresy and a description of the first four of the seven sacraments of the Church (baptism, confirmation, penance, and communion), Alfonso devotes much of the early part of the work to an *encomium* of the deceased Fernando III. This identification of his authorship exemplifies the structuring of the self's identity according to the father's law, symbolized after his death by his name. By saying that the work is meant "to fulfill [Fernando's] commandment as a father and to obey him in all things," Alfonso logically combines his role as author and patron with his identity as Fernando's son.

Both parts of the work organize all information into groups of seven, which is taken as a mystical organizing principle of the universe itself. The universal septenary logic that underlies all things is similarly manifest in Fernando's life and reign, and thus just as there are seven virtues, seven sacraments, seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, seven deadly sins, and, we are told, seven names of God in Hebrew, so there the seven letters used to write Fernando's name ("law 2"), seven virtues to Fernando's character ("law 5"), seven habits that he regularly followed ("law 7"), and seven ways that God favored Fernando's reign ("law 9"). This seven-part logic also explains the nature of Fernando's and Alfonso's relationship as father and son, and Alfonso names seven "bienes que ffizo el rrey don Fernando al rrey don Alffonso su ffijo" ("law 4," p. 10; "good things that King Fernando did to his son King Alfonso"). Such paternal kindness includes actions such as "en faziéndonos omne" ("making us as a man"), "amándonos" ("loving us"), "ffaziéndonos mucho bien" ("doing much good to us"), and "que nos fizo en noble logar e en mugier de grant lineaie" (10; "that he made us in a noble state and through a woman of great lineage").¹⁸ By counting both Fernando's virtues as a king and as a father among his abundant lists of seven, Alfonso presents his own identity as a son as part of the perpetual and universal structure of the universe, a natural state in which his own kingship and identity as author and patron of translation continue even after Fernando's death.

18. Such language sounds strikingly familiar to his description of the areas of the *Trivium* – grammar, logic, and rhetoric – according to the structure of the Trinity. On this language, see the discussion below.

Alfonso's praise of Fernando in the *Setenario* is well known in Alfonsine scholarship, but less attention has been paid by scholars to the role of language in the text. Although the *Setenario* is not a translation but an original work, it does repeatedly discuss the questions of language and translation and, more importantly, links such topics to Alfonso's identity as 'Fernando's son' in a way comparable to that

already noted in Alfonso's early scientific and didactic works. The beginning of the work in the surviving manuscripts takes up in mid-stream a discussion of the meaning of the letters of the name *AL-FA-ET-O*, a Castilian rendering of the Greek letters *Alpha* and *Omega*, taken in Christianity (following *Revelation 22:13*) as an expression of the divine name of Jesus. The text explains the important linguistic correspondence between the letters of the name and the virtues they express, all organized in groups of seven. All of the letters of *AL-FA-ET-O* are taken to express names or aspects of God in Hebrew or Latin (A and L are missing, but the remaining letters symbolize: *Factor*, "maker," *Agnus*, "lamb," *El*, "God," *Theos*, "God," *Omnipotens*, "Omnipotent," etc.) (4-6). Alfonso then applies this methodology of reading the meaning of mystical letters to the letters of his and his father's names, reiterating his status as Fernando's son and specifying that he is also the legitimate heir.

Et por ende nos don Alffonso, ffigo del muy noble e bienauenturado rrey don Ffernando e de la muy noble rreyna donna Beatrís; e ssennor heredero, primeramente por la merçed de Dios, e después por derecho lineaie, de que heredamos los rregnos de Castiella ... (7; "son of the very noble and fortunate King Don Fernando and of the very noble Queen Doña Beatrice, and noble heir, primarily by the mercy of God and further by direct lineage from which we inherited the kingdoms of Castile...").

His identity as Fernando's son is also the basis of his genealogical legitimacy and the justification of his inheritance of the crown. Here, identity as son, heir, and king are conflated, stressing that Alfonso sees his kingdom, along with his book, not as the work of his foundation but as the fruit of his status as son and heir.

Such a conjunction is divinely ordained, and Alfonso notes about his own name that

Dios por la ssu merçet quiso que sse començasse en A e sse ffeneçiesse en O, en que ouyesse ssiete letras, ssegunt el lenguaie de Espanna, a ssemiança del ssu nonbre. Por estas ssiete letras enbió ssobre nos los ssiete dones del Spíritu Ssanto (7; "God in his mercy wanted that it begin in A and end in O, that it have in it seven letters according to the language of Spain, like His name. By these seven letters He sent the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit onto us").

Not only is divine favor of Alfonso and his reign built into the letters of his name, but also this mystical meaning is particularly embodied in his name as it is written “according to the language of Spain.” This detail seems all the more significant in light of Alfonso’s cultural projects, making translation to Castilian and not Arabic, Latin, or Hebrew a key to his identity as God’s chosen vicar, the rightful heir of Fernando’s legacy.

It is thus not surprising that Alfonso links the reading of the letters of his own name with those of his father. Alfonso reiterates his filial identity by stressing that

este libro ... nos començamos por mandado del rrey don Ffer-
nando, que ffué nuestro padre naturalmiente e nuestro
sennor, en cuyo nonbre, ssegunt el lenguaie de Espanna, ha
ssiete letras(8; “We began this book by order of King Fernan-
do, our Lord and biological father, in whose name, according
to the language of Spain, there are seven letters”).

Alfonso links his own claim to the throne as legitimate (“naturalmiente”) son of Fernando, and presents the elaboration of the text as a fulfillment of his father’s wishes. Most importantly, he grounds his identity as dutiful son and legitimate heir in the divine symbolism of his name in Castilian. The seven letters (not counting the repeated “n”) used to write Fernando’s name each stand for a divine or political virtue or characteristic (*Fe*, “faith,” *Entendimiento para conocer Dios*, “understanding in order to know God,” *Recio* [...] *para quebrantar los enemigos de la Ffe*, “fierce [...] in destroying enemies of the faith,” *Nobleza*, “nobility,” *Amigo de Dios*, “friend of God,” *Derechurero*, “upright,” *Onrrado de Dios*, “honored by God”).¹⁹ In explicating his father’s name, Alfonso also declares his intention to “obey him in all things,” including his pursuit of “great learning” (“grant sabor”), thus making sonship, authorship, and translation into Romance three aspects of his divine mandate as king.

The language of filial piety is used later in the work in exploring the conjunction of intellectual and spiritual pursuits. In naming the seven liberal arts of the *Trivium* and *Quadrivium* – standard branches of learning in medieval education – Alfonso shows how the *Trivium* mirrors the structure of the divine Trinity, which is itself based on a divine father-son relationship of sorts.

Et la gramática, que es de palabra, sse entiende por el Padre;
porque por el poder del su vierbo tan solamiente ffueron

19. Taking the father as a symbol of the law itself, exegesis of the father’s name might be understood both as a kind of legislative action and an act of obeisance to his intellectual and political authority.

ffechas todas las cosas. La lógica departe la mentira de la verdat, et entiéndesse por el Ffijo; que él nos mostró el Padre uerdaderamente e por él lo connosçiemos, e sacónos de yerro e de mentira (31; “Grammar, which is language, is understood to be the Father, because through His words alone all things were made. Logic separates lies from truth, and it is understood to be the Son, for He showed us the Father truly, whom we know through Him, and He took us from error and lies”).

On the surface, this seems like standard Trinitarian theology built on *John* 1:1 (“The Word was with God and the Word was God”), associating God the Father with the creating Word and the Son with the means to understand that Word. This Trinitarian reading of the trivium, moreover, follows Trinitarian theories of the Liberal Arts already elaborated in the twelfth century, such as that of Rupert of Deutz and others.²⁰ In Alfonso’s view, God the father shows Himself to us in the Son, “mostrándonos ciertamente en cuál manera nos ssaluásemos, e ganando ssu amor” (31; “showing us truly how we are to be saved and earning his [the Father’s] love”). This Trinitarian language takes on another significance when read in the light of Alfonso’s earlier statements about father-son relations and language.

Such a reading is justified, not only because the discussion of the Trinity repeats language from Alfonso’s discussion of Fernando, but also because we have already been told about the divine significance of both Fernando’s and Alfonso’s names. Just as Fernando’s Castilian name embodies a divine sevenfold identity including religious characteristics such as faith and friendship with God and fierceness in opposing God’s enemies, so God the father embodies language itself, creating all things by his Word. The comparison between God and Fernando is direct when Alfonso lists, as the first of the seven gifts that he received from his father, that “nos fizo omne, ca quiso Dios que él fuese nuestro padre e por él viniésemos al mundo” (10; “He made us man, for God wanted that he [Fernando] be our father and that we come into the world through him”). Similarly Alfonso received the gifts of the Holy Spirit through his Castilian name, which is a parallel to Jesus’s name as *Alfa et o*. Alfonso’s use of Castilian as the language of his translation and writing projects is similarly parallel to the way Jesus the Son reflects and broadcasts the will of God the Father. Alfonso connects will, understanding, and language through the image of the voice. “Ca la uoluntad embía la boz; e la boz embía la letra; la letra, la ssíllaba; et la ssíllaba, la parte; e la parte, el

20. On Rupert’s Trinitarian view of the Liberal Arts in his *De Sancta Trinitate et operibus eius* (ca. 1112–16), see Copeland and Sluiter 40 and 309–405.

dicho; e el dicho, la rrazón” (30; “For the will sends forth the voice; and the voice sends forth the letter; and the letter [sends] the syllable; and the syllable, the part of speech; and the part of speech, the statement; and the statement [sends forth] reason”).

These elements of language, which Alfonso lists in his historiographical writing as the origins of writing and written memory, are parallel in Alfonso’s description of the Trinity, making explicit the comparison between Alfonso’s relation with Fernando and Jesus’s relation with God the Father.²¹ Alfonso claims that Jesus is the “voice” by which his Father’s will can be heard: “la boz del Padre [...] era ssu fijo mucho amado” (35; “the voice of the father [...] was his much beloved son”). Just as the voice of the Father, in this Trinitarian model, is taken literally as a manifestation of the Son and as an expression of the Father’s divine will, Alfonso implies he himself constitutes a fulfillment and embodiment of Fernando’s will as expressed on his deathbed. It is thus not surprising that when Alfonso claims that Fernando ordered him to finish the *Setenario*, he also affirms that “entendimos conplidamiente cuál era ssu uoluntad” (9; “We understood completely what his will was”).

21. In *Estoria de España*, Alfonso begins by discussing the origins of language and writing. He notes that the origins of writing lie in the desire to pass on the wisdom of the voice from one generation to the next. In seeking out a way to avoid oblivion, “fallaron las figuras de las letras et ayuntando las fizieron dellas sillabas et de sillabas ayuntadas fizieron dellas partes. E ayuntando otrosi las partes fizieron razon et por la razon que uiniessen a entender los saberes [...] et saber tan bien contar lo que fuera en los tiempos dantes” (Alfonso X, *Primera crónica general* 1:3a; “They discovered the shapes of letters and, joining them, they made syllables and with syllables joined they made parts of speech. And joining the parts of speech they made arguments and with arguments they came to understand knowledge [...] and know also how to tell what happened in past times”).

22. On Alfonso’s imperial ambitions, the so-called *fecho del imperio*, see Valdeón Baroque; Rodríguez López, “Rico fincas”; and González-Casanovas 23–63. On Alfonso’s understanding and portrayal of Fernando III as part of his imperial ambitions, see especially 59–63. For the wider context of Alfonso’s ambitions, see Linehan, *History and Historians*, 413–506; and Fraker 155–76.

Translation and *Translatio*: Memorializing Fernando in Word and Image

The link between translation and sonship is not limited to Alfonso’s translation projects, but is also part of his larger project of self-representation as king of Castile and its newly conquered kingdoms, as well as legitimate heir to the title of Holy Roman Emperor by virtue of being the son of Beatrice of Swabia, who was granddaughter of Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa (and, as noted, first cousin to Emperor Frederick II of Sicily). After Holy Roman Emperor William of Holland died in 1256, Alfonso and Richard of Cornwall were both elected a few months apart in 1257, and both failed to gain papal approval from subsequent popes (Alexander IV, Urban IV, Clement IV, Gregory X) over the subsequent two decades (O’Callaghan, *The Learned King* 201).²² Anthony Cárdenas has argued that Alfonso’s intellectual projects during this period functioned as a logical attempt to connect an image of *translatio studii* with an imperial *translatio imperii* in an effort to gain support for his imperial ambitions: “For Alfonso not to have connected a *translatio studii* to a *translatio potestatis* – learning and power yoked both from his ancestors to him and

especially a *translatio* from him to his progeny – would have been impractical if not foolhardy” (106). Alfonso used his texts to present himself as a legitimate heir of the estates of both his father and mother – making him, through his father, the legitimate ruler of the unified Castile and León as well as the newly conquered lands of al-Andalus and, through his mother, the heir to the title of Holy Roman Emperor. In making this connection, *translatio imperii* – the transfer of power to Alfonso’s empire by virtue of its inheritance of past imperial power (Roman and Islamic) – was justified through translation, understood simultaneously as a linguistic act and a transfer of cultural capital and goods.

One striking example of the conjunction of filial piety, linguistic translation, cultural inheritance, and political *translatio* is found in canticle 292 of Alfonso’s extensive corpus of Galician-Portuguese Marian devotional songs, the *Cantigas de Santa María* (CSM), one of a few items written or commissioned by Alfonso (along with CSM 122 and 221) describing a miracle that involves his father Fernando.²³ CSM 292 tells of a miracle that happened when Alfonso constructed a new tomb for his parents in the cathedral of Seville, which had been converted from a mosque after the conquest of the city by Fernando in 1248. The lyrics of this song, as well as the visual representation of its plot in the Florentine manuscript (Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Banco Rari 20, 10va-11vb; see Plate 1), represent Alfonso in the role of a pious and dutiful son, glorifying his father’s memory. This self-representation as a son stands out because in the *Cantigas* Alfonso never represents himself in any similar way as a father or uses any of his songs to present his relationship with his eleven legitimate and three illegitimate children.²⁴ By contrast, Alfonso focuses on his decision to honor his parents by constructing their tomb.

Ond’ avêo que séu fillo Rei Don Alfonso, fazer
 fez mui rica sepultura que costou muy grand’ aver,
 feita en feitura dele, polo óssos i meter
 se o achassen desfeito; mas tornou-xo-lle en al ...
 Ca o achou tod’ inteiro e a ssa madre
 Esto [foi] quando o corpo da sa madre fez viir
 de Burgos pera Sevilla, que jaz cabo d’Alquivir,
 e en ricos mōimentos os fez ambos sepelir,
 obrados muy ricamente cada un a séu sinal.
 (Alfonso X, *Cantigas* 3:79; “Wherefore it happened that his
 son, King Don Alfonso, had a very rich sepulchre construct-

23. These and related songs have been considered by Joseph O’Callaghan in his study of the *Cantigas* in a chapter on “filial piety and dynastic history” (*Alfonso X* 36–58). The most extensive consideration of Alfonso’s construction of his father’s image in writing and memorialization is Fernández Fernández, “Muy noble,” which also considers CSM 292 (151–61). See also Linehan, *History and Historians*, 449–52.

24. While the role of Alfonso’s personal hand in the composition of this song is not certain, we may assume that the importance of the theme demanded that Alfonso know of and oversee its content. Writing about the *Cantigas*, Joseph Snow has commented that the varied content of the songs “may prove to contain important keys – even at this remove of time – to the kind of person [Alfonso] was or, better yet, the kind of person he wanted to be” (“Alfonso as Troubadour” 124). Given Fernando’s preponderance in Alfonso’s vision of history, it is fair to say that much of what Alfonso wished to be was an imitation of his father, and it is logical to characterize Alfonsine cultural production – both written and material – as a recurrent encomium of Fernando III. In this reading, CSM must be understood as a personal work of the king, if not in form then undoubtedly in content.

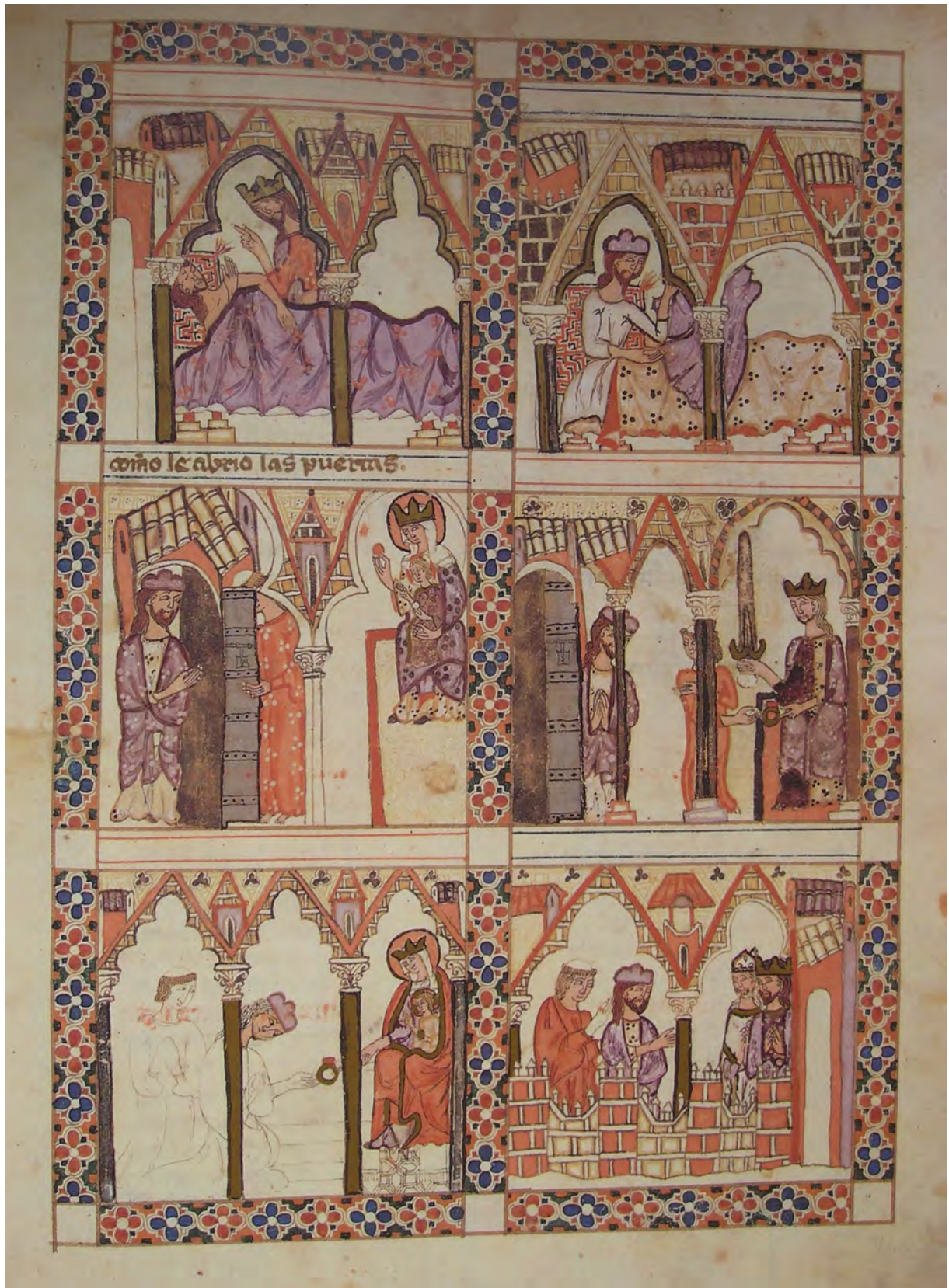


Plate 1: Master Jorge and the King's rin (CSM 292). Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Banco Rari 20, 12r.

ed which cost great wealth. It was made in his father's likeness to hold his bones, if he should be found decomposed. However it turned out not to be the case, for he found him and his mother completely uncorrupted... This miracle took place when he had the body of his mother brought from Burgos to Seville, which lies near the River Guadalquivir. He had them both entombed in rich sepulchres, beautifully carved, in their respective likenesses." Alfonso X, *Songs* 352–53).

Alfonso decided to honor his father's pious and noble deeds by erecting a statue of him to grace the royal tomb. In one hand, his father held "ssa espada ... con que deu colbe a Mafomete mortal" (*Cantigas* 3:79; *Songs* 353; his sword with which he had dealt a fatal blow to Muḥammad) and on the other hand, his finger bore a "u anel d'ouero con pedra mui fremosa" ("a ring of gold with a very beautiful stone"). A short time after the monument was completed, King Fernando appeared in a dream to the man who fashioned the statue and ring, an artisan named Jorge, and told him to replace his image with a statue of the Virgin, and to put the ring on her finger.²⁵ Jorge hastened to the cathedral of Seville, where he and the sacristan found to their astonishment that the ring he had fashioned was already on a statue of the Virgin instead of the statue of Fernando where it had been. When King Alfonso and the archbishop heard the story, they praised king Fernando's memory together.

The focus of the song is on memorialization – Alfonso's creation of a monument to honor his father's deeds. This memorialization is made possible by putting the material fruits of Fernando's deeds on display, and the location of the miracle of CSM 292 in Seville underscores the importance of conquest and spoliation of conquered cultural capital. The choice of Seville is significant, not only because Fernando died there, but also because it was the last city conquered by Fernando from the Muslims. It was a city "que Mafomete perdeu/ per este Rey Don Ffernando, que é cidade cabdal" (Alfonso X, *Cantigas* 3:78; *Songs* 352; "a capital which Muḥammad lost/ because of this King Don Fernando"). This city "that Muḥammad lost" symbolizes a loss that brought with it riches, both monetary and cultural, such as that represented in the jeweled ring put on Fernando's finger, later transferred to the Virgin. Fernando's piety is represented as a form of loyalty to the Virgin, and thus he is rewarded with victory because, as the refrain of the poem reiterates, "Muto demóstra a Virgen, a Sennor esperital,/ sa lealdad' a aquele que acha sempre leal"

25. "Con que vin ben des Toledo; e logo cras manarnan/ di a meu fillo que ponna esta omagen de San/ ta Maria u a ma está [...] e que lle den o anel,/ ca dela tiv' eu o reyno e de seu Fillo mui bel,/ e sōo seu quitamente...." (l. 87–96, Alfonso X, *Cantigas*, ed. Mettmann 3:79–80; Come quickly from Toledo, and tomorrow tell my son to put the image of Holy Mary where mine is [...] and give her the ring, because I held my kingdom from her and from her beautiful son; and I am hers entirely...).

(*Cantigas* 3:79; *Songs* 352; “The Virgin, Spiritual Lady, clearly reveals Her loyalty to the one She finds ever loyal”).

The loyalty and piety for which Fernando is rewarded continue after his death in his appearance in the dream of Jorge in order to request that his statue be moved and modified to pay homage to the Virgin (Fernández Fernández, “Muy noble” 158). The dream of the tomb in *CSM* 292 thus represents an inversion of the scenario presented in the *Setenario*. In the latter, Alfonso claims to be finishing a project begun by Fernando after his death. In the former, Alfonso claims Fernando has come back to finish the work of his tomb that his son did not complete correctly, and the fact that the work is miraculously already done by the time Jorge arrives at the cathedral implies that the Virgin supports and anticipates Fernando’s own wishes. In both texts, Alfonso presents his works – both literary and monumental – as those of a son fulfilling Fernando’s legacy. To read Alfonso’s works exclusively through a teleological, modern lens as foundational or innovative rather than in terms of Alfonso’s own goals is to risk misconstruing the significance of the Alfonsine legacy in its own local and contemporary context.

The story of *CSM* 292 is also a memorialization of the *spolia* brought by Fernando into the Castilian kingdom, constituting a *translatio* both of political power and also of real wealth, symbolized by the golden ring at the center of the miracle story. As in his prologues and in the *Setenario*, Alfonso expresses his filial piety to his parents through images of translation and *translatio*, underscoring his own legitimacy as heir of that transferred wealth. Yet this translation is not only figurative or material, but is also linguistic, being literally an act of translation on Alfonso’s part. The story of *CSM* 292 dramatizes the real history of Alfonso’s construction of his parents’ royal tombs in 1279.²⁶ Originally located within an enclosed chapel in the old Cathedral of Seville, which had been the Almo-

had mosque before it was converted after the conquest of 1248, the tomb was dismantled and rebuilt in the sixteenth century upon the construction of the new royal chapel that stands at the northeast end of the new gothic cathedral, near the Giralda bell tower (converted from the mosque’s minaret). The largely rebuilt baroque monument today contains the actual tomb of Fernando (see Plate 2), which includes a front panel that is occasionally lowered to display, within a glass coffin, the mummified

26. The reference to the building of the tombs can be found in González Jiménez, *Diplomatario* 473–74, no. 450. See the discussion and documentation in O’Callaghan, *Alfonso X*, 50n38; and Nickson 172–73.

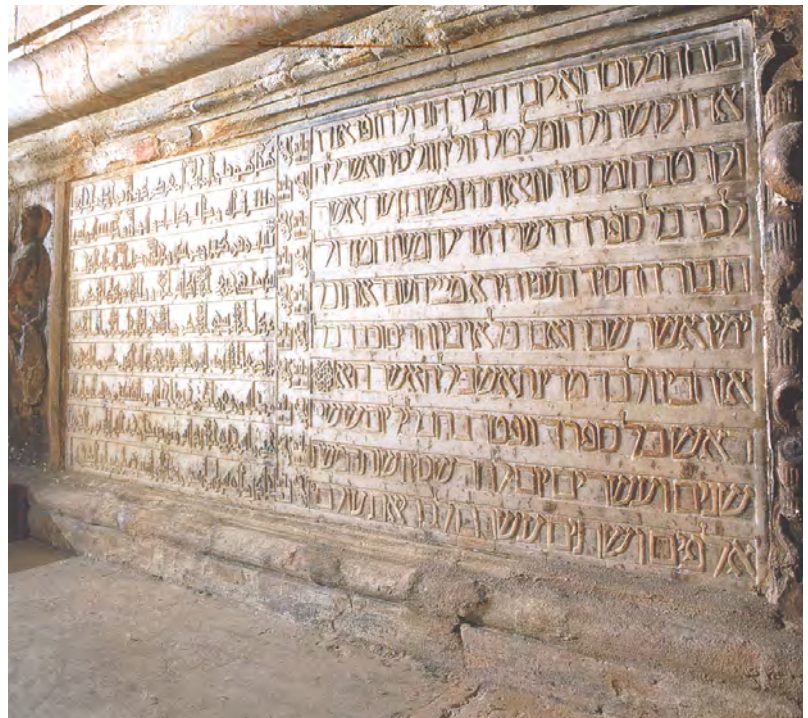
Plate 2: Fernando III’s mummified body on display in the Royal Chapel, Cathedral of Seville.



27. For a recent overview of the inscriptions on the tomb, including photos and translations, as well as current bibliography on the monument, see Nickson; and Dodds et al. 196–202.

fied body of Fernando himself (the incorruptibility of Fernando's and Beatrice's bodies is mentioned in the song as well). This structure stands atop a stone base, into which have been incorporated panels from the original Alfonsine monument, including, between symbols of the crowns of Castile and León, four well-known epitaph inscriptions in Hebrew and Arabic (on the back side) and Castilian and Latin (on the front), respectively. Each epitaph is very similar but not identical in meaning to the others.²⁷ Reading the inscriptions on the base, we can hear echoes of Alfonso's own prologues identifying him as the king "of Toledo, of León, of Galicia, of Sevilla, of Córdoba, of Murcia, and of Jaén," the warrior who "conquered all of España" (or "Hispania" or "al-Andalus" or "Sefarad," as it is written in the various inscriptions) (Nickson 180; See Plate 3). The epitaphs use translation to emphasize the universality of Fernando's kingship, a multilingual legacy that Alfonso lays claim to by building the monument and then including an ekphrastic representation of it as the site of a Marian miracle in *CSM* 292. As Laura Fernández has argued, Fernando's royal tomb "should not only be understood as a funerary scene that served to commemorate the memory of the deceased king

Plate 3: The multi-lingual inscriptions on the base of Fernando III's tomb. Royal Chapel, Cathedral of Seville.



28. "Dicha capilla no solo debía ser entendida como escenario funerario que sirviera para conmemorar la memoria del rey difunto y su esposa, sino como escenario triunfal de la monarquía castellano-leonesa."

and his wife, but also as a scene of the triumph of the Castilian-Leonese monarchy" ("Muy noble" 143–44; my translation).²⁸

This emphasis on translation-as-*translatio* is further hinted at when Fernando, speaking in the dream of the ring maker Jorge, tells him to give the ring “en offreçon/ aa omagen da Virgen que ten vestido cendal,/ con que vin ben des Toledo” (Alfonso X, *Cantigas* 3:79; *Songs* 353; “In offering to the statue of the Virgin which has a silken robe which I brought all the way from Toledo”). This movement of wealth and spiritual patrimony from Toledo to Seville mirrors the historical movement of the Castilian request of Muslim lands, from the taking of Toledo in 1085 by Alfonso VI to the conquest of Seville by Fernando III in 1248. Alfonso’s own translation projects in the thirteenth century were, as Márquez Villanueva has argued, modeled on those of Toledo of the previous century. “The prestige of [Toledo’s] Arabic learning was accepted as a natural fact [...] The Learned King [Alfonso]’s efforts must be understood as an attempt to convert that ‘Toledan’ ideal [...] into a cultural politics for his kingdoms” (77; my translation).²⁹ It is significant in this context that the character of Fernando III in *CSM* 292 orders Jorge to replace his own statue – a monument to his military conquests of Seville – with that of the Virgin “which I brought all the way from Toledo” – a monument to the cultural riches that developed after the conquest of that Muslim city in 1085. The transfer of spiritual goods from Toledo to Seville is likewise a symbolic transfer of cultural riches acquired through translation from Arabic, making the replacement of the statue an act of both real translation as well as cultural and political *translatio*. This transfer of riches, which David Wacks has recently named, in his study of the Castilian chivalric novel *Libro del Caballero Zifar*, as the transfer of “symbolic capital” (119), is as much as movement of things as it is of prestige, and the function of the representation of the father’s tomb in *CSM* 292 is “to bring together under a single rubric the traffic in relics and traffic in Andalus learning” (136). The narrative unfolding of *CSM* 292 enacts Alfonso’s own symbolic transformation of the political legacy of his father’s military conquests into a cultural legacy of his own design.

As Nicholas Paul has argued about family memory among noble crusading families of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the tomb of the hero was the center of a claim to power and the ongoing rights of inherited legacy, a “site around which rights of lordship and spiritual commitment were ritually renegotiated and the power and identity of a family was restated.” Similarly, the presence of the royal or aristocratic body “was the precious keystone supporting the weight of the noble house” (149). Paul’s observations are appropriate to de-

29. “El prestigio de su saber árabe era aceptado como un hecho natural y nada polémico en todas partes [...] los esfuerzos del rey Sabio han de entenderse como un intento de convertir dicho ideal ‘toledano’ [...] en una política cultural para sus reinos.”

scribe how Alfonso's construction of his parents' royal tomb not only presented their bodies in a similar way, but also prepared a space in which he too would be inserted as their son. Alfonso's narrativization of this act in CSM 292 memorializes his own act of tomb building as much as it preserves his parents' memory, and the song uses this fictive space to compare Alfonso to his father. Just as his father's military conquests were marked with the placing of a commemorative statue of the Virgin – as the song boasts, “quand' algũa cidade | de mouros ía gãar, sa omagen na mezquita | pōía eno portal” (“When [Fernando] conquered a city from the Moors, he placed Her statue in the portico of the mosque”) – so Alfonso's act of memorializing his parents was marked with the placing of a statue of his own father – “el Rei apóst' e mui ben a omagen de séu padre” (*Cantigas* 3:79; *Songs* 352–53; “The king had erected the dignified statue of his father”). We might read Alfonso's vision of his father returning in Jorge's dream to ‘correct’ his son's gesture – insisting that the Virgin's statue, not his own, be placed – as a way of reaffirming the link between the two memorial gestures in the poem. Such correcting was one of Fernando's “gifts” to Alfonso that were listed in the *Setenario* – not only “creating us” and “loving us” but also “castigándonos” (“teaching/disciplining us”), and “perdonándonos quando algunos yerros ffazíemos contra él o contra otre” (*Setenario* 10; “forgiving us when we committed errors against him or another”).

Fernando's tomb is a site celebrating the victory of the Christian conquest of Islamic civilization, and the representation of the act of memorialization of that victory in CSM 292 is Alfonso's deliberate gesture of inserting himself into that conquest as its son and heir. Alfonso's choice to memorialize his father through an act of translation in a way comparable to his prologues and other writing about his father conflates sonship, translation, and kingship as parts of a single polyvalent performance of his own royal identity as legitimate heir. The representation of this act of memorialization in CSM 292 as a scene of political *translatio* and also as a scene of a Marian miracle signaling divine favor points to the complex nature of this political rhetoric.

Conclusion: From Father to Son

The first of Alfonso's two great works of historiography, the *Estoria de España* (“History of Spain”), survives in a number of versions,

30. For an overview of the *Estoria de España*, see the introduction by Ayerbe-Chaux. The so-called ‘primitive redaction’ (also called ‘versión vulgar’ and ‘versión regia’) was drafted before 1270; a second post-1274 version made some changes to this; the so-called ‘critical version’ was elaborated at the end of Alfonso’s life, between 1282 and Alfonso’s death in 1284; and a fourth version, sometimes called the ‘rhetorically expanded version,’ was developed during the reign of Sancho IV. The versions of the *Estoria* have been studied in depth. For the theories of the different versions, see Catalan; and Fernández-Ordóñez 205–220. On the evolution of Alfonsine rhetoric in the royal chronicles, see Funes, “Dos versiones”; For a brief overview of the state of studies on Castilian historiography, see Ward.

Plate 4: *Estoria de España* (Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Y-I-2, 1v). Alfonso X presents his heir with the royal copy of the *Estoria*.
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31. Some scholars such as Menéndez Pidal have seen the son as Fernando, given the early date of the manuscript (Fernández Fernández, “Transmisión del saber” 200–02). But others, such as Fernández Fernández, have argued that this folio was inserted into the manuscript and better reflects artistic elements of Alfonso’s later manuscripts, thus concluding that it must be Sancho. A summary of this debate can be found in Fernández Fernández, “Transmisión del saber,” 200–02. On the book as a symbol of royal power, see Ruiz García. On the role of the *Estoria* in proffering an imperial ideology for the king, see Funes, “La crónica”; and Fraker 132–69.

some made during the king’s lifetime and an expanded version made by his son King Sancho IV (reg. 1284–95) after his death in 1284.³⁰ In the beginning of the manuscript of the early redaction (Madrid, El



Escorial, MS Y-I-2, also known as “E1,” fol 1v), there appears an image of King Alfonso seated in his court, holding a sword in one hand and handing a book to a kneeling son with the other. See Plate 4. While it is not clear which son this is – his firstborn son, Fernando de la Cerda, who died in battle in 1275, or his second son, Sancho IV – the scene was certainly from Alfonso’s lifetime, and can therefore be taken as a clear representation of Alfonso in the role of father to his children rather than son to Fernando III.³¹ As in his depictions of his own father, the emphasis is on father-son relations as a conduit of the transmission of knowledge and royal power.

Viewing this image of the transfer of power and knowledge from father to son, it is poignant to consider that Alfonso, after losing his first-born son, would end his life betrayed by his second. In 1282, Sancho rallied his mother, his brothers, as well as Alfonso’s own brother, Prince Manuel, all to support him in claiming the crown against Alfonso’s wishes. Two years later, Alfonso, isolated and abandoned in Seville by all of his family except for his illegitimate daughter, Be-

32. Alfonso even specified in his final will that if here were buried in Seville with his parents, as he ended up, “que fagan de tal manera, que la nuestra cabeça tengamos a los pies damos a dos” (González Jiménez, *Diplomatario* 558–59, no. 521; “that they make it in such a way that our head be at the feet of both of them”).

atrice, would die without reconciling with Sancho, whom he would disinherit in his final will. Nevertheless, Sancho was chosen as king and seized the crown and the inheritance left by Alfonso to his younger sons (O’Callaghan, *A History* 380–81). Alfonso would be buried in the cathedral in Seville alongside the tombs of his parents, affirming in death his role more as son than father.³² The old saw of Alfonso being a failure at politics and a success at learning might be modified to call him instead a failure at fatherhood and a success at sonship.

Indeed, Alfonso would fittingly be remembered by his own family more for his legacy as a son than as a father. In the fourteenth-century *Crónica particular de San Fernando*, appended to a later copy of the *Estoria de España* (in the El Escorial manuscript, MS X-I-4), there appears a dramatization of Fernando III’s death, including a curious scene in which Fernando bequeaths to Alfonso his kingdom. Although written well after Alfonso’s own death, the imagined (or embellished) scene offers a representation of the bequest from father to son that so much preoccupied Alfonso during his lifetime. Here a dying Fernando is represented as telling Alfonso:

Fijo rico fincas de tierra et de muchos buenos vasallos mas que Rey que en la cristiandad sea. Punna en fazer bien et ser bueno ca bien as con que. Et dixol mas sennor te dexo de toda la tierra dela mar aca quelos moros del Rey Rodrigo de espanna ganado ouieron. Et en tu sennorio finca toda la una conquerida et la otra tributada. Sy la en este estado en que tela yo dexo la sopieres guardar eres tan buen Rey como yo; et sy ganares por ti mas, eres mejor que yo; et si desto menguas, non eres tan bueno como yo. (fol. 358v, Alfonso, *Primera crónica general*, ch. 1132; 2:772–73; “Son, you have been left rich in lands and many good vassals, more than any king in Christendom; Strive to do well and to be good, for you have what [you need]. And he also said: Sir, I leave you with all the land from the sea up to here that the moors had won from King Rodrigo of Spain. All lies in your command, the one part conquered and other other part, under tribute to you. If you know how to keep what I give you in this state, you will be as good a king as I am; if you win more for yourself, you will be better than I am; and if you lose part of this, you will not be as good as I am.”)

33. Despite this fact, it has been taken by numerous critics as a partly faithful representation of events. Salvador Martínez has argued that these words would haunt Alfonso like a “nightmare” that would “drive” Alfonso to make some of the poor political decisions for which he is so much criticized. “Estas palabras de su padre se grabarán en la conciencia de Alfonso como una pesadilla que lo empujará, en determinados momentos, a aventuras políticas y militares con consecuencias desastrosas” (13; “These words of his father would be burned into Alfonso’s conscience like a nightmare that would push him, in certain moments, to political and military adventures with disastrous consequences”). For an extended reading of this passage as a reflection of Alfonsine royal ideology, see Rodríguez López, “Rico fincas.”

Taking this as a product of the fourteenth century, we might see in this scene a chronicler’s affirmation of Sancho’s claim to inheritance by connecting his reign and legacy with those of his grandfather Fernando III rather than with his father. Or we might instead see a tacit criticism of Alfonso’s failure to live up to Fernando’s military legacy or his inability to “keep what [Fernando] g[a]ve you” in the face of Sancho’s later challenge to his rule. In any case, although this scene is undoubtedly a poetic invention of a royal chronicler,³³ it is not without importance in signaling how Alfonso was remembered and represented by posterity in the decades after his reign: as one who regularly sought to present himself as a son rather than a father.

By picturing himself as one who received land, knowledge, and title from Fernando, Alfonso had repeatedly characterized his role as patron of translation and author of original works in Castilian as intimately dependent on continuing the legacy bequeathed to him through his family. For this reason, as well as because of standard medieval notions of authorship and authority, Alfonso would have shunned any notion of himself as a founder or initiator of his projects – a thoroughly modern concern – instead choosing to see himself as a point of transmission of knowledge and power from past to present. Highlighting such a connection – all-consuming to him, and equally evident to his contemporaries – allows us to appreciate the value of approaching the Alfonsine corpus not, or not primarily, through the metaphor of fatherhood – of foundation, initiation, or innovation – but first and foremost through the metaphor of sonship – of reception, inheritance, and continuity with past traditions of learning and kingship. The modern focus on Alfonso as a founder of all things Castilian and a forerunner of the Renaissance and the arrival of Humanism risks misconstruing the intellectual, religious, and genealogical aspects of Alfonso’s cultural projects in the service of modern political and historiographical narratives. Further work on Alfonso’s self-representation in its own context and on its own terms could illuminate how it resonates not only through Alfonso’s own historiographical and legal works, but also through the writings of his son Sancho, as well as Castilian writing from the fourteenth century such as the *Libro del Caballero Zifar* and the writing of Alfonso’s nephew, Juan Manuel. Examining such continuity reveals the curious irony that in his memorialization of his father and his representation of himself in the terms of sonship, reception, and continuity, Alfonso was the initiator of a mode of the representation of authorship that persisted in later Castilian writing. In this way, he unwittingly

tingly established himself, through the metaphor of sonship, as a founding father to be remembered.

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Der Philosoph als Nekromant

Gerbert von Aurillac (Silvester II.) und Vergil im europäischen Hochmittelalter

Abstract

The philosopher as necromancer is a commonplace medieval reality. This paper traces how William of Malmesbury invents the figure of a necromantic philosopher in the person of Gerbert of Aurillac. This new image of the philosopher, which William elaborates using many classical and religious reminiscences, gave personal expression, at the beginning of the 12th century, primarily to fears generated by new knowledge arriving from Arabic sources. As a figure inspiring terror, however, the necromantic philosopher did not exist for long. As the second part of the paper will argue, his disappearance owes nothing to scientific progress or religious enlightenment, but is rather connected with the emergence of a new cycle of legends. Virgil is their protagonist: in the new legends that begin to circulate in the late 12th century, the Latin *vates* becomes a kind of magician. He uses his magical powers, however, not so much for his own benefit as to help out his adopted hometown of Naples. Thanks to Virgil, or rather thanks to the new Neapolitan stories about him, the formerly evil necromantic philosopher turns into a good necromantic philosopher, whose newly positive image colours the representation of many great philosophers in the following centuries.

Der Philosoph im Dickicht der Epoche

Falls es stimmt, dass Historiker keinen allzu großen Bedarf an Philosophie haben, wie Lucien Febvre schon 1934 kolportiert (10), dann unterscheiden sich Historiker der Philosophie von solchen anderer Arbeitsfelder wohl primär dadurch, dass sie sich schwerer tun, ihren Bedarf an Philosophie auf ein handliches Maß zu reduzieren. Diese Schwierigkeit ist verständlich. Meist verfügen Philosophiehistoriker über eine 'klassische' Ausbildung in Philosophie und fast immer sind sie in einem Umfeld tätig, wo man sich der Klärung philosophischer

Probleme verpflichtet weiß. Entsprechend sind Philosophiehistoriker philosophisch oft derart eingebunden und festgelegt, dass ihre eigenen Innovationen, wie Richard Rorty in *Historiography of Philosophy* gezeigt hat, selten mehr sind als Revisionen kanonischer Deutungen und Bestände. Es ist daher mehr als verständlich, wenn die Spezialisten der Vergangenheit der Philosophie den Historikern anderer Disziplinen nicht unbedingt als ideale Gesprächspartner in Sachen neuer Perspektiven oder Methoden gelten. In der folgenden philosophiehistorischen Skizze wird deshalb von vornherein darauf verzichtet, einem neuen Modell welchen Couleurs auch immer das Wort zu reden.

Allerdings alimentieren sich meine Ausführungen an einer jener Schnittstellen, die *Interfaces* zum Programm erhoben hat. Denn im Folgenden wird eine gemeinhin vernachlässigte Dimension der mittelalterlichen Figur des Philosophen rekonstruiert, deren Spuren sich weniger in den Folianten der mittelalterlichen Scholastiker finden als in einer Reihe narrativer Texte, die gewiss nicht zum kanonischen Bestand der Philosophie gezählt werden. Da diese Texte den Philosophen kaum als exquisiten Denker dafür umso engagierter als Personifikation wahrlich miraculöser Kompetenzen inszenieren, braucht ihre Vernachlässigung seitens der modernen Doxographien der mittelalterlichen Philosophie nicht weiter zu verwundern. Weniger nachvollziehbar ist allenfalls, wieso die beiden primären Helden der folgenden Seiten sowohl in Jacques Le Goffs "introduction à une sociologie historique de l'intellectuel occidental" (4) als auch in Alain de Liberas später Antwort auf dieses wichtige Buch so gut wie keine Rolle spielen. Hätten Le Goff und de Libera in ihren jeweiligen Rekonstruktionen dessen, wofür der Intellektuelle und der Philosoph im Mittelalter *auch* stehen, Gerbert von Aurillac und Vergil einbezogen, hätten sie den Philosophen zwangsläufig um die Dimension des Nekromanten erweitern müssen.

Anders als die verwegenen Denker de Liberas und Le Goffs Spezialisten der intellektuellen Techniken perpetuieren der Papst und der *vates* weder einen epochalen Erfolg der Vernunft noch der Institution. Hingegen wird zu Beginn des 12. Jahrhunderts anhand von Gerbert die Angst vor den neuen intellektuellen Versuchungen der Epoche zum Thema und in der Figur des Nekromanten mittels einer Reihe beängstigender Details konkretisiert. Nach diesem ersten Auftritt des Philosophen als Nekromanten transformieren gegen Ende des Jahrhunderts neue Geschichten über Vergil die Schrecken Gerberts in die Mirakel einer Praxis, die den Nekromanten mitten in eine

städtische Gesellschaft versetzt, die in ihren Erzählungen nicht zögert, von ihm zu profitieren.

Die Technik der Nekromanten, dank “deren Bezauberung wiedererweckte Tote zu weissagen und auf Fragen zu antworten scheinen,” wie es in der klassischen Definition bei Isidor von Sevilla heißt,¹ gehörte in der Antike nicht zum Rüstzeug der Philosophen und auch ihre modernen Namensvettern praktizieren sie eher nicht. Im Mittelalter allerdings gelten mitunter Männer als *necromantii*, von denen es gleichzeitig heißt, sie seien Philosophen. Der als Nekromant vorgestellte Philosoph ist ein mittelalterliches Faktum. Eine Philosophiegeschichte, die nicht einfach die Geschichte der Sieger schreiben will, – sprich der Konzepte und Vorstellungen, die heute noch *en vogue* sind –, ist somit schon aufgrund der Faktenlage gehalten, sich der nekromantischen Philosophen anzunehmen. Indem sie den Nekromanten aufgreift, leistet sie zudem ihren ureigenen Beitrag zu einer Historiographie der Philosophie, die im Anschluss an Paul Veyne (16) auf das Hantieren mit Universalien verzichtet und stattdessen zu verstehen sucht, was ein scheinbar transhistorisches Konzept wie ‘Philosoph’ oder gar ein eindeutiger Personennamen wie ‘Vergil’ zu einem bestimmten Zeitpunkt an einem bestimmten Ort meint. In den folgenden Seiten wird somit ein verwundertes Erzählen praktiziert, was im vorliegenden Fall nichts anderes bedeutet als das überraschte Registrieren, detaillierte Aufbereiten und arrangierte Weitergeben dessen, was ein ausgewähltes Ensemble hochmittelalterlicher Texte hergibt, nachdem die Aufnahmefähigkeit auf die nekromantischen Philosophen ausgerichtet worden ist.

1. *Etym.*, VIII, ix, 11: “Necromantii sunt, quorum praecantationibus videntur resuscitati mortui divinare, et ad interrogata respondere.”

Der Gerbert des Wilhelm von Malmesbury

Am Anfang scheint alles einem Versehen geschuldet. Eben noch berichtete Wilhelm von Malmesbury, ganz dem Gang seiner *Gesta regum Anglorum* verpflichtet, vom Frieden, den Papst Johannes XV. im Jahr 991 zwischen dem englischen König Æthelred und Richard, Herzog der Normandie, vermittelt hatte (ii, 165f.), da führt er mit der Bemerkung, dieser Johannes werde “auch Gerbert genannt” (167, 1), eine Episode ein, die mit der Geschichte der englischen Könige nicht das Mindeste zu tun hat. Sechs Kapitel später, nachdem besagter Gerbert sein verdientes Ende gefunden hat, wird Wilhelm die entsprechenden Ausführungen als unterhaltsamen Seitenweg abtun (173, 1) und dann noch zwei im Bistum Köln angesiedelte Wunder-

erzählungen einflechten, ehe er sich wieder König Æthelred zuwendet (176).

Die vielleicht im Zuge einer Verwechslung, ausdrücklich aber zum Zweck der Unterhaltung in die Taten der englischen Könige eingeschobene Darstellung Gerberts gliedert sich grob in drei thematische Stücke. Sie beginnt mit einem Bericht zu Gerberts Lehrjahren im islamischen Spanien, an deren Ende der Pakt mit dem Teufel steht (167, 1–5). Darauf folgt zweitens die ausführliche Schilderung seines Aufstieges, in dessen Verlauf Gerbert durch König Robert II. von Frankreich zuerst zum Bischof von Reims, danach von Kaiser Otto III. zum Erzbischof von Ravenna und kurz darauf zum Papst erhoben wird, was ihm schließlich erlaubt, seine nekromantischen Kompetenzen (*ars nigromantiae*; 168, 3) an den antiken Schätzen Roms zu erproben (168–69, 3). Im Zentrum des dritten Abschnitts steht dann jener Kopf einer Statue, den Gerbert unter Beachtung der Sternkonstellation schafft und der die Zukunft betreffende Fragen mit “ja” bzw. “nein” beantwortet. Da Gerbert die Antwort bezüglich seines eigenen Todes missdeutet, bleibt ihm am Ende nur, seine Taten zu beweinen und rasend und vor Schmerzen von Sinnen anzuordnen, dass sein Körper in Stücke zergliedert und in der Gegend zerstreut werde (172), womit er selbst für den Vollzug der sog. *sepultura asini*, d.h. der Eselsbestattung von Jer. 22, 19, sorgt, die für Exkommunizierte vorgesehen ist (Schmitz-Esser 475f. und 496).

Dergestalt zusammengefasst reiht sich Wilhelms Version von Gerberts Lebensgeschichte (Oldoni, “Silvestro II”) nahtlos ein in ein Ensemble von Texten, deren Autoren sich spätestens seit Benno von Osnabrücks *Gesta aecclesiae contra Hildbrandum* darum bemühen, Gerbert, der als Papst den Namen Silvester II. angenommen hatte, zu diffamieren, indem sie ihn mehr oder weniger explizit nekromantischer Praktiken bezichtigen. Es steht außer Frage, dass Wilhelm von Malmesbury diese Tradition kennt, die Massimo Oldoni in seiner Monographie *Gerberto e il suo fantasma* jüngst umfassend aufgearbeitet hat.² Ebenso klar ist allerdings, dass er einzelne Versatzstücke von Gerberts Image auf eine Weise überarbeitet und ausgestaltet, dass sein Gerbert schließlich weit über diese Tradition hinausragt. Ehe Wilhelm ihm schriftlich Gestalt verleiht, gibt es schlicht keinen Gerbert, – sowie auch sonst niemanden in der lateinischen Welt –, von dem zu berichten wäre, dass er,

nachdem er die Sterne genau beobachtet hatte, als sämtliche Planeten am Anfang ihres Weges standen, den Kopf einer

2. Kritisch anzumerken bleibt, dass Oldoni sich auf die alte, von Stubbs 1887 vorgelegte Ausgabe von Wilhelms *Gesta regum Anglorum* stützt (*Gerberto*, 45, Anm. 31). Dergestalt bleiben ihm vor allem die wichtigen Resultate, die Thomson im Kommentar (*Wilhelm, Gesta*, 1999) zur neuen kritischen Edition vorgelegt hat, leider unzugänglich.

3. *Gesta*, ii, 172, 1: “[...] fudisse sibi statuæ caput certa inspectione siderum, cum videlicet omnes planetæ exordia cursus sui meditarentur, quod non nisi interrogatum loqueretur, sed verum vel affirmative vel negative pronuntiaret. Verbi grati diceret Gerbertus ‘Ero Apostolicus?’ responderet statua ‘Etiam.’ ‘Moriar antequam cantem missam in Ierusalem?’ ‘Non.’”

4. Siehe zuletzt Truitt und Mills. In neuerer Zeit wahrscheinlich zu Unrecht kaum weiter verfolgt wurde, soweit ich sehe, der Hinweis von John Selden (17), wonach es sich bei den alttestamentlichen Teraphim laut Abraham ibn Ezra um “fictas [imagines] ab Astrologis, ut futura prædicerent [...] et humana forma factas, ita ut coelestis influentiæ essent capaces” handelt. Siehe dazu jetzt mindestens Idel, “Hermeticism” sowie derselbe, *Golem*, 148–51 und 456–62.

Statue goss, der nur sprach, wenn er gefragt wurde und der die Wahrheit zustimmend oder verneinend ausdrückte. Sollte Gerbert zum Beispiel fragen, ‘Werde ich Papst sein?’ antwortet die Statue ‘ja.’ ‘Werde ich sterben, ehe ich eine Messe in Jerusalem gelesen habe?’ ‘nein.’³

Die Pointe der Kopf-Episode, die durch die vorangehenden Ausführungen zu Gerberts Konstruktion einer mechanischen Uhr und einer Orgel (168, 2) bestens vorbereitet ist, besteht darin, dass Gerbert beim Abwägen der letzten Antwort des Kopfes nicht bedenkt, dass es in Rom eine Jerusalem genannte Kirche gibt.

Es ist bisher nicht gelungen, die Genese des Kopf-Motivs im Detail zu erhellen.⁴ Allerdings spricht nichts dagegen, für seine Schöpfung ähnliche Inspirationszusammenhänge zu postulieren, wie sie im Falle des “Hic percute” am Werke sind. Mit der Aufforderung “Schlage hier” lässt Wilhelm Gerberts Begegnung mit den antiken Schätzen Roms beginnen. Im Gegensatz zu Menschen früherer Zeiten interpretiert Gerbert die auf einer Statue des Marsfeldes angebrachten Worte richtig. So gelangt er eines Nachts, nur von einem Diener begleitet, in eine verborgene unterirdische Königshalle, deren Wände und Deckentäfelung aus Gold sind, wo alles aus Gold ist, inklusive goldene Soldaten, die sich mit goldenen Würfeln die Zeit vertrieben, während ein ebenfalls metallener König mit der Königin, Speisen vor und aufwartende Diener um sich, inmitten schwerer, wertvoller Schüsseln tafelt, deren Machart die Natur überbietet (ii, 169, 2). Bewacht wird die Pracht, in die Gerbert da eindringt, von den besagten Figuren selbst. Alles kann man ansehen, nichts aber berühren, denn kaum streckt man die Hand nach etwas aus, erheben sich die Figuren und gehen auf den Verwegenen los. Als Gerberts Begleiter versucht, ein kleines Messer mitlaufen zu lassen, lässt ein Junge, dessen Bogen fortwährend auf den Karbunkel zielt, der die ganze Szenerie erhellt, den angelegten Pfeil schnellen und die beiden Eindringlinge finden sich im Dunkeln wieder (169, 2f.).

Dass Wilhelm von Malmesbury diese Geschichte in toto irgendwo entwendet hätte, hat sich bisher nicht belegen lassen (Oldoni, *Gerberto*, 145–78). Allerdings verfügte Wilhelm, wie Thomson gebührend gezeigt hat, über singuläre Kenntnisse antiker Texte. Selbst falls ihm Cassiodors Lob der prächtigen (*splendida*) römischen Kanalisation (94) nicht gegenwärtig gewesen sein sollte, war ihm als Kenner von Senecas *Apocolocyntosis* wahrscheinlich bekannt, dass man vom Marsfeld direkt in die Unterwelt steigt (13, 1); als Leser Suetons war er mit dessen Beschreibung von Neros *domus aurea* ver-

traut (*Nero*, 31); als Gelehrter, der, wie der Briefprolog seines *Polyhistor* (37) bezeugt, im augustinischen Hermes Trismegistus die wichtigste pagane Autorität überhaupt verehrt, war ihm nur zu bewusst, dass der Mensch über die Fähigkeit verfügt, sich Götter zu schaffen, die ihm selbst ähnlich sind, und dass es sich bei diesen *simulacra* laut Augustinus (*De civ. Dei*, VIII, 23) um empfindungsfähige, beseelte Statuen handelt; und zu guter Letzt dürfte er ebenfalls von Augustinus gelernt haben, dass ein Phänomen wie etwa die unauslöschliche Laterne (*lucerna inextinguibilis*) der Venus niemanden zu irritieren braucht, denn entweder handelt es sich dabei um etwas durch menschliche Künste Geschaffenes oder aber um Dämonenwerk (*De civ. Dei*, XXI, 6). Entsprechend hat Wilhelm in den *Gesta* in mindestens drei Fällen antike römische Statuen als beseelt imaginiert und im Modus der Literatur zum Leben erweckt: in der eigentlichen Gerbert-Episode; im unmittelbar zugehörigen Einschub, der eine angeblich in der Kindheit vernommene ähnliche römische Geschichte zum Thema hat (ii, 170); und schließlich in einem eigenen Nachtrag (Oldoni, *Gerberto*, 182–205) zu Rom, der von den Umtrieben einer wahrscheinlich vor allem durch Claudianus' *Magnes* (*Magnet*) inspirierten Venus-Statue handelt (ii, 205).

Durchaus folgerichtig ist der Gerbert, der überhaupt erst den Zugang zu dieser Welt eröffnet, laut Wilhelm mit Salomon zu vergleichen. Nicht nur, weil Gott letzterem bekanntlich (1 Kön 3, 12) außergewöhnliche Weisheit verliehen hat (ii, 169, 4), sondern vor allem, weil Salomon, wie der Verfasser der *Gesta regum Anglorum* aus den *Antiquitates* des Josephus weiß (VII, 16), im Grabe seines Vaters *mechanico modo* viele Schätze versteckt hat. Zudem zeichnet sich Salomon, wie ebenfalls bei Josephus zu lesen ist (VIII, 2), dem Wilhelm beinahe wörtlich folgt, dadurch aus, dass die Dämonen ihm gehorchen. Und dennoch ist Salomon nicht die einzige Gestalt, der Wilhelm die Züge seines Gerbert nachbildet. Denn sein Gerbert, der als erster in der Lage ist, das “Hic percutit” der Statue auf dem Marsfeld erfolgreich zu deuten, verhält sich, worauf Arturo Graf bereits in seinen *Miti, leggende e superstizioni del medio evo* von 1892/93 hingewiesen hat (215), ganz offensichtlich wie Apollonius (von Tyana). Dieser berichtet zu Beginn von *De secretis naturae* als Ich-Erzähler, wie es ihm gelungen ist, das Rätsel eines von Hermes errichteten *simulacrum* zu lösen und so in den Besitz des besagten Buches zu gelangen (Weisser 17–19). Das von Hermes gestiftete Bildnis befand sich auf einer gläsernen Säule, auf der nebst dem Namen des Stifters zu lesen war (Hudry 23f.): “Wer immer danach strebt, die Geheimnisse

des Werdens und der Wirksamkeit der Dinge zu ergründen, beeile sich unter meine Füße zu schauen und zu sehen.” Wie der Ich-Erzähler berichtet war in der Vergangenheit niemand in der Lage gewesen, den Sinn dieser Worte und ihr Geheimnis zu entschlüsseln. Er erst versteht, die Worte wieder und wieder bedenkend, dass man am Fuß der Säule graben muss. Er gräbt und stößt auf unterirdische Gänge, die sehr dunkel sind und in denen ein Luftzug herrscht, der jedes Licht auslöscht. Im Traum erfährt Apollonius dann, was für einer Laterne er sich bedienen muss, um sich erfolgreich durch die unterirdischen Gänge zu bewegen. Entsprechend ausgerüstet stößt er unter der Erde “auf einen alten Mann, der auf einem goldenen Schemel saß. In seinen Händen hielt er eine smaragdgrüne Tafel, auf der folgendes zu lesen stand: [...]”

Ursprünglich ist dieser Bericht über den Fund von *De secretis naturae* wie das Werk selbst auf Arabisch abgefasst. Ins Lateinische übersetzt wurde die Schrift durch Hugo von Santalla, der einige seiner Übersetzungen dem Bischof Michael von Tarazona gewidmet hat, dessen Episkopat in der nordspanischen Stadt von 1119–51 dauerte. Unter chronologischen Gesichtspunkten spricht somit nichts dagegen, dass Wilhelm von Malmesbury diesen Text kannte, als er wahrscheinlich um 1126 die erste Version seiner *Gesta* abschloss (Wilhelm, *Gesta*, 1999, xvii–xxxv), wo Gerbert, ganz wie Apollonius, als erster die Inschrift einer Statue richtig deutet, darauf zu graben beginnt und schließlich auf unterirdische Bauten stößt. Sicher ist, dass Wilhelm von jenem Spanien, wo zu seinen Lebzeiten nebst Hugo von Santalla auch die namentlich bekannten Übersetzer Johannes Hispalensis, Plato von Tivoli, Hermann von Carinthia und Robert von Ketton tätig sind und von wo etwa Adelard von Bath und Petrus Alfonsi Kunde nach England bringen (Burnett, *Introduction*), gründlich umgetrieben wird, denn es ist an erster Stelle dieses Spanien, dem er mit seinem Gerbert Gestalt verleiht. Während Richer in seinen *Historiarum libri quatuor*, die auf Gerberts Initiative zurückgehen, nur berichtet, dass der junge Mönch auf Beschluss seines Klosters zur weiteren Ausbildung im Quadrivium nach Spanien zu Atto, Bischof von Vic geschickt wurde (III, 43; Zuccato 747–50), und Ademar von Chabannes wenige Jahre später erzählt, der Mönch Gerbert habe um der Weisheit willen zuerst die *Francia* und dann Cordoba durchwandert (154), flieht Wilhelms Gerbert⁵

5. *Gesta*, ii, 167, 1–5: “[...] seu tedio monachatus seu gloriae cupiditate captus, nocte profugit Hispaniam, animo precipue intendens ut

sei es des Mönchtums überdrüssig, sei es von der Gier nach Ruhm ergriffen, nachts nach Spanien, wobei ihm der Sinn

astrologiam et ceteras id genus artes a Saracenis edisceret. Hispania, olim multis annis a Romanis possessa, tempore Honorii imperatoris in ius Gothorum concesserat; Gothi, usque ad tempora beati Gregorii Arriani, tunc per Leandrum episcopum Hispalis et per Ricaredum regem fratrem Herminigildi, quem pater nocte Paschali pro fidei confessione interfecerat, catholico choro uniti sunt. Successit Leandro Isidorus, doctrina et sanctitate nobilis, cuius corpus nostra aetate Aldefonsus rex Gallitiae Toletum transtulit, ad pondus auro comparatum. Saraceni enim, qui Gothos subiugarant, ipsi quoque a Karolo Magno victi Gallitiam et Lusitaniam, maximas Hispaniae provincias, amiserunt; possident usque hodie superiores regiones. Et sicut Christiani Toletum, ita ipsi Hispalim, quam Sibiliam vulgariter vocant, caput regni habent, divinationibus et incantationibus more gentis familiari studentes. Ad hos igitur, ut dixi, Gerbertus perveniens desiderio satisfacit. Ibi vicit scientia Ptholomeum in astrolabio, Alhandream in astrorum interstitio, Iulium Firmicum in fato. Ibi quid cantus et volatus avium portendat didicit, ibi exire tenues ex inferno figuras, ibi postremo quicquid vel noxium vel salubre curiositas humana deprehendit; nam de licitis artibus, arithmetica musica et astronomia et geometria, nichil attinet dicere, quas ita ebibit ut inferiores ingenio suo ostenderet, et magna industria revocaret in Galliam omnino ibi iam pridem obsoletas. Abacum certe primus a Saracenis rapiens, regulas dedit quae a sudantibus abacistis vix intelliguntur. Hospitabatur apud quendam sectae illius philosophum, quem multis primo expensis, post etiam promissis demerebatur. Nec deerat Saracenus quin scientiam venditaret; assidere frequenter, nunc de seriis nunc de nugis colloqui, libros ad scribendum prebere. Unus erat codex totius artis conscius quem nullo modo elicere poterat. Ardebat contra Gerbertus

vor allem danach stand, die Astrologie und die anderen derartigen Künste von den Sarazenen zu lernen. Spanien, das einst während vieler Jahre von den Römern beherrscht wurde, war zur Zeit des Kaisers Honorius in den Besitz der Goten geraten; die Goten, die bis zur Zeit des seligen Gregor Arianer gewesen waren, wurden dann von Leander, Bischof von Sevilla, und König Reccared, dem Bruder des Herminigild, der von seinem Vater in der Osternacht wegen des Bekenntnisses des Glaubens umgebracht worden war, mit dem katholischen Reigen vereinigt. Dem Leander folgte Isidor, bekannt für Gelehrsamkeit und Heiligkeit, dessen Körper, in Gold aufgewogen und gekauft, Alfons, König von Galizien, unserer Tage nach Toledo überführt hat. Die Sarazenen nämlich, die die Goten unterjocht hatten, wurden selbst von Karl dem Großen besiegt und verloren Galizien und Lusitanien, die größten Provinzen Spaniens; sie besitzen bis zum heutigen Tag die südlichen Regionen. Und wie die Christen Toledo, haben sie Hispalis, volkssprachlich Sevilla genannt, als Hauptstadt des Königreichs und [dort] studieren sie vertraulich die Wahrsagungen und Verzauberungen nach Art der Heiden. Zu diesen gelangt befriedigte Gerbert, wie ich bereits gesagt habe, sein Verlangen. Dort besiegte er mit Hilfe der Wissenschaft den Ptolemäus in Sachen Astrolab, den Alchandreus in Sachen Interstitien der Sterne, den Julius Firmicus in Sachen Schicksal. Dort lernte er, was der Gesang und der Flug der Vögel ankündigt; [dort lernte er] feine Figuren aus der Unterwelt hervorzurufen; [dort lernte er] zu guter Letzt, was immer die menschliche Neugier an Schädlichem und Schmutzigem kennt. Denn von den erlaubten Künsten, der Arithmetik, der Musik, der Astronomie und der Geometrie, die er da derart in sich aufnahm, dass sie sich als seinem Geist unterlegen erwiesen und die er mit großem Einsatz nach Gallien zurückrief, wo sie seit langem gänzlich vergessen waren, braucht nichts gesagt zu werden. Dem Abakus, den er wahrlich als erster den Sarazenen entrissen hat, gab er Regeln, die selbst von den schwitzenden Abakisten kaum verstanden werden. Er wohnte bei einem Philosophen jener Sekte, den er zuerst mit großen Ausgaben danach auch mit Versprechungen für sich gewann. Der Sarazene ließ es sich nicht nehmen, um die Wissenschaft zu verkaufen, oft mit ihm zusammensitzend, Mal im seri-

librum quoquo modo ancillari.
Semper enim in vetitum nitimur, et
quicquid negatur pretiosius putatur.
Ad preces ergo conversus orare per
Deum, per amicitiam; multa offerre,
plura polliceri. Ubi id parum
procedit, nocturnas insidias temptat.
Ita hominem, conivente etiam filia,
cum qua assiduitas familiaritatem
paraverat, vino invadens volumen
sub cervicali positum abripuit et
fugit. Ille somno excussus inditio
stellarum, qua peritus erat arte,
insequitur fugitantem. Profugus
quoque respiciens eademque scientia
periculum comperiens sub ponte
ligneo qui proximus se occultit,
pendulus et pontem amplectens ut
nec aquam nec terram tangeret. Ita
querentis aviditas frustrata, domum
revertit. Tum Gerbertus viam
celerans devenit ad mare. Ibi per
incantationes diabolo accersito,
perpetuum paciscitur hominum si se
ab illo qui denuo insequeretur
defensatum ultra pelagus eveheret. Et
factum est.”

ösen, Mal im unterhaltsamen Gespräch, und ihm Bücher zum Abschreiben zu überlassen. Da war aber eine Handschrift, Inbegriff der gesamten Kunst, die er ihm auf keine Weise zu entlocken vermochte. Gerbert dagegen brannte danach, sich dieses Buch dienstbar zu machen. Stets nämlich reizt uns das Verbotene und was vorenthalten wird, wird für wertvoller gehalten. Aufs Bitten verfallen, bat er bei Gott, bei der Freundschaft; er bot viel, versprach noch mehr. Und wie er nicht weiterkommt, erprobt er eine nächtliche List. Er füllte den Mann, wobei die Tochter, mit der er sich familiären Umgang verschafft hatte, weg sah, mit Wein ab, stahl den unter dem Kopfkissen verwahrten Band und floh. Aus dem Schlaf erwacht, verfolgte [der Sarazene] aufgrund der Angabe der Sterne, deren Kunst er kundig war, den Flüchtigen. Auch der Fliehende schaute [in die Sterne] und mittels derselben Wissenschaft erkannte er die Gefahr und versteckte sich unter einer nahegelegenen Holzbrücke, wobei er sich so darunter hängte und sich an der Brücke festhielt, dass er weder das Wasser noch die Erde berührte. Der solchermaßen in seinem Verlangen getäuschte Verfolger kehrte nach Hause zurück. Gerbert hingegen beeilte sich und gelangte ans Meer. Dort holte er durch Beschwörungen den Teufel herbei und versprach ihm ewige Huldigung, wenn er ihn zum Schutz vor jenem, der ihn wieder verfolgte, über die Fluten brächte. Und so ist es geschehen.

Spätestens seit Rodney Thomson, von Charles Burnett mit dem entsprechenden Detailwissen versehen (“King Ptolemy” 340), in seinem Kommentar zur Stelle (Wilhelm, *Gesta*, 1999) die Namen von Ptolemäus, Alchandreus und Iulius Firmicus Maternus sowie die Nennung des jeweiligen Kompetenzfeldes als Büchertitel verstanden und darauf hingewiesen hat, dass mit der Handschrift München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek CLM 560 ein Codex existiert, der die drei Texte gemeinsam überliefert, erfreuen sich die fraglichen Zeilen Wilhelms einer gewissen Beliebtheit bei Wissenschaftshistorikern. Sie sehen darin einen Beleg für Gerberts Vertrautheit mit dem neuen arabischen Wissen (Juste 249–57; Truitt; Zuccato). Dabei übersehen sie geflissentlich, dass sie sich in der Person Wilhelms auf einen Zeugen stützen, der sich um 1120, also anderthalb Jahrhunderte nachdem Gerbert um *ca.* 970 in Spanien gewesen war, zu dessen vorgeblichen Interessen und Kompetenzen äußert. Desgleichen

nehmen sie nicht zur Kenntnis, dass schon ihrem Zeugen nicht wirklich bewusst ist, dass ihn 150 Jahre von Gerberts spanischen Lehrjahren trennen, denn seine Beschreibung der politisch-religiösen Teilung Spaniens, wo einem arabischen Sevilla, wohin sich Gerbert begeben haben soll, ein christliches Toledo gegenübersteht, trifft historisch erst auf die Zeit nach 1085 zu. Entsprechend, und in Berücksichtigung der zahlreichen zusätzlichen literarischen Bezüge, die im Rahmen unserer bisherigen Lektüre von Wilhelms Gerbert-Episode anzuzeigen waren, empfiehlt es sich, auch die Nennung der drei Autoren Ptolemäus, Alchandreus und Firmicus Maternus primär als einen weiteren Beleg dafür zu lesen, dass der Autor der *Gesta* ein ausgewiesener Büchermensch ist. Sein Gerbert entspringt, um mit Foucault zu sprechen, einem Imaginären, das zwischen “dem Buch und der Lampe” haust (222). In der Gerbert-Episode sind die drei Astrologen, die nebenbei auch für die drei großen Kulturräume des Mittelmeeres stehen, primär als klingende Namen anwesend.

Was Gerbert in Sevilla studiert hat, weiß Wilhelm nicht und indirekt gibt er dies seinen Lesern auch zu verstehen, wenn er ausführt, Gerbert habe in Sevilla gelernt, “wie man feine Figuren aus der Unterwelt hervorruft.” Das Syntagma “excire tenues ex inferno figuras” zitiert ganz offensichtlich einen Vers des Prudentius, den Isidor von Sevilla in seinen *Etymologiae* im Kapitel *Über Zauberer* (VIII, ix) anführt, um dann unmittelbar anschließend *magi* und *necromantii* zu definieren. Im selben Kapitel spezifiziert Isidor nur wenige Zeilen später zudem, Vogelschauer seien diejenigen, “qui volatus avium et voces intendunt” (VIII, ix, 18), was Wilhelm zur Aussage veranlasst haben dürfte, Gerbert habe in Sevilla gelernt, “quid cantus et volatus avium portendat.” Alles andere als exotisch, beruht Gerberts Lehrplan offenkundig auf der bekanntesten und meistkonsultierten Enzyklopädie des Mittelalters (Porzig).

Dieser Lehrplan berücksichtigt auch “was immer die menschliche Neugier an Schädlichem und Schmutzigem kennt.” Dennoch weist das Bild, das Wilhelm mittels der in Sevilla gepflegten Fächer vom Wissen der Sarazenen entwirft, in Form der erlaubten Wissenschaften des Quadriviums auch unproblematische Aspekte auf. Endgültig ins Negative kippt das Wissen der Sarazenen erst mit dem “quidam sectae illius philosophus,” bei dem Gerbert wohnt und der vor allem bereit ist, ihm sein Wissen um Geld zu veräußern und zu verkaufen. Damit rückt der muslimische Philosoph zwangsläufig in die Nähe jener, “die wissen wollen, um ihr Wissen zu verkaufen” (qui scire volunt ut scientiam suam vendant) und deren Gewinn ein Zeit-

genosse Wilhelms wie Bernhard von Clairvaux in seinen *Sermones super Cantica Cantorum* (36, 3) ohne jeden Vorbehalt als schändlich (*turpis*) geißelt. Die Erzählung merklich beschleunigend, setzt Wilhelm die Schändlichkeit dieser Art der Wissensvermittlung sogleich dramatisch in Szene: Gerbert stiehlt das Buch, das der *philosophus* ihm nicht verkaufen will und flieht mit seiner Beute. Der Sarazene verfolgt ihn *inditio stellarum*, indem er Gerberts Aufenthaltsort aus den Sternen ermittelt, Gerbert entzieht sich ihm mittels derselben Kompetenz und noch ehe man sich darüber richtig hat wundern können, erscheint der Teufel.

Es ist, als hätte sich Wilhelm von Malmesbury die Aufgabe gestellt, die Maximalfolgen des in zeitgenössischen Codices gut bezeugten Bücherfluches, “wer dieses Buch stehlen sollte, sei verdammt (*anathema sit*)” (Drogin, 58–106), aufzuzeigen. Am Ende des Buchdiebstahls steht der Pakt mit dem Teufel. Ihm ewige Huldigung zu versprechen, wie Gerbert es am Meeresgestade tut, bedeutet nichts anderes, als das *anathema*, d.h. gemäß der kanonischen Definition des Burchard von Worms die “aeterna [...] mortis damnatio” (861), willentlich auf sich zu nehmen. Ungefähr 250 Jahre nachdem das lateinische Christentum in Form der aus dem Griechischen übersetzten Legende des Theophilus von Adana mit der Vorstellung eines vorsätzlichen Teufelspakts konfrontiert worden ist (Gier, *Sünder*; Schnyder), gestaltet Wilhelm das Motiv damit radikal neu. Nicht nur, dass in seiner Spielart des Teufelspakts kein Platz ist für die rettende Gottesmutter; in Wilhelms Teufelspakt ist überhaupt keine Erlösung vorgesehen.

Nachdem er Gerberts Geschichte bis zu diesem Punkt vorgetragen hat, macht Wilhelm allerdings nicht diese Neuerung explizit zum Thema. Aus der Erzählung heraustretend greift er vielmehr die Bedenken jener auf, die das bisher Dargelegte für “eine Erfindung des Volkes halten, denn das Volk pflegt den Ruhm der Schriftkundigen zu schmähen, indem es von einem, den es bei irgendeiner Tätigkeit brillieren sieht, sagt, er spreche mit einem Dämon.”⁶ Zur Stützung dieser Aussage zitiert Wilhelm Boethius, der sich in der *Consolatio Philosophiae* mit den Worten an die *Philosophia* wendet: “Bösen Künsten scheinen wir gerade deshalb nahe zu stehen, weil wir mit deinen Lehren getränkt, in deinen Sitten unterrichtet worden sind.”⁷ Nach Boethius haben also jene recht, die Geschichten, wie die eben über Gerbert erzählte, für *vulgariter ficta* halten. Wilhelm dagegen ist aufgrund von Gerberts schmählichem Ende, von dem er aus einer

6. *Gesta*, ii, 167, 5: “Sed haec vulgariter ficta crediderit aliquis, quod soleat populus litteratorum famam ledere, dicens illum loqui cum demone quem in aliquo viderint excellentem opere.”

7. *Cons. phil.*, I, iv, 39-41: “(...) atque hoc ipso uidebimur affines fuisse maleficio quod tuis imbuti disciplinis, tuis instituti moribus sumus.”

alten Handschrift weiß, ausdrücklich der Meinung, dass es sich im Falle Gerberts nicht um eine Erfindung des Volkes handle (ii, 167, 6).

In Anbetracht der bisherigen Ausführungen dürfte es nicht allzu schwer fallen, Wilhelms Qualifizierung der Geschichte Gerberts als nicht *vulgariter ficta* zu akzeptieren. Was er über Gerbert vorträgt ist ein hochgelehrtes literarisches Konstrukt, dessen einzelne Motive von seinen exklusiven Lektüren zeugen, wobei Wilhelms Motivanerkennung im Falle des wahrsagenden Kopfes und der “Hic percute”-Episode auch Stoffe betrifft, die ihre Gestaltung ursprünglich dem arabischen Sprachraum verdanken. In seinem eigenen, trivialen Kompetenzfeld verhält sich Wilhelm somit nicht anders als sein Gerbert, der sich im Bereich des Quadriviums auf arabisches Wissen einlässt. Anders als der Held seiner Gerbert-Erzählung hat Wilhelm von Malmesbury sich diese neuen Stoffe indes angeeignet, ohne mit seinem Klostermilieu zu brechen. Sein Gerbert hingegen ist des Mönchtums überdrüssig. Nur deshalb gerät er überhaupt in jenes Spanien, dessen nekromantisches Wissen ihm eine der glänzendsten Karrieren ermöglicht, die man sich vorstellen kann, ehe es zum Schluss seinen diabolischen Preis fordert. Wenn Wilhelm seinen Gerbert als Nekromanten inszeniert, dann stigmatisiert er primär dieses Verhalten, das einen radikalen und – wie Gerberts Ende belegt – höchst gefährlichen Bruch mit der traditionellen Klosterkultur der Mönche bedeutet.

Die Antwort auf Wilhelms Gerbert in der Gestalt Vergils

Wilhelm von Malmesburys exemplarische Warnung vor den Verlockungen eines Wissens, das man sich außerhalb des Klosters, am Ende gar außerhalb der christlichen Welt bei den Sarazenen aneignet, ist im Jahrhundert ihrer Publikation auf wenig Interesse gestoßen. Obwohl 17 der 36 erhaltenen Handschriften der *Gesta regum Anglorum* wohl noch aus dem 12. Jahrhundert stammen (Wilhelm, *Gesta*, 1999, xii–xxi), hat Wilhelms Gerbert in zeitgenössischen Texten so gut wie keine Spuren hinterlassen. Nur eine Notiz im *Auctarium ursicampinum* aus der zweiten Hälfte des 12. Jahrhunderts zur *Chronica* des Sigebert von Gembloux lässt sich vielleicht als Remake der “Hic percute”-Szene lesen (470). Erst Helinand von Froidmont, der sein *Chronicon* in den Jahren um 1215 redigiert, greift den Gerbert der *Gesta* offenkundig auf. Allerdings beschränkt er sich auf die

Übernahme des ersten Teils von dessen Geschichte. Er folgt Wilhelms Darstellung nur bis zur Schilderung der Flucht des Buchdiebes und eliminiert schon dessen Pakt mit dem Teufel am Meeresstrand (916–18). Helinand, der, wie die ausführliche *Disputatio contra mathematicos* im *Chronicon* belegt (Malewicz), alles andere als ein Adept der Astronomie ist, begnügt sich, einen in der Jugend der Himmelskunde verfallenen Gerbert vorzuführen. Dass dessen weiteres Leben von dieser verhängnisvollen Kompetenz geprägt und schließlich gar der Tod des Papstes dessen nekromantischen Fähigkeiten anzulasten ist, erwähnt der Autor des *Chronicon* nicht, obgleich ihm bekannt ist, dass mitunter die Meinung vertreten wird, Silvester sei vom Teufel geschlagen verstorben (920). In Vincent von Beauvais *Speculum historiale*, dessen erste Version um 1246 ins Reine gebracht wurde (Lusignan 55), findet sich dann, – die Ausführungen zum *vulgariter ficta* ausgenommen –, so gut wie das gesamte Material der Gerbert-Episode der *Gesta* (XXIV, 98–101; Oldoni, *Gerberto*, 109–41). Zu diesem Zeitpunkt allerdings ist Gerbert bereits Teil einer lateinischen Geistes- und Philosophiegeschichte, die seit einigen Jahrzehnten in der Figur Vergils über eine antike Persönlichkeit verfügt, die den Vergleich mit dem nekromantischen Papst kaum zu scheuen braucht.

Schon Karl Ludwig Roth hat in seiner grundlegenden Arbeit *Über den Zauberer Virgilius* von 1859 auf einzelne Motive des mittelalterlichen Vergils hingewiesen, die zuvor für Gerbert bezeugt sind (16–20). In seinem epochalen *Virgilio nel medio evo* von 1872 betont dann auch Domenico Comparetti, dass die Motivkreise der beiden Figuren sich mitunter überschneiden (II, 82), was zwanzig Jahre später durch Arturo Graf auch von Seiten Gerberts bestätigt worden ist (*Miti*, 205). Während die Frage, welche Motive von Wilhelms Gerbert auf den Zauberer Vergil übertragen worden sind, somit als geklärt gelten darf (Spargo 121 und 132; Oldoni, *Gerberto*, 206–21), bleibt noch zu verstehen, wie es kommt, dass der neue Vergil, wie er in der Literatur um 1200 fast ebenso plötzlich wie vielstimmig auftaucht, ähnliche Kompetenzen wie Gerbert verkörpert und gleichzeitig das Mirakel vollbringt, den Nekromanten in eine Figur zu transformieren, die nicht angstbesetzt ist.

Obwohl Gerbert schon bald nach seinem Tod der Nekromantie bezichtigt wird, ist die narrative Ausgestaltung dieses Vorwurfs zu einer exemplarischen Figur, wie Massimo Oldoni in aller Ausführlichkeit gezeigt hat, doch primär das Werk des Wilhelm von Malmesbury und damit eines einzigen Autors. Deutlich anders verhält es

sich im Falle des Nekromanten Vergil, der nicht die Schöpfung eines einzelnen Autors ist. Ohne dass sich intertextuelle Abhängigkeiten belegen ließen, verfassen kurz vor, bzw. kurz nach dem Jahr 1200 Alexander Nequam, Gervasius von Tilbury, Johannes von Alta Silva und Konrad von Querfurt Texte ganz unterschiedlichen Zuschnitts, die Vergil als Magier präsentieren. Im philosophiehistorischen Schrifttum der Epoche wird in der Folge primär, wenn auch nicht ausschließlich der Vergil des Alexander Nequam rezipiert. Dieser hat, möglicherweise durch Helinands *Chronicon* vermittelt, in den Vergil-Kapiteln des *Speculum historiale* des Vincent von Beauvais seine Spur hinterlassen, wo es bezüglich Vergils besonderen Fähigkeiten noch eher vorsichtig heißt, dem Vernehmen nach habe er vieles auf wunderbare Weise bewerkstelligt (*multa ... mirabiliter actitata*; Berlioz 105). Das *Compendiloquium de vita et dictis illustrium philosophorum* des Johannes von Wales, das um 1265 entstanden ist, formuliert unter der Überschrift *De Virgilio et eius operibus mirabilibus* dann bereits unmissverständlich, „nigromantia in multis usus est“ (Berlioz 111), worauf der entsprechende Abschnitt Nequams folgt. Nochmals gut 50 Jahre später, im höchst erfolgreichen *De vita et moribus philosophorum* des sogenannten ps.-Walter Burley vom beginnenden 14. Jahrhundert wird Vergil dann explizit als *nigromanticus* bezeichnet (336) und wiederum werden Nequams Ausführungen als Beleg angeführt.

Ursprünglich ist Nequams folgenreicher Paragraf zu Vergil in seinem *De naturis rerum* Teil eines Kapitels *Über die Orte, an denen die freien Künste in Blüte standen*. Das entsprechende Itinerar beginnt mit Abraham in Ägypten, findet in Griechenland und Athen seine Fortsetzung und wendet sich dann Italien zu:⁸

8. *De naturis rerum*, cap. 174, 309-11: “[...] Diebus nostris nec in Aegypto nec in Graecia vigent scholarium exercitia. Floruit in Italia studium, dubiumque est utrum plus armis debuerit an litterariae professioni. Julii Caesaris virtus orbem subjugavit; Tulliana eloquentia totum mundum illustravit. Sed o felicia antiquorum tempora, in quibus et ipsi imperatores mundum subhastantes, seipsos philosophiae subdiderunt. Senecam et Lucanum nobilis genuit Corduba. Mantuano vati servivit Neapolis, quae, cum infinitarum sanguisugarum peste lethali vexaretur, liberata est projecta a Marone in fundum putei hirudine

Unserer Tage stehen die Übungen der Schüler weder in Ägypten noch in Griechenland in Blüte. In Italien hat das Studium geblüht und es ist zweifelhaft, ob Italien den Waffen oder der Pflege der Schriften mehr verdankte. Julius Caesars Kraft unterwarf den Erdkreis; Ciceronianische Beredsamkeit erleuchtete die gesamte Welt. Oh glückliche Zeiten der Altvordern, als selbst die Kaiser, die die Welt versteigerten, sich selbst der Philosophie unterwarfen. Seneca und Lukan brachte das edle Cordoba hervor. Des Sehers aus Mantua bediente sich Neapel, das, als es an der tödlichen Seuche einer riesigen Menge Blutsauger litt, durch Maros Wurf eines goldenen Blutegels in einen Brunnenschacht davon befreit

aurea. Qua evolutis multorum annorum curriculis a puteo mundato et erudato extracta, replevit infinitus hirudinum exercitus civitatem, nec sedata est pestis antequam sanguisuga aurea iterato in puteum suum mitteretur. Notum est etiam quia macellum Neapolitanum carnes illaesas a corruptione diu servare non potuit, unde et carnifices summa vexati sunt inedia. Sed hanc incommoditatem excepit Virgilio prudentia, carnem nescio qua vi herbarum conditam in macello recludentis, quae quingentis annis elapsis recentissima et saporis optimi suavitate commendabilis reperta est. Quid quod dictus vates hortum suum, aere immobili vicem muri obtinente, munivit et ambivit? Quid quod pontem aereum construxit, cujus beneficio loca destinata pro arbitrio voluntatis suae adire consuevit? Romae item construxit nobile palatium, in quo cujuslibet regionis imago lignea campanam manu tenebat. Quotiens vero aliqua regio majestati Romani imperii insidias molire ausa est, incontinenti proditricis icona campanulam pulsare coepit. Miles vero aeneus, equo insidens aeneo, in summitate fastigii praedicti palatii hastam vibrans, in illam se vertit partem quae regionem illam respiciebat. Praeparavit igitur expedite se felix embola Romana juvenus, a senatoribus et patribus conscriptis in hostes imperii Romani directa, ut non solum fraudes praeparatus declinaret, sed etiam in auctores temeritatis animadverteret. Quaesitus autem vates gloriosus quamdiu a diis conservandum esset illud nobile aedificum, respondere consuevit: „Stabit usque dum pariat virgo.“ Hoc autem audientes, philosopho applaudentes, dicebant: „Igitur in aeternum stabit.“ In nativitate autem Salvatoris, fertur dicta domus inclita subitam fecisse ruinam. Quid de Salerno et Montepessulano loquar, in quibus diligens medicorum solertia, utilitati publicae deserviens, toti mundo remedium contra corporum

wurde. Als dieser nach Verstreichen vieler Jahre anlässlich der Reinigung und Leerung des Brunnens entfernt wurde, erfüllte eine riesige Zahl von Blutegeln die Stadt, und diese Seuche hörte nicht auf bis wieder ein goldener Blutsauger in ihren Brunnen geworfen wurde. Bemerkenswert ist auch, dass der Fleischmarkt von Neapel das Fleisch nicht lange vor dem Verderben bewahren konnte, weswegen selbst die Fleischer von großem Hunger gequält wurden. Aber dieser unangenehmen Situation setzte die Umsicht Vergils ein Ende, der ich weiß nicht mit der Kraft welcher Kräuter gewürztes Fleisch in den Fleischmarkt einschloss, das nach Ablauf von fünfhundert Jahren sehr frisch und durch einen süßen Geschmack ausgezeichnet entdeckt worden ist. Was dazu, dass besagter Seher seinen Garten mit einer aus unbewegter Luft bestehenden Mauer schützte und umgab? Was dazu, dass er eine Brücke aus Luft schuf, mit deren Hilfe er die Orte seines Beliebens zu erreichen pflegte? In Rom schuf er zudem einen edlen Palast, worin das hölzerne Bild einer jeden Region eine Glocke in der Hand hielt. Wann immer aber irgendeine Region es wagte einen Anschlag auf die Herrschaft des Römischen Imperiums vorzubereiten, begann das Bildnis der ungenügsamen Verräterin das Glöckchen zu schlagen. Ein bronzenener Soldat aber, der auf einem bronzenen Pferd sitzend, ganz oben auf dem Giebel des besagten Palastes mit einer Lanze glänzte, wandte sich jener Stelle zu, die auf die fragliche Region schaute. So bereitete sich die römische Jugend, von den Senatoren gegen den Feind des Imperiums geschickt, unverzüglich für die glückliche Schiffsfracht (Poucet 4, Aa, 4) vor, nicht nur um den geplanten Schaden zu verhindern, sondern auch um die Urheber des tollkühnen Planes zu bestrafen. Gefragt wie lange das edle Bauwerk von den Göttern bewahrt werde, pflegte der berühmte Seher zu antworten: „Stehen wird es, bis eine Jungfrau gebiert.“ Die dies hörten applaudierten dem Philosophen und sagten: „Dann wird es in Ewigkeit stehen.“ Bei der Geburt des Erlösers, so wird erzählt, fiel das herrliche Gebäude augenblicklich zusammen. Was soll ich von Salerno und Montpellier sagen, wo die sorgfältige Kompetenz der Ärzte zum Nutzen der Allgemeinheit aus der gesamten Welt die Heilmittel gegen die Gebrechen der Körper zusammenträgt? Die Kenntnis des Zivilrechts beansprucht Italien für

incommoditates contulit? Civilis juris peritiam vindicat sibi Italia; sed coelestis scriptura et liberales artes civitatem Parisiensem caeteris praeferendam esse convincunt. Juxta vaticinium etiam Merlini, viguit ad Vada Boum sapientia tempore suo ad Hiberniae partes transitura. Sed o vanitas [...].”

9. Konrads *Epistola de statu Apulie et de operibus vel artibus Virgilii* stammt zwar aus dem Jahr 1196 doch ist der Brief nur überliefert, weil Arnold von Lübeck ihn in seine um 1210 abgeschlossene *Chronica Slavorum* (193-196) aufgenommen hat (McFarland 231f. und Walther). Gervasius von Tilbury wiederum siedelt in den *Otia imperialia* (578) seine neapolitanische Begegnung mit Vergil im Jahr 1190 an, doch hat er sein Werk dem Widmungsträger Otto IV. erst um 1215 übereignet (ebenda, xxxviii-xli). Alexander hingegen hat sein *De naturis rerum* in der Zeit nach Herbst 1187 und vor Sommer 1204 redigiert (Hunt 26), so dass er die beiden beinahe zeitlichen Berichte nicht in ihrer heute vorliegenden Gestalt kennen kann.

10. *Policraticus*, I, iv, 26: “Fertur vates Mantuanus interrogasse Marcellum, cum depopulationi avium vehementius operam daret, an avem mallet instrui in capturam avium, an muscam informari in exterminationem muscarum. Cum vero quaestio- nem ad avunculum retulisset

sich, aber die himmlische Schrift und die freien Künste überzeugen uns, dass Paris den übrigen Städten vorzuziehen sei. Gemäß der Prophezeiung Merlins nun erstarkte in Oxford die Weisheit (Parker 19), die zu seiner Zeit nach England gelangte. Doch, oh Eitelkeit ...

Bezüglich der für Rom reklamierten Initiative Vergils darf als gesichert gelten, dass sie in einer bereits Jahrhunderte zuvor bezeugten, erstmals in *De septem miraculis mundi ab hominibus factis* greifbaren Tradition steht. Von ihr hebt sich Nequams Darstellung nur insofern ab, als hier zum ersten Mal Vergil als Schöpfer der *Salvatio Romae* genannt wird (Poucet 4, Aa; Graf, *Roma*, 226). Deutlich schwieriger ist es, die Genese der neapolitanischen Leistungen Vergils zu rekonstruieren. Diese Schwierigkeit ist zu einem guten Teil darauf zurückzuführen, dass mit Konrad von Querfurt und Gervasius von Tilbury zwei der frühen literarischen Zeugen – und andere als literarische Zeugen gibt es in diesem Fall nicht – in einer Weise von Vergils Wirken in Neapel berichten, die authentische Kenntnis lokaler Gegebenheiten insinuiert, so dass es nicht an modernen Lesern fehlt, die ihnen ein Neapel glauben, in dem man Vergil beinahe auf Schritt und Tritt begegnet. Dagegen belegen Nequams Ausführungen, wo die *Salvatio Romae* den Katalog der Mirakel des *vates* abschließt, zum einen, dass Vergils Aktionsraum nicht zwingend auf Neapel beschränkt ist, und zum anderen, dass man von Vergils neapolitanischen Leistungen wissen kann, ohne die Stadt am Vesuv oder Süditalien je besucht zu haben (Hunt 1–15) und ohne die entsprechenden Berichte des Konrad und des Gervasius zu kennen.⁹

Dies vorausgeschickt lassen sich nicht einmal begründete Vermutungen darüber anstellen, wie und wo der Verfasser von *De naturis rerum* auf seinen Vergil gestoßen ist. Vor seinen Ausführungen zum parthenopäischen Vergil kennt die auf uns gekommene antike und mittelalterliche Literatur den magischen Wohltäter Neapels nur dank Johannes von Salisbury. Dieser berichtet in seinem im Jahr 1159 abgeschlossenen *Policraticus*, im Rahmen seiner kritischen Ausführungen zur Jagd, um damit zu belegen, dass der Nutzen Vieler der Unterhaltung eines Einzelnen vorzuziehen ist:¹⁰

Es wird erzählt, der Seher aus Mantua habe den Marcellus, als sich dieser energisch der Ausrottung der Vögel hingab, gefragt, ob er vorziehe, dass einem Vogel die Vogeljagd gelehrt oder dass eine Fliege zur Ausrottung der Fliegen gebildet werde. Nachdem er die Frage seinem Onkel Augu-

Augustum, consilio eius praelegit ut fieret musca, quae ab Eneapoli muscas abigeret, et civitatem a peste insanabili liberaret.”

stus vorgelegt hatte, wählte er auf dessen Rat, dass die Fliege geschaffen werde, die die Fliegen aus Eneapolis vertreibe und die Stadt von dieser unheilbaren Seuche befreie.

Mit dieser kurzen, in sich geschlossenen Episode beginnt das literarische Leben eines Vergil, der in der Folge mehr und mehr zum ausgewiesenen Magier wird. In einem ersten Moment, d.h. ehe Konrad von Querfurt und Gervasius von Tilbury seine Spuren in Neapel angetroffen haben wollen, scheint dieser Vergil seine Existenz primär gelehrten Spielereien und literarischen Reminiszenzen zu verdanken. Wenn der *vates* im Rahmen des einzigen Vergil-Exemplums des *Policraticus* (Lerer) mit Marcellus interagiert, dann wird er mit einer Figur konfrontiert, die bereits in der sog. *Suetonvita* Vergils hervorgehoben ist (32), wo ein Ohnmachtsanfall Octavias anlässlich der Lektüre des Halbverses *Aen.* VI, 883 “tu Marcellus eris” (du wirst Marcellus sein) erinnert wird. Das Problem der Ausrottung der Vögel, das zwischen Vergil und Marcellus im Raum steht, ergibt sich, so ich recht sehe, aus einem Vers derselben *Aeneis*-Szene. Die künftigen Siege des Marcellus verkündigend präzisiert Anchises, “sternet Poenos Gallumque rebellem” (*Aen.* VI, 858). Das meint natürlich, dass der Jüngling dereinst die Punier und die Gallier niederwerfen wird. Wer sich eine kleine semantische Unschärfe erlaubt, wird allerdings unversehens eines Marcellus gewahr, der den widerspenstigen Hahn niederstrecken wird. Von diesem Punkt ist es dann nicht mehr allzu weit zur “energischen Ausrottung der Vögel,” die Marcellus laut dem *Policraticus* betreibt. Vergil reagiert auf dieses Wüten, indem er den Jäger auffordert, zwischen der Bereitstellung eines idealen Beizvogels und einer Fliege, die alle Fliegen aus *Eneapolis* vertreibt, zu wählen.

Sowohl die Fliege als auch *Eneapolis*/Neapel gehören in der Folge zum Minimalbestand der Berichte über Vergil. Anlässlich ihres ersten Auftretens als Elemente der neuen Erzählung über den *vates* erweist sich der Name der Stadt indes als ebenso erklärungsbedürftig wie die Rolle des Insekts, denn *Eneapolis* ist keine eingeführte geographische Bezeichnung. Dem *Thesaurus linguae latinae* ist kein Ort dieses Namens bekannt. Verhandelt wird die Ortsbezeichnung hingegen in der *Vita Athanasii I episcopi neapolitani* vom Ende des 9. Jahrhunderts, wo unter den Städten Kampaniens *Heneapolis* besonders hervorgehoben und zugleich betont wird, die alten und die zeitgenössischen Historiker verschwiegen, wann diese Stadt durch wen gegründet worden sei (439f.). Umgehend betont der Verfasser der *Vita* deshalb, es handle sich um eine sehr alte Stadt, deren Erhaben-

heit der Mantuaner Vergil in den singulären Versen seines Epitaphs herausgestellt habe, als er die Stadt *Parthenopes*, d.h. Jungfrau nannte. Augustus habe dann angeordnet, dass sie *Neapolis* genannt werde, d.h. Beherrscherin von neun Städten (*novem civitatum dominatrix*) oder, wie nicht wenige andere meinten, neue Stadt (*nova civitas*), was aber angesichts des Alters der Stadt widersinnig sei, zumal jener die Stadt nicht gegründet habe. So gewunden diese Ausführungen sich ausnehmen, ihr Verfasser möchte Neapels Namen offensichtlich von Ἐννεάπολις (Herrin über neun Städte) und nicht von Νεάπολις (Neue Stadt) hergeleitet haben (Cilento 67). Zwar verschweigt er, wieso ihm derart an dieser Etymologie liegt, die den in *Eneapolis* anklingenden Aeneas unauffällig überspielt, doch lassen seine Formulierungen einen Konflikt erkennen, in dem die Frage des Gründers der Stadt Neapel und die Deutung ihres Namens von zentraler Bedeutung sind. Gut hundertfünfzig Jahre später ist bei Alexander von Telese von dieser Auseinandersetzung um die Gründungsgeschichte Neapels nichts mehr zu spüren. In seiner um 1140 redigierten *Ystoria Rogerii regis Sicilie Calabrie atque Apulie* bezeichnet der Abt eines unweit von Neapel gelegenen Benediktinerklosters jedenfalls umstandslos Aeneas als den Gründer der Stadt (69f.).

Ob sich Johannes von Salisbury der lokalpolitischen Implikationen des Städtenamens *Eneapolis* bewusst war, wissen wir nicht. Vielleicht ist er, der laut eigenem Bekunden (*Metalogicon* 101) zweimal in Süditalien unterwegs gewesen ist, dort auch nie mit der ebenfalls bei Alexander von Telese (89) überlieferten Vorstellung konfrontiert worden, Vergil sei bei Augustus in solchem Ansehen gestanden, dass er für zwei lobende Verse auf den Kaiser von diesem mit der Herrschaft über Neapel und Kalabrien beschenkt worden sei (Brugnoli 110–12). Umso bedeutsamer ist, dass Johannes seinen Vergil als Wohltäter einer Stadt vorstellt, deren Name *Eneapolis* nur vor Ort in Neapel belegt ist. Denn ausschließlich dieser Name zeigt an,¹¹ dass sich das in der Vergil-Episode des *Policraticus* verarbeitete Material nicht ausschließlich der literarischen Phantasie Nordeuropas verdankt sondern es seinen Ursprung mindestens in Teilen in Neapel oder vor dessen Mauern hat.

Schwieriger ist es, die Umstände genauer zu bestimmen, denen die Fliege ihre Anwesenheit in Neapel verdankt, zumal die *musca* (Fliege) im Umfeld eines Autors, dem man seit alters her für den Verfasser eines Kleinepos auf die Stechmücke (*Culex*) hält, vorerst nicht weiter auffallen mag. Spätestens seit Comparetti (II, 32) wird die Fliege, die im Vergil-*Exempel* des *Policraticus* zum ersten Mal auf-

11. Der neuen *Policraticus*-Edition von Keats-Rohan, die an der fraglichen Stelle (34) *ab Neapoli* liest, ist zu entnehmen, dass eine Handschrift (P) *aneapoli*, eine (Z) *a Neapoli* und fünf (A B F M I S) *ab Eneapoli* schreiben. Wieso sich die Herausgeberin mit den verbleibenden vier Handschriften (G H R W) für *ab Neapoli* entschieden hat, bleibt ihr Geheimnis. Sie setzt sich damit nicht nur über den Grundsatz “lectio difficilior lectio probabilior” (Der schwierigere Text ist der wahrscheinlichere) hinweg, sondern auch über den kritischen Apparat ihres Vorgängers Webb (26), wo zur Erläuterung von *Eneapoli* bezeichnenderweise auf die *Vita Athanasii* hingewiesen wird, so dass nicht weiter überrascht, dass auch dieser, wie gesehen überaus sachdienliche Hinweis bei Keats-Rohan fehlt.

taucht, indes gerne mit dem Hinweis auf ein Artefakt versehen, das Apollonius von Tyana in Konstantinopel geschaffen haben soll (*The Patria* 219) und das Vergils Neapolitanischer Fliege gleichsam Pate gestanden hätte. Selbstverständlich ist die Möglichkeit des Motivtransfers aus der Hauptstadt des Ostreichs in das ursprünglich byzantinische *ducatu*s Neapel nicht von vornherein auszuschließen. Desgleich ist es auch nicht rundum unmöglich, dass bei der Genese der Fliege jene Bemerkungen der *Naturalis historia* des Plinius eine Rolle spielten, auf die Spargo hingewiesen hat (72f.). Doch weder die Patenschaft des Apollonius noch des Plinius "seuchenbringende Riesenmenge von Fliegen" (*Nat. hist.*, X, 75, 40) geschweige denn sein Hinweis, dass in Rom sowohl Fliegen als auch Hunde den Herkulestempel meiden (X, 78, 41) und noch weniger die Deutung der Fliege als astronomischer Talisman (Weill-Parot 147–49), kann davon ablenken, dass der Vergil der *musca*-Episode zuallererst als einer daherkommt, der Macht über Fliegen hat. Als solcher steht er aber grundsätzlich im Banne des *Beelzebub* der Evangelien, den Hieronymus in seinem *Liber interpretationis hebraicarum nominum* lateinisch als *vir muscarum* (Herr der Fliegen) gedeutet (142; Huth 279f.) und den Isidor in den *Etymologiae* dann zusätzlich zum allerschmutzigen Götzen (*spurcissimum idolum*) erklärt hat (VIII, xi, 26).

Die gegenwärtig verfügbaren Dokumente, die entsprechenden Berichte des Konrad von Querfurt und des Gervasius von Tilbury eingeschlossen, erlauben nicht näher zu bestimmen, wann und zu welchem Zweck Vergil mit der Fliege assoziiert worden ist. Auch lässt sich nicht ausmachen, ob dieser Vergil ursprünglich eine negative oder eine positive Figur darstellen sollte und ob er von Anfang an mit *Eneapolis* in Verbindung gebracht wurde. Wir wissen nicht einmal, ob er bereits vor seinem Auftritt im *Policraticus* des Johannes von Salisbury existiert hat. Der Vergil aus Nequams *De naturis rerum* allerdings lässt erkennen, dass sich schon bald jemand an diesem Herrn der Fliegen gestört hat. Denn ist die Ambiguität des Fliegen-Vergils erst einmal erkannt, lässt sich das Blutegel-Mirakel, von dem Nequam berichtet, als gelungene Variation der Fliegen-Episode verstehen. In der neuen Version zeichnet sich der Einsatz des Sehers aus Mantua (*vates mantuanus*) zwecks Befreiung der Vesuv-Stadt von einer Seuche (*pestis*) dadurch aus, dass das negative Assoziationspotential der Fliegen vermieden wird. Vergils Engagement, das zuvor einem Wesen der Luft gegolten hat, das dazu angetan ist, seinen Meister als teuflisch erscheinen zu lassen, gilt jetzt einem Wesen des Wassers, das

laut Isidor zwar ebenfalls sehr unangenehm sein kann (*Etym.*, XII, v, 3), doch nicht mit dem Beelzebub in Verbindung gebracht wird.

Es lässt sich nicht bestimmen, ob Alexander Nequam selbst der Autor dieser Variation ist. Doch falls die Deutung seiner Blutegel-Episode zutreffend ist, dann belegt sie nebenbei auch, dass die einzelnen neapolitanischen Vergil-Wunder ihre diegetische Existenz weit weniger zwingend irgendwelchen in der Stadt am Vesuv angeblich vorhandenen Artefakten verdanken, als dies in der Sekundärliteratur nach wie vor gern angenommen wird (Petzoldt 561). Weil von keinem anderen Zauberer berichtet wird, er hätte sich durch die Einrichtung eines Fleischmarktes hervorgetan, hat Spargo die Nachricht von diesem Wunderwerk als Erweiterung des Fliegen-Mirakels gedeutet (80f.). Spargos Deutung vermag indes nur dann wirklich zu überzeugen, wenn gleichzeitig darauf hingewiesen wird, dass kein *marcellum*, weder ein normales noch ein miraculöses, in Neapel eine besondere Spur hinterlassen hat. Weil es eine solche Spur eben nicht gibt, bleibt nur anzuerkennen, dass sich die wunderbare Fleischkonservierung im Fleischmarkt, – die ihrerseits wie eine säkularisierte Version des Topos vom wohlerhaltenen und wohlduftenden Leichnam des Heiligen daherkommt –, eingedenk der unvermeidbaren Präsenz von Fleisch- und Schmeißfliegen im Umfeld von verwesendem Fleisch wie eine literarische Konsequenz der Befreiung Neapels von den Fliegen ausnimmt. Wobei, wer sich im Zeichen Vergils dieses verwesungsfreie Neapel vorgestellt hat, vielleicht weniger von den Versen des *vates* inspiriert war, wo der Begriff *macellum* nur einmal in der *Appendix Virgiliana* (*Moretum* 80f.) Verwendung findet, als von den realen klimatisch-sanitarischen Bedingungen Süditaliens (Binetti), die im Jahr 1231 dazu geführt haben, dass in den *Konstitutionen Friedrichs II.* (III, 48f.) bis dato beispiellose Normen zur Umwelthygiene formuliert wurden (Dilcher 691–98).

Nicht einmal einen klimatischen Bezug zu Neapel haben in Nequams Version der bemerkenswerten Taten Vergils indes die Luftmauer, mit der der *vates* seinen Garten schützt, und die Luftbrücke, die ihm als Fortbewegungsmittel dient. Statt die beiden von der Sekundärliteratur gerne übergangenen Motive (Gier, “Vergil”) banalisierend als “extremely common folklore motifs” (Wood 93) abzutun, sei hervorgehoben, dass das Garten-Motiv vor allem als gut virgilianisch gelten darf, imaginiert der Dichter in *Georgica* IV, 116–48 doch betont engagiert einen Garten, zu dessen weiterer Ausgestaltung er ausdrücklich auffordert. In der bei Alexander Nequam vorliegenden Form stammt Vergils Garten allerdings zweifellos aus dem *Erec et*

Enide des Chrétien de Troyes, wo auch die Mauer des exemplarischen Zaubergartens (Cardini und Miglio 61) beschrieben wird:

12. *Erec et Enide* (5739-45): “Le vergier n’avoit environ / mur ne paliz se de l’er non; / mes de l’er est de totes parz / par nigromance clos li jarz / si que riens antrer n’i pooit, / se par dessore n’i voloit, / ne que s’il fust toz clos de fer.”

Der Garten hatte weder Mauer noch Zaun, sondern war nur von Luft umgeben, aber von Luft, die den Garten von allen Seiten durch einen Zauber (*par nigromance*) umschlossen hat, so dass nichts in ihn eindringen konnte, wenn es nicht drüber hinwegflog, als ob er ganz von Eisen umschlossen wäre.¹²

Vergils mobile Luftbrücke erklärt sich angesichts der Gartenmauer, die nur im Flug zu überwinden ist, schon fast von selbst. Umso mehr als sie sich zugleich wie ein nur leicht kaschierter Tribut an die Flugkünste des Simon Magus (Herzman und Cook; Lugano) ausnimmt, dem Inbegriff des Zauberers in der christlichen Welt.

Wer auch immer für den Vergil des Alexander Nequam verantwortlich zeichnet, er hat diesen Vergil, der, wie gesehen, bereits deutliche Spuren literarischer Überarbeitung aufweist, als eine Figur konzipiert, die sich durch ihren Einsatz für das Gemeinwohl (Blutegel, Fleischmarkt, *Salvatio Romae*) auszeichnet, ohne ihr eigenes Wohlbefinden (Garten, Luftbrücke) deswegen hintanzustellen. Auffallend an diesem Vergil ist zudem, dass sein Wirkungsfeld nicht auf jenes Neapel beschränkt ist, das der Dichter selbst als *dulcis* (lieblich) bezeichnet und dessen Muße er die *Georgica* verdankt (*Georg.*, IV, 563f.). Noch bemerkenswerter ist allerdings, dass Nequams Vergil, all seinen Wundertaten zu trotz, nie anders denn als *vates* (Seher) oder *philosophus* bezeichnet wird. Dass der Seher und Philosoph Vergil über ungewöhnliche Fähigkeiten verfügt, lässt sich nur aus seinen ungewöhnlichen Taten erschließen.

Während die explizite Benennung der Fähigkeiten dieses neuen Vergils bei Nequam wie zuvor schon bei Johannes von Salisbury unterbleibt, haben die Autoren von Texten, die eine persönliche Begegnung mit Vergil bzw. mit seinen Wunderwerken imaginieren, keinerlei Hemmungen, diese Kompetenzen ausdrücklich zu benennen. So schreibt Konrad von Querfurt in seiner *Epistola de statu Apulie et de operibus vel artibus Virgilio*, wenn er von der Schleifung der Stadtmauern Neapels berichtet, die er in seiner Funktion als Kanzler Kaisers Heinrich VI. und Reichslegat im Jahr 1196 angeordnet hatte, die Stadtmauern seien vom großen Philosophen (*tantus philosophus*) Vergil grundgelegt und errichtet worden (194). Auf dieses erste Stück, dessen Vergil sich zu Neapel verhält wie der mythische Dichter Amphion zu Theben, dessen Stadtmauern sich bekanntlich auf-

13. *Epistola de statu Apulie* 194: “Non profuit civibus illis civitatis eiusdem ymago, in ampulla vitrea magica arte ab eodem Virgilio inclusa, artissimum habente orificium, in cuius integritate tantam habebant fiduciam, ut eadem ampulla integra permanente nullum posset pati civitas detrimentum. Quam ampullam sicut et civitatem in nostra habemus potestate et muros destruximus, ampulla integra permanente. Sed forte, quia ampulla modicum fissa est, civitati nocuit.”

grund des Gesang des Dichters zusammengefügt haben (Horaz, *De arte poetica*, 394–96 und *Mythographus vaticanus* I, I, 96), folgt so gleich das zweite:¹³

Nichts nutzte den Bürgern der Stadt deren Bildnis, vom selben Vergil mittels magischer Kunst (*magica arte*) in ein gläsernes Gefäß mit überaus enger Öffnung eingeschlossen, auf dessen Unversehrtheit sie so sehr vertrauten, dass solange besagtes Gefäß unversehrt besteht, die Stadt keinen Schaden leiden kann. Dieses Gefäß ist wie die Stadt in unserer Gewalt und wir zerstörten die Mauern, wobei das Gefäß unversehrt blieb. Aber vielleicht hat das Gefäß der Stadt geschadet, weil es ein wenig gesprungen war.

Hier benennt Konrad die Kompetenzen explizit, die Vergils Einsatz für Neapel überhaupt erst möglich machen. Seiner *magica ars*, seiner Zauberkunst ist das Objekt – das ganz ähnlich, allerdings ohne magische Funktion, im *Polyhistor* des Wilhelm von Malmesbury beschrieben wird (62; Thomson 186f., Maaz 1013) – zu verdanken, dessen Integrität die Integrität der Stadt Neapel garantiert. Mittels magischer Zauberformeln (*magicis incantationibus*), so fährt Konrad so gleich fort, hat Vergil zudem jenes Pferd zusammengefügt, das, solange es in seiner Integrität bestand hatte, alle Pferde der Gegend vor Rückenproblemen bewahrte, was einen Leser der *Georgica* vielleicht an jene Verse erinnert (III, 75–85), die Seneca seinerzeit als eine übertragene Beschreibung des *vir fortis* lobte (*Ep.* 95, 69). In der gleichen Weise, wie das Gefäß mit der *imago* der Stadt und das Pferd nicht mehr unversehrt (*integer*) bestehen, so existiert laut Konrad auch die Fliege nicht mehr unversehrt, deren Unversehrtheit garantierte, dass keine Fliege in die Stadt eindringen konnte.

Konrads explizite Benennung der Zaubermacht Vergils geht mit der Feststellung einher, dass diese Macht mittlerweile nicht mehr wirksam ist. Bezeichnenderweise endet Konrads persönliche Begegnung mit Vergil, die im Zeichen von dessen wirksamstem Werk, dem *opus operosum* der Stadtmauern begonnen hat, mit den Gebeinen Vergils. Deren Wirksamkeit besteht zwar noch fort, doch nimmt sich Konrads Beschreibung ihrer meteorologischen Wirkung wie ein indirektes Eingeständnis aus, dass er als Vertreter Heinrichs VI. ungestüme Zeiten über Neapel gebracht hat. Werden Vergils *ossa* nämlich der Luft ausgesetzt, trübt sich der Himmel, gerät das Meer in Bewegung und entwickelt sich ein Sturm, was der Briefschreiber selbst gesehen und erprobt hat (*nos vidimus et probavimus*).

Als Gestalt, mit der er seine persönliche Erfahrung hat, präsentiert auch Gervasius von Tilbury den neapolitanischen Vergil im dritten Buch seiner *Otia imperialia*. Ihm zufolge verdanken sich die Fliege, das glücksbringende Stadttor, von dem er selbst profitiert haben will, sowie die Unmöglichkeit im dunklen Felstunnel zwischen Neapel und Pozzuoli ein Verbrechen zu begehen, der *ars mathematica* Vergils (iii, 10; 12; 16). Desgleichen beruht die Wirkung einer von Vergil auf einem Berg nahe Neapel errichteten Statue *vi mathesis*, auf der Kraft der Astrologie (iii, 13). Dass Vergil sich nebst “anderen Studien (...) auch mit Medizin und besonders mit *mathematica*,” die im klassischen Latein auch einfach ‘Astrologie’ bedeuten kann, beschäftigt hat, steht schon in der *Suetonvita* (15). Der Vergil des Gervasius ist allerdings noch um ein Detail reicher. Vielleicht inspiriert von der Bemerkung des Johannes von Salisbury über einen *Ludowicus*, der nur die Knochen Vergils, nicht aber dessen *sensus* von Apulien nach Gallien gebracht hat (*Policraticus* II, 23), erzählt Gervasius als erster, man habe in Vergils Grab ein Buch gefunden, das die *Ars notaria* (iii, 112; Véronèse, “Virgile”) “nebst anderen Aufzeichnungen aus seiner Kunst” enthielt, wie es in der deutschen Übersetzung der *Otia* von Heinz Stiene heißt.

Die Herausgeber der *Otia imperialia* verweisen zur Stelle auf Thorndike (279–89), wo allerdings nicht die *Ars notaria* sondern die dem Salomon zugeschriebene *Ars notoria* besprochen wird, die Julien Véronèse jüngst kritisch ediert und dabei auch festgehalten hat, dass der Name Vergils in diesem Text keine Rolle spielt (23). Allerdings erwähnt Ralph Niger in seiner gegen 1190 entstandenen zweiten *Chronica* (108) eine *Ars notaria*, die Vergil in den *Secreta Aristotelis* gefunden, dann aber verbrannt hat. Zudem erklärt Johannes von Tilbury in seiner eigenen, um 1180 redigierten *Ars notaria*, dass zu den falschen Meinungen, die bezüglich dieser *ars* in Umlauf seien, nebst anderen auch jene gehöre, dass Vergil sie erfunden und der selige Gregor sie verbrannt habe und dass wer diese Kunst beherrsche, sich in sieben Tagen bedeutende Kompetenzen in den sieben freien Künsten erwerben könne (Rose 320f.). Diese Bemerkung belegt, dass Johannes von Salisbury vielleicht der erste, aber bald nicht mehr der einzige ist, der um Gregor des Großen Verbrennung astrologischer und divinatorischer Bücher weiß (*Policraticus* II, 26). Vor allem aber illustriert sie, dass man Vergil mitunter nicht nur für den Erfinder der Schnellschrift der *ars notaria* hielt, sondern dass man in ihm auch den Autor eines didaktischen Wunderbuches zu den *artes liberales* erkannte. Wenn Gervasius nicht wirklich präzisiert, was für

ein Werk man in Neapel im Grab Vergils zu Haupte von dessen integrem Körper gefunden hat, so scheint diese Unbestimmtheit gewollt. Zumal er auch behauptet, Exzerpte aus besagtem Buch gesehen und für wirkungsvoll befunden zu haben (*vidimus et probari ... fecimus*), er indes verschweigt, um was für eine *experientia* es sich dabei gehandelt hat (iii, 112). Da das in Neapel zuvor unbekannte Grab Vergils aber von einem *astronomus summus* mit Hilfe seiner Kunst lokalisiert worden ist und dieser *astronomus* eigentlich die *ossa* Vergils mittels Beschwörungen dazu bringen wollte, ihm die gesamte Kunst Vergils zu offenbaren, steht außer Frage, dass auch dieser Fundbericht die Wahrnehmung Vergils als Astronomen weiter fördert.

Über entsprechende Kompetenzen verfügt Vergil in den Jahren um 1200 schließlich auch im *Dolopathos* des Johannes von Alta Silva, wo er als Lehrer des Lucinius, der eigentlichen Hauptfigur des Romans vorgestellt ist. Im *Dolopathos* agiert ein Vergil, der als der hervorragendste Philosoph seiner Zeit gilt und der den Inhalt der freien Künste einem kleinen Büchlein (*libellum*) derart präzise und bündig anvertraut hat, dass man sich deren Stoff in nicht mal drei Jahren vollständig aneignen kann (72). Lucinius lernt den Stoff der klassischen Fächer unter Vergils Anleitung denn auch problemlos, wobei Johannes betont, dass die Astronomie edler als die anderen Disziplinen sei. So sieht sich Lucinius dank der ihm von Vergil beigebrachten Regeln in die Lage versetzt, aus der Bewegung der Planeten und der anderen Sterne sowie aus dem Aussehen des Himmels zu erkennen, was auf der gesamten Welt geschieht (74).

Geschichtszauber

In den beiden Jahrzehnten vor und nach 1200 genießt Vergil, wie Gervasius von Tilbury und Johannes von Alta Silva bezeugen, einen singulären Ruf als Astronom, wobei Konrad von Querfurts Insistieren auf den magischen Kompetenzen des parthenopäischen Philosophen nur zusätzlich deutlich macht, dass sich dieser Astronom weniger durch seine Beobachtung der Himmelskörper auszeichnet als durch seine Kompetenz, sich die Einflüsse der Himmelskörper zum Nutzen der Stadt Neapel bzw. seines Schülers dienstbar zu machen. Aber selbst diese drei Autoren, die Vergils magisch-astronomische Kompetenzen im Gegensatz zu Alexander Nequam nicht nur beschreiben sondern ausdrücklich benennen, wissen von keiner *ars nigromantica*. Der üble Ruf, den sich Gerbert mittels einer durchge-

hend auf seine eigene Person zentrierten Praxis derselben Kompetenzen erworben hat, kommt im Falle Vergils nicht auf. Ein knappes halbes Jahrhundert nachdem Gerbert im Verfolgen seiner magisch-astronomischen Kompetenzen sein Heil verspielt hat, steht Vergil um 1200 für die Möglichkeit, dasselbe Können ohne das mindeste persönliche Risiko zum Vorteil der Gemeinschaft und seiner selbst einzusetzen.

Dass es sich bei Vergils Zauberkönnen trotzdem um eine Manifestation der *ars nigromantica* handelt, spricht erst ein halbes Jahrhundert später Johannes von Wales offen aus: "Vergil war in der Naturphilosophie begabt und hat sich in zahlreichen Fällen der *nigromantia* bedient; deshalb erzählt Alexander Nequam Wunderbares von ihm [...]."14 Auf die *nigromantia* bzw. auf die *ars nigromantica* ist Johannes von Wales in den *Derivationes* des Huguccio von Pisa gestoßen (248), dessen Erläuterungen zum Kolosseum er auf Alexander Nequams Beschreibung der *Salvatio Romae* folgen lässt. Dergestalt kreiert er ein römisches Wunderbauwerk, dessen Urheber, dank Nequam, Vergil ist und dessen Funktionsweise, dank Huguccio, auf jener nekromantischen Kunst beruht, mit deren Hilfe Rom sich den ganzen Erdkreis unterworfen hat. Wo Huguccio auf diese zuvor unbekannte nekromantische Deutung des Kolosseums gestoßen ist, entzieht sich unserer Kenntnis (Poucet 5, A). Seine Ausführungen zum Lemma *nigromantia* belegen allerdings, dass das entsprechende Imaginationsfeld bereits im Verlauf des dritten Viertels des 12. Jahrhunderts, als Huguccio seine *Derivationes* erarbeitete (Huguccio xxi), nachhaltig in Bewegung geraten war.

Während Osbern von Gloucester in seinen *Derivationes*, die nur kurz vor dem gleichnamigen Werk des Huguccio entstanden sind und von diesem intensiv benutzt werden, die *nigromantia* zusammen mit anderen klassischen *-mantia*-Begriffen im Wortfeld von *ydromantia* verzeichnet, das seinerseits unter *ydor* eingeordnet ist (337), finden sich die *-mantia*-Begriffe bei Huguccio unter MAN, wo als erster Begriff "*mantos idest divinatio*" erläutert wird (732). Über Manto, Tochter des Tiresias, kommt dann die Stadt Mantua ins Spiel, aus der Vergil gebürtig ist und die sich mit Ovid an ihm freut (*Am.* III, 15, 7), worauf nochmals Manto aufgerufen wird, die jetzt etymologisch für *mantia* steht und damit für das Wortfeld der *-mantia*-Begriffe: *nigromantia*, *piromantia*, *aerimantia*, *ydromantia*, *geomantia*, *ciromantia*, *ornixomantia* und *armomantia*. Es versteht sich, dass diese Begriffe zusammengehören. Die meisten von ihnen stehen denn auch bereits im Magie-Kapitel Isidors (*Etym.* VIII, ix) nahe beieinan-

14. Berlioz 111: "Hic [Virgilius] fuit et philosophia naturali preeditus et nigromantia in multis usus est, unde et mira narrat de eo Alexander Nequam in libro De naturis rerum, ubi ait [...]."

der. Neu ist bei Huguccio, dass all diese Zauberworte ihre etymologische Existenz dem Geburtsort Vergils verdanken. So gesehen ist nicht recht verständlich, wieso Huguccios Ausführungen zur *mantia* weder in der *Enciclopedia Virgiliana* noch in *The Virgilian Tradition* unter die Testimonien aufgenommen worden sind.

Wie dem auch sei, Huguccios *Derivationes* sind sicher nach dem *Policraticus* des Johannes von Salisbury entstanden, aber höchstwahrscheinlich vor den Texten, die Vergils neues neapolitanisches Wirkungsfeld zusehends detaillierter beschreiben. Im Vergleich mit Huguccios Mantua erscheint dieses Neapel wie ein Gegenstück, das erlaubt, den Zauber zu erleben, der im etymologischen Nachschlagewerk im Zeichen Vergils gelehrt katalogisiert wird. So gesehen steht der neapolitanische Vergil für die Erfahrung, dass Worte nicht nur eine Bedeutung haben sondern mitunter auch eine Wirkung. Wenn die Autoren, die diese Wirkung darstellen, zu diesem Zweck neue Geschichten verschriftlichen, dann zeigt dies vor allem, dass, um Zaubermeister Vergil selbst zu bemühen, die entsprechenden *carmina* bisher fehlten (*Buc.* VIII, 67). *Carmen* bedeutet bekanntlich nicht nur bei Vergil auch Zauberspruch. Der Zauber, den Alexander Nequam, Gervasius von Tilbury, Johannes von Alta Silva und Konrad von Querfurt im Anschluss an Johannes von Salisbury im Namen Vergils herbeigeschrieben haben, hat obwohl nicht in Versen sondern in Prosa vorgetragen ganz offensichtlich Wirkung gezeitigt: Er hat dazu geführt, dass der Begriff *nigromantia* und seine Ableitungen, die im Zeichen Gerberts von Aurillac eben noch ewigen Verlust des Heils implizierten, zu Ehrenbegriffen wurden, die, wie die der Vergil des *Compendiloquium* des Johannes von Wales zum ersten Mal belegt, den *nobiles philosophi*, den angesehensten Philosophen (Berlioz 110) bestens anstehen.

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Cosmopolitan and Vernacular

Petrarch at Sea

Abstract

Casual readers and scholars alike celebrate Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* (*RVF*) as an early masterpiece of vernacular lyric. Yet Petrarch directed most of his professional energies as writer to Latin composition, in the belief that Latin was the language of his most important literary models and of the literary future. This essay studies Petrarch's life – in particular, episodes revealing his conflicted attitudes toward the sea and especially toward travel by ship – in order to comment on his attitude toward the language of literature: his respect for Latin, his enduring affection for Italian, and his work on the vernacular lyrics at the very end of his life. The essay uses Theodor Adorno's formulation of 'late style' (Adorno used this concept to discuss the late work of composers, in particular Beethoven) to describe Petrarch's late work on the *RVF* in his last years. It argues that Petrarch's turn to the vernacular in his final years should be read as a kind of linguistic experimentalism – fragmentary and catastrophic, as Adorno would describe it, rather than sweet, unified and harmonic – made possible when Petrarch is no longer using Latin to think about literary posterity.*

* I am particularly grateful to the anonymous reviewers for their thoughtful comments on an earlier draft of this essay.

1. See, for instance, the (hilariously titled) *Wall Street Journal* article "Caveat Emptor: Lovers of Latin Try to Sell a Dead Language," by Matthew Dalton (29 Nov. 2013) on the Schola Nova in Belgium, which educates Latin speakers and promotes Latin as pan-European language.

Of all the specters of unity that haunt Europe, the dream of a common language is the most equivocal. Few hanker for a return to Latin – until the topic of English hegemony looms, and Latin seems the lesser of the evils.¹ Latin, after all, was the language that gave Europe coherence (and liturgical unity, though now that ship has sailed) and that linked the present to the ancient past for the centuries predating modernity. With the collapse of Latinity and the rise of that curious beast, the national language system, Europe lost any semblance of linguistic unity. In order to do business together, an Italian and a Dane or a Frenchman and a Ukrainian must learn another's language. Enter English – and the regional particularism which Europe symbolizes and celebrates is weakened.

The national language system is arguably the most distinctive feature of the European nation state. The principle that the mother

tongue should serve as language of culture, that the literary language (like the nation) should have territorial sovereignty, and that contemporary spoken practice should serve as stylistic standard which the written language must emulate seems natural – until one looks away from Europe to virtually any other part of the globe. Much of what medieval literary historians study is the drama that unfolded when European writers undertook to create regional literatures using tongues which, at first, were understood to be distinct both from Latin and from the mother tongue as spoken in the kitchen and in the piazza, and only over time became naturalized as national languages.

This drama unfolded differently in each corner of Europe. In Italy, a number of factors complicated the emergence of a regional literary tradition. In large part because Italians felt Latin to be their own possession, they long resisted the rise of vernacular culture. And perhaps because their activities as merchants put them in regular contact with so many and such diverse populations, they showed little reluctance to import others' linguistic and literary cultures along with their commodities and goods. Thus in northern Italy both French and Occitan were used as literary languages between the late twelfth and late fourteenth century, and in southern Italy and Sicily Arabic survived as literary language into the twelfth century and Greek into the thirteenth. The explosion of vernacular culture during the thirteenth and fourteenth century – in particular the activities of the three authors known as the Tre Corone (or Three Crowns) of Italian letters, Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio – augured great things. But during the fifteenth century Italians rewound the tape: they returned to Latinity; they lovingly cultivated the Latin language and allowed the new leaves of vernacular culture to wither on the vine.

No author better symbolizes the contradictions and tensions of late medieval literary culture than Francesco Petrarch (1304–74), and no work better expresses the paradoxical instability and enduring power of emergent vernacular letters than the *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta* (RVF).² Petrarch himself weighs the “vernacular fragments” against his Latin compositions in the opening sentences of the volume that served him as fictionalized autobiography, the collection of letters (written in Latin) known as the *Familiars*. He describes the

great number of writings that lie scattered and neglected throughout my house [...] confused heaps of letters and formless piles of papers

2. I follow current scholarly convention in referring to Petrarch's lyric collection (usually) using the Latin title he himself gave it. The title *Canzoniere* became popular only during the nineteenth century.

(multa michi scriptorum diversi generis supellex domi [...] sparsa quidem et neglecta [...] confusis itaque circumventus literarum cumulis et informi papiro).

And he sorts them into categories that merge linguistic and stylistic distinctions:

Part of the writing was free of literary niceties, part showed the influence of Homeric control since I rarely made use of the rules of Isocrates; but another part intended for charming the ears of the multitude relied on its own particular rules

(Erat pars soluto gressu libera, pars frenis homericis astricta, quoniam ysocraticis habenis raro utimur; pars autem, mulcendis vulgi auribus intenta, suis et ipsa legibus utebatur).³

3. *Familiares* 1.1.3–4 and 6: Petrarca, *Letters* 1: 3–4 and *Le Familiari* 1: 3–4.

Petrarch's intention here is to characterize all his efforts as writer and with quick, deft strokes to create distinctions among them, to sort them into categories. One "formless pile of papers" was written in prose (literally, "free and unbound in its ways"); one obeyed the poetic rules that govern epic ("Homeric reins"). In a third pile, Petrarch sets the writings "intended to caress the ears of the crowd" (*mulcendis vulgi auribus intenta*). The fragments of vernacular lyrics used a linguistic medium that had a scant literary record in comparison to the millennial archive of the cosmopolitan tongue, Latin; that did not yet possess a standardized orthography, grammar, or lexicon; that was as fluid and variable and as seductive to the ear as music. While the *grammatica* could be compelled to obey the rules of quantitative meter and the ancient standards of linguistic practice, the nearly lawless vernacular ("obeying only its own rules") flows like the errant melodies drifting in from the street and the tavern.

Viewed in the context of Petrarch's corpus as a whole, the *RVF* poses a peculiar problem. It is one of a very small minority of vernacular works written by the master. In Latin, Petrarch wrote some twenty eight texts and treatises – from the major works, like the abandoned epic *Africa*; the *Secretum*, a private volume of reflections not circulated during his life; and the multiple volumes of letters which the fifteenth century Humanists would use as a stylebook of Latin prose, to the briefer and more occasional texts like the *Penitential Psalms* and the *Prayers*. And in Italian, he wrote two: the *Canzoniere* and the *Trionfi*. The works in Latin, combined, represent (by a very rough count) 720,000 words of prose and poetry; the Italian poetry

adds up to a total of 68,700 words. Petrarch wrote 91.3% of his oeuvre in Latin and 8.7% in Italian.

But scholars have long recognized that Latin mattered most to Petrarch, and it is not just the prominence of Latinity in Petrarch's corpus that poses a problem for literary historians. More difficult to account for is the fact that – despite his palpable love and respect for the Latin language – Petrarch returned to the vernacular at the end of his life. The semi-autograph manuscript of the *RVF* that we know today as Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (BAV), Vat. lat. 3195 was Petrarch's own working copy, which he continued to edit until shortly before his death. And his sustained work on the *Trionfi* dates to this same period: late in his life, during his years of residence in Venice and, after that, at his final home at Arquà.⁴ The curious position of the *RVF* in Petrarch's corpus, his late work on the *RVF* in particular as a sort of linguistic *pentimento*, has not deterred its ardent fans. Today, it remains the most loved of Petrarch's works. But the imbalance between Latin and Italian makes the writer's linguistic footprint difficult to describe with accuracy and precision. The corpus makes a queasy cocktail of ingredients that mingle uneasily with each other: the large yet inconsequential Latin corpus on the one hand and the sliver of vernacular poetry, which would change the course of European letters, on the other; the works of probity and substance that only scholars read on the one hand, and the *fragmenta* we all love on the other; the measured and balanced periodic sentences of the Latin works on the one hand, and on the other the urgent, musical verses of the vernacular rhymes – scattered like dice, scattered like ships in a storm.

To further complicate matters, this attitude toward Petrarch's corpus – the disproportionate attention given to the relatively small body of vernacular poetry – contradicts the immediate influence that Petrarch's work had on Italian letters. The fifteenth century saw the ascendancy of Humanism in Italy. And the Humanists, following Petrarch's authoritative lead (and with a couple of noteworthy exceptions), promoted Latin and had little use for the vernacular.⁵ When Italy (like the rest of Europe) finally embraced the vernacular, during the sixteenth century, Italy (like the rest of Europe) would take up Petrarchan poetics – meaning, of course, the vernacular lyrics of the *Canzoniere*, not the pompous and ponderous Latin epic, the *Africa*. But for the first century following his death, Petrarch was known, respected and loved as supreme Latin stylist and as Latin philologist, and his most popular work was a Latin treatise, *De remediis utriusque*

4. I follow Pacca in dating the *Trionfi* to this same period, late in Petrarch's life (250–55), although it's quite possible that he first conceived the work much earlier.

5. The vernacular, of course, had its fifteenth century defenders – most notably Leon Battista Alberti (1404–72), who wrote important treatises in Italian and composed his own grammar of the vernacular (preserved in a single, autograph manuscript). In the second half of the Quattrocento vernacular writers would become more numerous and vernacular composition more central to the literary life of the peninsula; see in particular the works of Matteo Maria Boiardo (1441–94) and Angelo Poliziano (1454–94) and the vernacular activism of Lorenzo de' Medici (1449–92).

6. On the manuscript tradition of *De remediis utriusque fortunae* see Trapp 218. Of course, with the return of vernacular culture in Italy during the sixteenth century, the fortunes of both Petrarch's and Boccaccio's vernacular works would rise.

7. The *RVF* famously both embodies and abjures the passing of time: it builds ineluctably toward death (Laura's death, Petrarch's death) and at the same time paces a repetitive yet unfruitful annual cycle of time, like an ancient, futile fertility ritual; there are 366 poems in the book, usually understood as 365 (one for each day of the year) + 1 (either the introductory sonnet or the concluding canzone addressed to the Virgin can be understood as the supplementary, extra-annual poem). For these reasons, and because the passing of time becomes at moments an obsession for Petrarch as poet, the topic of time in relation to the *RVF* is a vast and intricate one.

8. Images of travel by ship and of shipwreck in particular are abundant in Petrarch's works, in both Latin and the vernacular; I will focus only on a specific set of these. I have chosen to focus on the *RVF* and not the *Trionfi* – the other vernacular work of Petrarch's old age – in part because the *RVF* is the product both of youth and of old age. But it is also true that in the *Trionfi*, Petrarch did not use images of ships at sea and shipwreck in particular in the same way as in the *RVF*. In the *Trionfi* seascapes serve as establishing shots to locate characters of historical or mythological importance. But images of stormy seas or of boats tossed on the waves are not used to represent a state of mind, as they are in the *RVF*. To my knowledge the sole exception to this rule is a fleeting image of a sailor turning his ship away from reefs, used as a simile; see *Triumphus Pudicitie* 50–51 (Petrarca, *Trionfi* 236).

9. Petrarch worked on the vernacular poems throughout his life. Scholars have identified periods of work on the lyric poems that would become the *RVF* in 1336–37, 1342, 1347–50, 1356–58, 1359–62, and finally 1366–74. For an exhaustive discussion of the phases of work on the *RVF* see Wilkins, *The Making*. In this reading, I am interested in his decisive turn at the end of his life not to Latin but to

fortunae.⁶ In the same way, Boccaccio was known above all for his Latin works, and *De genealogia deorum* was the most read of his treatises. Only Dante, of the great writers of the Trecento, was remembered principally for the vernacular masterpiece; and his star dimmed (temporarily) for that reason.

In this essay, I will tease out one thread from this knot of problems to do with the tangled relation between cosmopolitan language and vernacular in late medieval poetics: I will study Petrarch's turn to the vernacular at the end of his life. And I will use the formulation 'late style' to think about the structural difficulty posed by the *RVF* as a linguistic rear-guard action. The term comes from Adorno, who used it to describe the late works of Beethoven and suggested that a similar dynamic could be found in the late works of other composers. Adorno proposed that in his late work, Beethoven moved beyond the sublime accomplishments of maturity – sweet or solemn, masterful and melodic – into a new kind of emotional abstraction, beyond beauty, even beyond coherent emotional expressionism. Adorno on 'late style' is – like much of Adorno's thought – difficult yet immensely suggestive. And thinking about the passing of time in relation to the *RVF* is notoriously risky business.⁷ Yet I believe that Adorno's fragmentary writings on 'late style' can help us to read Petrarch's late work on the lyric poems by illuminating their lasting power, for Petrarch himself as well as for us. In the final section of this essay, I will use Adorno on 'late style' to read two sonnets from the *RVF*, focusing on images of ships in distress as metaphors that align the poetry and the poet's life.⁸ My aim is not to contribute to the superb biographical criticism that tracks the composition of the *RVF* in relation to the events of Petrarch's life, but rather to create a portrait of the poet *at sea* – in the English idiom, at once "bewildered" and "meandering" – in the trackless ocean of vernacular poetics at the end of his life. Petrarch began the *RVF* as a young man and continued to work on it periodically throughout his life. But in its final form it is the work of old age.⁹ More important to my inquiry in this essay, it is the work to which he chose to devote himself toward the end: not the enduring Latin monuments, but the vernacular fragments. Is it possible to see a stylistic progression in the *RVF* from a mature, harmonious, affectionate and sweet style to a style that is ravaged, emotionally expressionless, and devoid of sweetness? Can we track this development in a narrowly defined set of images in particular: the ship on the troubled sea of life? Adorno proposes that in their late works, great artists have finished with mere beauty. "In the

the humble vernacular, and to the vernacular fragments in particular. In other words, I'm not arguing that the vernacular *didn't* interest him (at least sporadically) earlier in his life, but rather asking *why* the vernacular interested him particularly during this late period: what attractions it held for him at the end of his life.

history of art,” he writes, “late works are the catastrophes” (567). Does Petrarch’s late work on the *RVF*, as Adorno suggests it might, represent *catastrophe*: the catastrophic collapse of the self, of the unified literary work, or of the cosmopolitan language of literature?

A Cat May Look at a King

In January of 1361, Petrarch – who, at the venerable age of 56, had already been crowned Poet Laureate by the Roman Senate, and had acted as emissary for popes and monarchs – was sent on a diplomatic mission to King Jean II of France to congratulate him on his recent release from captivity under the English. Jean, remembered as Jean le Bon, had been captured following his defeat in battle at Poitiers in 1356 and taken as prisoner of war to London. Released in 1360 after his son, Charles, concluded a treaty that promised a ruinous ransom to buy his freedom, Jean returned to Paris. Petrarch met him there on behalf of his patrons, the Visconti of Milan, to celebrate his safe return to the capital.¹⁰

The speech that Petrarch made on this occasion, which he himself edited and recorded for posterity, begins with a disclaimer defending his use of Latin rather than French in his audience with the King. And, read against the backdrop of the linguistic policies of the French court and the linguistic adventures of the French king, his oration makes a succinct and forceful statement of both Petrarch’s attachment to the Latin language and the challenges that Latin faced in late medieval Europe. King Jean’s court, it seems, had requested that as a concession to local sensibilities Petrarch address his audience in French. And in his opening comments, he explains his choice not to comply. He concedes that it would be preferable to speak in the language that is more agreeable and more familiar to his audience. And he recalls with approval the rulers of ancient Rome, who would allow no language but their own to be spoken in their presence: they conducted their audiences in Latin and only in Latin. Other monarchs, too, enforced a similar linguistic policy. Thus Athenian Themistocles was obliged to work up some Persian before his negotiations with the King of Persia, rather than

offend the ears of the King with a foreign tongue (*peregrinum ydioma*). And indeed willingly would I myself do the same, if I could. But I am not a man of such wit: I do not know the

10. On Petrarch’s embassy to King Jean see Barbeau du Rocher and Wilkins, *Life* 173–76.

French language, nor am I able to learn it with ease (Petrarch, “Collatio” 1286–89).

Yet – despite his modesty about his own linguistic capacity – Petrarch is emboldened by the knowledge that Jean as a young man was himself devoted to the study of Latin. Petrarch cannot be expected to address so magnificent a personage in a language that no one could expect him to have mastered; and so Petrarch begs the king’s condescension and announces his intention to say his piece in their common tongue, Latin.

As is usual with matters relating to Petrarch’s biography, we have only his own version of this story. Petrarch edited his papers carefully, with an eye to shaping his reputation and managing his fame. Historians commenting on this episode typically assume that Petrarch received a formal request to speak in French and read these sentences as his firm refusal to do so – shocking temerity on his part, if this is the case. Indeed, it’s difficult to imagine the sequence of events leading up to Petrarch’s audience with the king. Did King Jean (or a member of his retinue) attempt to dictate the terms of the ceremony, to be rebuked by Petrarch? Or was there a more spontaneous exchange: did Petrarch begin his comments in his fluent, Italian-accented Latin to be interrupted by the King, and only then continue (perhaps halting and uncertain) his prepared text, aware that the King was not following his periodic sentences and poetic flourishes? Was this exordium part of the speech that the King and the court heard, or was it added later, as self-justification on Petrarch’s part?

Perhaps most provocative, the episode compels us to ask: how well did Petrarch know his audience? King Jean II is remembered today, among other things, as the originator of a French vernacularization movement, a movement that would come to fruition under his son and successor, Charles V – also present at Petrarch’s address. During Jean’s reign the Bible was vulgarized by Jean de Sy. Jean de Vignay created a French version of Vincent of Beauvais’s *Speculum Historiale*. But the first translation made during Jean’s rule and with his patronage was the work of another man, also present when Petrarch addressed the King. Pierre Bersuire (also known as Pierre of Poitiers) vulgarized *Decades* I, III and IV of Livy’s *Ab Urbe Condita*.¹¹ Pierre was an old friend of Petrarch’s; they had known each other since Petrarch’s days in Avignon, Petrarch’s home until 1353.¹² Indeed, Pierre’s vernacular translation of Livy would not have been possible without Petrarch’s intervention. It was Petrarch’s philological detective work that brought Livy fully into the Middle Ages. Before Pe-

11. On vernacular translation in fourteenth century France, see Monfrin.

12. On Pierre Bersuire, see Pannier and Barbeau du Rocher 197–200.

trarch's diligent search for new manuscript versions of the *Decades*, before his meticulous editorial work on the text, Livy's name was attached to countless vernacular works, some more or less faithfully translated from Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita* and others spin-offs of derivative compendia or epitomes, circulating as independent (and increasingly variant) texts. Petrarch used his deep knowledge of Latin and his acute sense of Latin style to restore Livy's text – which Pierre in turn reproduced in the French vernacular.

We know that Pierre was there (along with King Jean and the Dauphin) because, once again, we have Petrarch's own account of the event, recorded in a letter written to Pierre. And, thanks to this letter, we know that Jean and his retinue did pay attention to Petrarch's Latin address that day – or at least they took in portions of it. Petrarch reminds Pierre of the events of the day: he noticed, as he spoke, that King Jean and his son Charles both responded eagerly to Petrarch's mention of Fortune. And Petrarch tells Pierre that he had a visit later that night from someone who warned him that he would be summoned to the King's presence to discuss and debate the role that Fortune plays in human affairs.¹³ Given Jean's recent adventures – his defeat and capture; the hostage exchange negotiated as part of the terms of his release, which required him to send another son, Louis, along with 39 other French nobles to England to take his place – it seems that the royal family had every reason to be interested in the subtle machinations of Fortune. Yet Jean's interest in Petrarch's thoughts on the twists and turns of fate, it seems, extended only so far. Petrarch reminds Pierre that he dutifully attended the King and the Dauphin, who whiled away the hours in vagaries and self-preening. A cat may look at a king – but he may not, it seems, speak with one. Petrarch left without saying his piece on Fortune.

Perhaps the King simply had little interest in inviting another torrent of voluble Latin from his Italian visitor's mouth. A glance at the text of Petrarch's address to King Jean allows another, admittedly uncharitable interpretation of the day's events. Petrarch addresses the topic of Fortune in the opening lines of his speech, building to a line from Virgil on the subject: *Fortuna omnipotens et ineluctabile fatum* (“All-powerful Fortune and inevitable fate”). One imagines Petrarch intoning the word *Fortuna* sonorously each time it occurs – typically, for emphasis, at the end of a phrase – and giving Virgil's verse the prominence it merits (Petrarca, “Collatio” 1290–91). One also imagines the King's and the Dauphin's ears perking to the sound of a word they recognized. The Latin word *Fortuna* entered French – as it en-

13. *Familiars* 22.13: Petrarca, *Letters* 3: 240–41 and *Le Familiari* 4: 136–38.

tered all the Romance languages – virtually unchanged. The French *fortune* is a cognate of the Latin *fortuna*, and hence immediately familiar even to the ear unaccustomed to following the divagations and peregrinations of Latin syntax. Certainly the dusty and moldering heap of Petrarch's periodic sentences – larded with subordinate clauses, meandering toward the *ineluctabile fatum* of that final Virgilian verse – must not have gone down easily at the French court. The quickening that Petrarch saw in his audience when he discussed Fortune was perhaps a sign of linguistic as well as moral comprehension and recognition – *anagnorisis*, as the Greeks would call it, though King Jean would probably prefer *entendiment* or *savoir*: good Latinate words that had, by one path or another, been naturalized by the fourteenth century as French.

It is difficult for modern readers to understand the depth of Petrarch's feeling for the Latin language. The Italian poetry presents a strong distraction. Who is Petrarch, for us, but the voice of poetic modernity: the poet who taught Europeans to appreciate the poetic immediacy and urgency of the vernacular (and its bosom companion, inconstancy)? But Petrarch himself spurned the vernacular. He placed his trust in Latinity: a language that moved with ease from Rome to Avignon and Avignon to Paris, that allowed the moderns to read and even to address the ancients (as Petrarch himself did in the letters he wrote to his literary models – Cicero, Virgil, Homer). He derided the vernacular poetry which defines his reputation for us as “trifles” – *nugae* – in a note he wrote (in Latin, of course) on the working draft of one of his poems: further evidence, if such were needed, of his disdain for (or at best conflicted feelings toward) vernacular composition.¹⁴

The episode with King Jean obliged Petrarch to tip his hand, to reveal his attachment to Latin. His waspish rejection of Jean's vernacular was not likely to win him friends at the King's court; but Petrarch himself had no use for the frivolities of court life. He had written elsewhere, long before this journey, that he was scandalized by the French court's ignorance of Latin, and that he could not picture himself as courtier among those who had no feeling for Latin (Petrarca, *Rerum memorandarum libri* 40: 1.37.9). As for King Jean, he would last less than four years in France. By the end of 1363 he had slipped back to England, called back either by a sense of honor (his ransom had not been satisfied) or, according to some, by the gaieties of English court life.¹⁵ What language, one wonders, did the King speak with his captors: Norman French, the French of King Jean's court,

14. The comment can be seen in the modern facsimile reproduction of the “manoscritto degli abbozzi”, the autograph manuscript of working drafts of a small number of poems from the *Canzoniere*; see *Il Codice Vaticano lat.* 3196 11v.

15. There is some speculation about Jean's motives for returning to England. A waggish chronicler, the Continuator of Guillaume de Nangis, accused him of going back to England *causa joci*, “for the sake of sport” (see the *Chronique latine de Guillaume de Nangis* 2: 333) – there being apparently a lady involved. But there is certainly more to the story. Jean arrived to great festivities and a warm welcome in London in January 1364; sadly, he soon fell sick and would be dead by the end of April.

English, or some combination of these? Perhaps Jean himself had acquired a taste (as those who travel sometimes do) for living in translation: in the *peregrinum ydioma* of the English court, a linguistic register liberated of regionalisms and unburdened by the idiosyncrasies of hearth and home.

Petrarch Turns His Back on the Sea

Petrarch traveled a great deal – on diplomatic missions, like the journey to Paris to celebrate King Jean’s release from captivity; from one ecclesiastical posting to the next; to call on friends, visit libraries and examine manuscripts. Scrutinizing Ernest Hatch Wilkins’s biography of Petrarch (largely based on close readings of the letters), I count no fewer than 57 distinct displacements, including trips, long or short, and changes of residence from one city to another. Petrarch’s travels took him mostly through the Italian peninsula, from Nice and Milan in the west to Venice in the east and to Naples in the south. He also traveled to Ghent and Liège, to Basel and Prague, and (twice) to Paris. Given the frequency of Petrarch’s travels, it is scarcely surprising that in the letters we find frequent descriptions of the road. He concludes a long letter, written in 1342 to the Friar Giovanni Colonna, with a description of an oneiric itinerary that leads from the River Aniene – outside the walls of Tivoli, Giovanni’s home – from river to river, with a quick dash through the Tyrrhenian Sea, and thence up “the Sorgue, the most peaceful of rivers” to reach “a spring second to none:” the riverbank at Petrarch’s home in Vacluse.¹⁶ Giovanni suffers from gout, and making the journey by ship would be easy on his afflicted feet; the late medieval equivalent of Aladdin’s magic carpet, the ship would bring him painlessly to Petrarch’s side. Petrarch also writes often about the discomforts and indignities of travel, by land and by sea.

Images of the sea, of sailors and of ships at sea are a medieval rhetorical convention, of course, and they would become a quotidian conceit for the Petrarchists. But they are not among the most common in the *RVF*. Petrarch writes more often of his pen and paper as vehicles of thought, or of the laurel tree as a sign of poetic achievement and fame and as Laura’s doppelganger. Yet, although it is an image he uses relatively sparingly, the sea and the ship far from shore serve Petrarch well as a metaphor both for the stormy sea of love and for the turbulent sea of life.¹⁷ The beautiful sonnet *Passa la nave mia*

16. *Familiars* 6.3.68: Petrarca, *Letters* 1: 312 and *Le Familiari* 2: 76.

17. On the image of the ship at sea in the *Canzoniere*, see Cachey, “From Shipwreck” and “Peregrinus.”

18. On the position of this poem in earlier versions of the *Canzoniere* see Wilkins, *The Making* 93 (for the pre-Chigi form) and 160 (for the Chigi form).

19. See Petrarca, *Le Rime* 377–78. Muratori worries particularly over the seaworthiness of Petrarch's vessel, which he reckons is constructed with "strumenti danosissimi" (378).

20. *Familiars* 1.1.21: Petrarca, *Letters* 1: 8 and *Le Familiari* 1: 7.

colma d'oblio (RVF 189), which in the earlier arrangements of the *Canzoniere* was the concluding poem of Part I of the collection, is one of his most focused and extended elaborations of the image of the ship at sea.¹⁸ In this sonnet, the ship represents the lover himself. Love personified – Petrarch's 'enemy' – sits at the tiller of the ship. His tormented thoughts man the oars. Storms of sighs fill the sails, a constant rain of tears lashes the deck, and the lights of shore – Laura's eyes – hide themselves from the lover. The commentary tradition admires the elegance of the allegory but criticizes the sonnet on nautical grounds. Alessandro Tassoni points out that "sighs" might plausibly fill a sail, but not "hopes" and "desires," as Petrarch suggests. Muratori makes the eminently reasonable point that the storms of tears would not loosen the ropes, but rather make them tauter.¹⁹ Petrarch uses technical vocabulary to satisfying emotional effect, but – as the commentators point out – his poetic ship might not prove seaworthy.

In his other writings, and in the letters in particular, Petrarch also deploys images of the sea, ships, travel by sea and sailors, to great poetic effect. And in the letters, naturally, these images tend to have an autobiographical dimension. The figure of Ulysses in particular appears a number of times in the letters. At the very beginning of the first collection of letters, the *Rerum familiarum libri*, Petrarch uses Ulysses as autobiographical self-representation:

Compare my wanderings to those of Ulysses. Though the reputation of our name and of our achievements be the same, he indeed traveled neither more nor farther than I.²⁰

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the *Familiars* to Petrarch's construction of his public image, and difficult to exaggerate the importance of the letters as stylistic model for the Humanists. The collection was the chief tool that Petrarch used to sculpt his public image, and a key text for the Latin prose of the Quattrocento. Some of the letters do reflect events in Petrarch's life. But scholars agree that all of them have been carefully crafted to reflect the image of himself that Petrarch wanted to leave for posterity. Thus it is fair to assume that Petrarch chose to compare himself to Ulysses at the beginning of the first letter of the collection for a reason.

Ulysses speaks to Petrarch firstly because Ulysses possessed a trans-historical literary glamour that Petrarch particularly admired. In his Greek incarnation – as Odysseus – he was the hero of an ancient epic. This epic was lost to Petrarch's contemporaries, because

Homer's *Odyssey* had not yet been translated into Latin – and he was all the more alluring for that. Later in his life, Petrarch (along with Boccaccio) would midwife Homer's rebirth into Latin by hiring a Calabrian Greek – the ill-fated Leontius Pilatus, to whom I will return later – to translate Homer. Secondly, Petrarch uses Ulysses as a self-representation for the reasons he gives in this passage: like Ulysses, he was a restless traveler. Petrarch was born to exile – his family was exiled from Florence shortly before his birth – and, and as his itinerary suggests, he seemed most comfortable on the road. He established a residence in various places throughout his life, but he had no long-term fixed home. He was a nomad; he was Ulysses.²¹

This being the case, it is all the more surprising to learn that in 1343, at the age of 39 (and just a year after writing the idyllic description of the riverine route from Tivoli to Vaucluse), Petrarch made a vow never again to travel by sea. Sea travel was fraught with dangers and uncertainty during the late Middle Ages. Yet it was the usual and the most convenient way to travel to most of the places Petrarch visited. He records in his letters the reason for his disgust with the sea. In 1343, he traveled from Avignon to Naples, acting as emissary from the Pope to the King of Naples. He and his entourage set sail from Nice and put in at Monaco for the night. Bad weather kept them in port on the next day. On the day after that they sailed, despite continuing unsettled weather. They were obliged to put in at Porto Maurizio, on the Ligurian coast. They reached land too late to enter the city, and had to sleep in a sailors' tavern. At this point, exasperated by the indignities of sea travel, he decided to go it by land, and bought horses. The party got stuck at the southern border of Lombardy; Milan and Pisa were at war, their armies encamped in the area. Once that hurdle was behind them, they took to sea from Lerici, traveling about 70 kilometers south along the coast to Pisa. From there, they rode to Rome and finally reached Naples.²²

This trip – as grueling as it sounds – was not, however, what inspired Petrarch's vow never again to travel by sea. He makes this pronouncement in a letter he wrote soon after this one, a letter in which he describes a devastating storm that blew in from the sea, while he was in residence at Naples.²³ Petrarch clearly conceived this letter as a set piece; he describes it explicitly as such in the opening phrases, in which he mentions Juvenal and cites Juvenal's phrase, "a poetic tempest arose."²⁴ In the letter that follows, he gives a vivid and horrified account of the destruction and the human anguish caused by the storm. And he closes by vowing that he will never again travel by

21. On Petrarch's nomadism as moral conviction, see Pacca, *Petrarca* 82–83.

To students of Italian literature, there is much in this biographical profile that mirrors the life and works of Dante Alighieri. Dante was exiled from Florence in 1301, and Petrarch's father in 1302, by the same political faction. Dante traveled throughout northern Italy after his exile and ended his life in Ravenna, not far from Petrarch's last home in Arquà. Perhaps most importantly from the perspective of the literary record, Dante's Ulysses – whose biography differed in important ways from Homer's Odysseus – was the Ulysses that Petrarch knew, until Leontius' translation revealed to him what Homer had written.

22. *Familiars* 5.3: *Petrarca, Letters* 1: 232–37 and *Le Familiari* 2: 5–10.

23. *Familiars* 5.5: *Petrarca, Letters* 1: 243–48 and *Le Familiari* 2: 14–19.

24. Petrarch was fond of this phrase. He had used it already in a letter to Giovanni Colonna; *Familiars* 2.8.3: *Petrarca, Letters* 1: 98 and *Le Familiari* 1: 89. For other citations of this phrase in Petrarch's works, see Berra 658.

25. *Familiars* 5.5.21; Petrarca, *Letters*
1: 248 and *Le Familiari* 2: 19.

sea: “since I was born on land,” he beseeches his correspondent, “permit me to die on land.”²⁵

We know that the storm that Petrarch describes in this letter did occur. We have a corroborating account of it from the contemporary historian Giovanni Villani (3: 367). We also know that Petrarch persevered in his refusal to travel by sea. He refers to the fact in subsequent writings, using this excuse (for instance) fifteen years later (in 1358) to decline a friend’s invitation to accompany him on pilgrimage to the Holy Land (*Petrarch’s Guide* 1v–2r: Pr. 3–5; unnumbered pages). Yet there is a puzzle here, and it is typical of the questions that Petrarch’s biography raises for the historian. The two anecdotes I have just summarized – the journey from Avignon to Naples and the storm in Naples – are taken from Petrarch’s letters, which are, in many cases, the only biographical source we have. But is Petrarch a reliable narrator of his own life? Certainly he experienced discomfort at sea. This trip seems to have been particularly difficult. The image of the great poet, who had been crowned poet laureate by the Roman Senate the previous year, sleeping rough in a sailors’ tavern outside the city gates at Porto Maurizio is not easy to dismiss. Imagine the sailors driven to shore by that same storm with whom he would share this refuge: Frenchmen, Italians and Spaniards, Greeks and Saracens – the motley crew that manned the Mediterranean ships of the age, even (one presumes) the accommodating women there to meet their needs in port. Was it the horrors that he saw from a distance – the storm at sea, at once sublime and terrifying – that made Petrarch vow never to travel by ship again, as the authorized biography tells us? Or was it the indignity of the journey down, which he personally experienced? It is difficult to trust the answer that the letters give us. Certainly, given Petrarch’s long-standing refusal to travel by sea, the move that he made late in his life – one of his last displacements, in 1362 – is startling. For he must travel by ship in order to reach the city that became his home at the age of 58: Venice.

Petrarch in Venice

Later in his life, Petrarch started to think seriously about the disposition of his library, and this is what brought him to Venice. The collection of books that he had amassed was at the time the largest private library in Europe; it was, in fact, the largest secular library of any kind – public or private – in Europe. The life of restless travel made

caring for a library of this magnitude difficult. When he brought books with him, he worried about their safety on the roads, where they were vulnerable to both bandits and the elements. And if he left them behind he must live without them. So he negotiated a deal with the *Maggior Consilio* of Venice that granted him a house large enough for himself and his books, if he agreed to leave his books to the city for the creation of a public library – which would have been the first such library in Europe. He moved to Venice in September 1362, a year after his trip to France to celebrate the return of King Jean, and lived there until 1368, when he relocated to the mainland – a move which he first considered temporary. Over time, as his health began to fail, it became clear that he would not return to the city. And in time the books also moved to the mainland to join him. The visionary public library failed to materialize.²⁶

26. On Petrarch's library, see Pastore Stocchi. The letter from the *Maggior Consiglio* in Venice accepting the donation of Petrarch's library and giving him in return a house in perpetuity has been published in *Petrarca: mostra di documenti* 20.

When he moved to Venice, Petrarch was not in the first bloom of youth, and the great works were behind him. Treatises like the *Secretum* and *De viris illustribus* had been begun and, in many cases, finished years earlier. He started writing the last of his great books, *De remediis utriusque fortunae*, in 1354, eight years before the move to Venice. During these late years, of course, he remained productive. The last period of sustained work on the *RVF*, the work that produced the *RVF* in the form we know it, began during the years of his residence in Venice. Giovanni Malpaghini, who had been working for Petrarch as copyist – he spent two years writing out the fair copy of the *Familiars* – started work on the final, fair copy of the *RVF* (the manuscript we know as BAV, Vat. Lat. 3195) in 1366. One year later, in 1367, Giovanni had a breakdown and refused to write any more (Wilkins, *Life* 205–06 and 208–11). Petrarch would take over the copying when Giovanni left his employment and would continue to edit and arrange the poems until the end of his life. Also during his Venetian residence, Petrarch received the long-awaited copy of Leontius Pilatus' Latin translation of the Homeric epics. Leontius, whom Boccaccio and Petrarch hired to translate the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, completed this work while living with Boccaccio in Florence, and Petrarch had to wait for Boccaccio to have a copy of Leontius' translations made before he could read the work himself. This reached him, finally, in 1366 (Wilkins, *Life* 207–08).

When he received these translations at the end of the year, they must have seemed to him like a message from beyond a watery grave – because in these Latin verses the long-dead Greek poet lived again and sang again, but also for a more lugubrious reason: because Le-

27. On Leontius Pilatus, in addition to Marilynn Desmond's wonderful essay, see also Pertusi's authoritative *Leonzio Pilato fra Petrarca e Boccaccio*.

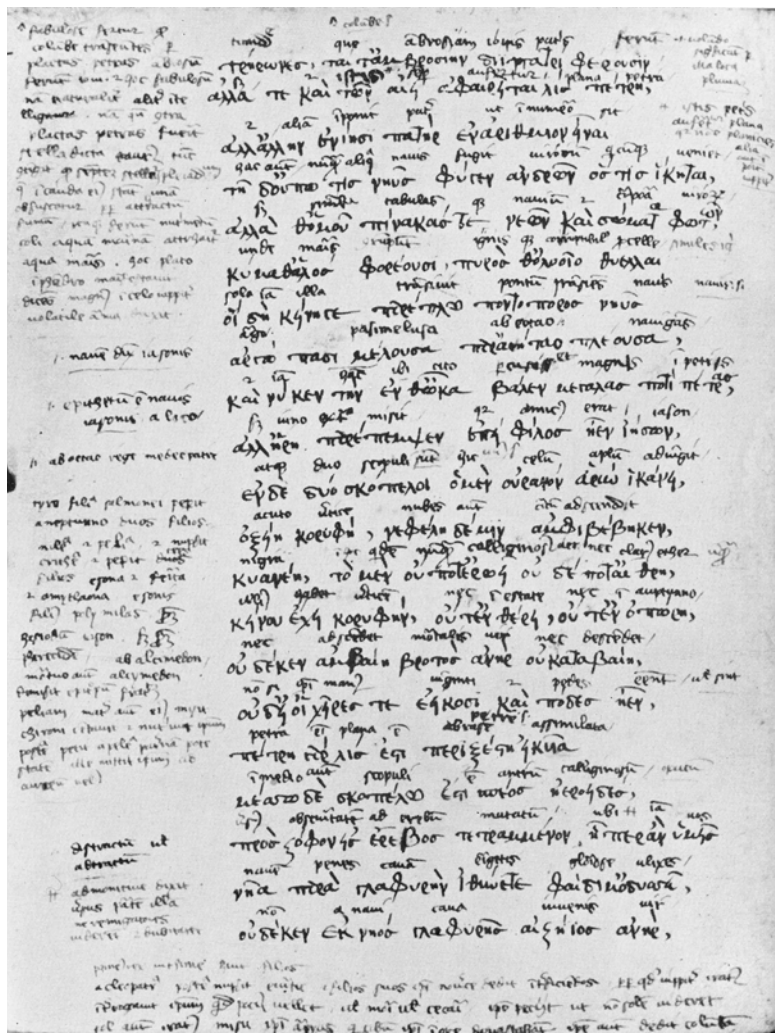
Plate 1: Venezia, BNM, cod. gr. IX 29, 154v, Hom. Od. XII, 63–83. Greek and Latin autograph of Leontius Pilatus.

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ontius, the man who brought Homer to life in Latin, had himself died at sea earlier in 1366. We know about Leontius' death because we have the letter that Petrarch wrote to Boccaccio describing his sad fate. Leontius, like Petrarch, was himself a bit of an Odysseus (as Marilynn Desmond describes him in a recent essay): a man who seemed at home nowhere, who traveled restlessly from city to city.²⁷ After finishing work on the translations of the Homeric epics, he conceived a desire to visit Constantinople. He came to Venice, where he stayed with Petrarch, and from there he set sail in 1363. On the return journey from Constantinople to Venice in 1366, just outside the Venetian harbor, Leontius' ship was caught in a sudden storm. It was struck by lightning, and Leontius – alone among those on the ship – died. Petrarch's letter to Boccaccio describes his death in detail and with the horror of one who himself suffers from fear of the sea. While the sailors ran about the ship attempting to keep it afloat, Leontius clung to the mast in fear, and the mast drew the lightning bolt that

killed him. Petrarch reports that Leontius' books were preserved by the sailors, who delivered them to him. And he hopes that among them might be found the volumes that he asked Leontius to bring back from Constantinople, copies of the works of Euripides and Plato (Petrarca, *Res seniles* 6.1: vol. 2: 112–17). It is not clear whether Leontius acquired the books and whether, if he did, Petrarch located them. Leontius' meager collection, like Petrarch's library, has been scattered or has vanished altogether.

However, several crucial manuscripts documenting Leontius' work for Petrarch and Boccaccio do remain in the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana at Venice: the interlinear Greek and Latin texts that were Leontius' working drafts for the translation he made for Boccaccio and Petrarch (See Plate 1),



28. These manuscripts are Gr. IX 2 a (1447) – the Greek *Iliad* with interlinear Latin translation; Gr. IX 29 (1007) – the Greek *Odyssey* with interlinear Latin translation; and Lat. XII 23 (3946) – the Latin *Odyssey*. On this last manuscript, see Franceschini and Pertusi; and Pertusi 531–63. In fact, Petrarch seems to have studied the *Iliad*; he had it nicely bound and illuminated and annotated it himself (Pertusi 147–48). His copy of the *Odyssey*, on the other hand, is annotated only through f. 21 (*Odyssey* 2.242). A note in somebody else's hand explains that Petrarch died while the volume was being illuminated (Pertusi 152–53).

29. In fact, Boccaccio misunderstood Petrarch's request and sent him the description of the journey to the underworld when Petrarch was particularly interested in reading about the terrestrial point of access to the underworld; see *Res seniles* 5.1.33–35; vol. 2: 30–31.

as well as a fair copy of the Latin *Odyssey*.²⁸ Petrarch's own copies of Homer in Latin have ended up in Paris, and the precise relation of the Latin *Odyssey* now in Venice to Petrarch's is disputed, but it is clear that the Marciana *Odyssey* is an early copy of Leontius' translation. And, like the interlinear translations now in Venice, the Latin *Odyssey* was read, and was studied as a crucial resource by its early readers. There are abundant marginal notes in all the Marciana manuscripts – the interlinear translations and the Latin fair copy of the *Odyssey* – some in Humanist hands. These notes demonstrate that the texts continued to serve as reference works for centuries after they were created.

The interlinear translations in the bilingual Greek-Latin version of Homer's epics are, inevitably, rough – guidelines for a polished copy of the work. Even the handsome fair copy in the Marciana is in spots rocky going. As an example of the quality of these early translations, consider the prophecy about his own fate that Odysseus hears from Tiresias when he meets Tiresias in the underworld. We know that Petrarch had a special interest in this episode from the *Odyssey*. When he wrote to Boccaccio asking for copies of Leontius' translations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, he requested a quick advance copy of one passage in particular: the description of Odysseus's journey to the underworld.²⁹ He would find this passage toward the end of that episode. Here, Tiresias tells Odysseus that he will travel far from the sea, to a place where he meets a man who takes his row for a winnowing hoe, because he doesn't know the life of the sea and has never seen a ship. The translator, in this case, has never seen a winnowing hoe – at least not the Homeric Greek word for one – because he transliterates the Greek, rather than translating it (Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana (BNM), Lat. XII 23 [3946], 49r, l. 22 [*Odyssey* 11.128]):

alius palam Athiriligon habeat supra nitidum humerum
(another man will openly have an Athiriligon upon his
shining shoulder)

It is hard to imagine what Petrarch, who was himself an astute textual critic, made of this passage. Also baffling is Leontius' rendition of the crucial phrase from Tiresias's prophecy that tells Odysseus how death will finally reach him (BNM, Lat. XII 23 [3946], 49r, ll. 26–27 [*Odyssey* 11.133]):

Mors autem tibi a mare est infirma valde

(Death moreover, much enfeebled, comes to you from the sea)

Here Tiresias reassures Odysseus that his death will occur *far away* from the sea: the ceaseless wanderings that keep him from home will end, and he will die on land, among his people. These are glad tidings. Sailors fear no death more than drowning. Yet in late medieval Latin, the passage is ambiguous. The construction allows two meanings. And certainly a reader who maps Latin syntax and prepositions using an Italianate template – a reader, furthermore, primed by Dante’s Ulysses, who died *far from land* – might take the Latin to mean quite the opposite of what Homer’s Greek actually says. Leontius’ Latin suggests that grim, relentless death will leave its seabed to find Ulysses – no matter how far it must travel from its natural home, no matter how much the journey wears it down. For a late medieval audience to whom Dante’s Ulysses is closer than Homer’s and to whom Dante’s Italian is more proximate than classical Greek, this passage could be construed as a pronouncement of doom.

Leontius’ death touched Petrarch deeply. When Leontius died, Petrarch did not lose a dear friend and patron, as he did when Giacomo Colonna died in 1341. He did not lose the lodestar of his emotional and poetic life, as he did when Laura died in 1348. But he was a young man when Giacomo and Laura died, with a young man’s optimism and resilience. Leontius’ death occurred at the beginning of 1366, when Petrarch was 61 years old. And it obliged him to face the sea. Following Leontius’ death Petrarch must have had contact with the sailors whom he describes in the letter to Boccaccio; he must have sought them out or received them in his house. From them he acquired Leontius’ meager possessions and “squalid little books” (*squalentes libelli*), and from them he heard the story of Leontius’ terrible end (*Res seniles* 6.1.21: vol. 2: 116–17). Indeed, it would have been hard for Petrarch to avoid the sea from his house in Venice – situated in a prime location on the Canale di San Marco, midway between St. Mark’s square and the Arsenale, near the pier that was the port of entry to Venice during Petrarch’s life.³⁰ Petrarch’s house faced out onto the lagoon that opened into the Adriatic: one of the largest bodies of open water visible from the city of Venice, one of the busiest liquid highways of the Veneto.³¹ The life of the sea was inescapable in Petrarch’s Venice; it lay directly outside Petrarch’s house, a visual and sonic constant in his life, woven indissolubly into the fabric of daily life. In Venice, even in church, one can be at sea. The Venetians – who

30. Petrarch lived at the Palazzo Molin, on the Riva degli Schiavoni. See Wilkins, *Petrarch’s Later Years* 42.

31. In one of the finest passages in the *Seniles*, Petrarch suspends a letter to describe the stirring sight of a ship setting sail in the middle of the night, as he witnessed it while composing the letter (to Francesco Bruni; see *Res seniles* 2.3.49–56: vol. 1: 156–57).

32. Two of these churches survive, with roofs framed like the hull of a ship: Santo Stefano and San Giacomo dell'Orto.

do not miss a trick – understood that the vaulted roof of a church could be constructed on the same principle as the hull of a ship.³² And so, when you walk into a church in Venice, you might see above your head the ribs of a ship, as if you were a sailor on a ship inverted by the terrible winds of a storm like the one Petrarch described in Naples more than 20 years earlier. Venice was a city where – even at home, even at church – you were at sea: no refuge for a man who, fifteen years earlier, turned his back on the sea.

Petrarch at Sea

Images of ships and of the sea are rare in the early poems of the *RVF*. In the first half of the collection descriptions of shores more typically refer to riverbanks, not the sea, and they are a setting for intimate, pastoral scenes. The quintessential shore in the first half of the *RVF* is the riverbank near Petrarch's house at Vacluse. When Petrarch talks about *journeys* in the early poems, they are typically journeys by land – as in the famous sonnet describing an old man's pilgrimage to Rome, *Movesi il vecchierel canuto et biancho*. Images of ships at sea begin to appear more frequently later in the *RVF*, and they regularly are used to represent Petrarch's journey both as a lover, traveling toward a port that represents union with Laura, and as a Christian, traveling toward a port that represents death and union with God. Sonnet 234, for instance, begins with a compact image in which the poet's bedroom is a *port* rocked by daily storms:³³

O cameretta che già fosti un porto
a le gravi tempeste mie diürne,
fonte se' or di lagrime nocturne,
che 'l dí celate per vergogna porto.

(O little room that once was a haven in the strong storms I
suffered daily, now you are a fountain of nightly tears, which I
carry during the day concealed in shame)

In the opening lines of sonnet 235, Petrarch acknowledges that he has been *importuno* (v. 4) with his haughty monarch (and at this point, we have no difficulty recognizing Laura in that description). The word *importuno* means 'unpleasant' or 'annoying.' In the context, however, it is tempting to see in it a false etymology, to assume that the poet is using the word to measure his distance from the port,

33. See *Canzoniere*, ed. Bettarini 2: 1073; *Canzoniere*, ed. Contini 296; *Canzoniere*, ed. Santagata 969. The dominant themes of this sonnet are capably glossed by both Marco Santagata and Rosanna Bettarini: the "little room" is "emblematic of the closed place where the *Canzoniere* was written, its peace and its (poetic) storms" (*Canzoniere*, ed. Bettarini, 2: 1073). Both Bettarini and Santagata note Dante's reference to his room in the *Vita Nova* (*Canzoniere*, ed. Bettarini, 2: 1073 fn. 1; *Canzoniere*, ed. Santagata, 969 fn. 1) along with other relevant passages from Petrarch's own works and from Scripture. I do not claim that the image of shipwreck is the most important note Petrarch strikes in this sonnet, nor is my reading intended to be exhaustive. On the contrary, I am pointing out a subtle but forceful theme in this sonnet (and the next).

where he will be reunited with Laura. And in the stanza that follows he compares himself to a sailor at sea, looking at the rocks that stand between him and the port, weighing the danger to himself and to the precious cargo his ship carries – his life, his soul, his love for Laura, her benevolence toward him; all these interpretations are possible. The word *porto* appears in prominent rhyme position in the opening lines of sonnet 234 (quoted above), at the end of verses 1 and 4 – the second time as a homonym, as the rules of prosody require (though spelled the same, it has a different meaning). *Porto* does not appear as a discrete word in sonnet 235, but is present as etymon from which the vocabulary of the poem is derived (*trasporta* [v. 1], *importuno* [v. 4], *porta* [v.13]). And it is central to the meaning of the poem, which represents the lover himself as “debile barcha” (“fragile boat,” v. 7), watchful and anxious as he is driven out to sea. By the end of sonnet 235 Petrarch has become both sea (stirred into horrible waves by sighs) and ship, “disarmata di vele et di governo” (“stripped of sails and rudder,” v. 14).³⁴

34. See *Canzoniere*, ed. Bettarini 2: 1076; *Canzoniere*, ed. Contini 297; *Canzoniere*, ed. Santagata 972. Both Bettarini and Santagata connect 235 thematically with the preceding sonnet – Santagata observes that 235 “seems to refer to the same episode [as 234], a transgression with reference to Laura” – and point out that the rhyme schemes are identical in 234 and 235 (ABBA ABBA CDE CDE).

In sonnet 234, Petrarch gives us a tidy image of a ship threatened during a stormy night. In sonnet 235 this image fragments: it is at once intensified and abstracted. Is this phenomenon of fragmentation and intensification an example of ‘late style,’ as described by Adorno? In the essay “Late Style in Beethoven,” Adorno characterized the master’s late works, in contradistinction to the works of youth and maturity, as “ravaged [...] devoid of sweetness, bitter and spiny” (564). The late compositions, he wrote, lack the harmony and sublime balance found in the works of youth and middle age. One might speculate that, in works created late in the master’s life, the spirit liberates itself from convention. Not so, Adorno writes: in the late works, “one finds formulas and phrases of convention scattered about” (565), fragments of form that float free of the structures that bind them in more conventional works of art. In early and mature works, we often hear the voice of self-discovery and self-celebration. However, according to Adorno, subjectivity does not strive to express itself in the late work. Rather, the sovereign voice of the subject sunders its relation to the work of art, leaving “only fragments behind, and communicates itself, like a cipher, only through the blank spaces from which it has disengaged itself” (566). Rather than cohere into a sweet, unified work, these fragments of the sovereign self speak urgently of the dissolution of the self. Rather than depict a sweeping landscape, as the works of youth and maturity do, late works illuminate glimpses of a flinty terrain that are harsh, startling,

at times flaring into beauty, but without the measured harmony and balance of the early and mature works. “In the history of art,” Adorno concludes, “late works are the catastrophes” (567).

We know that sonnets 234 and 235 were incorporated into the *Canzoniere* during the last phases of work on the manuscript, despite the fact that they fall in Part I of the final manuscript. Recall that Giovanni Malpaghini started work on the manuscript we know as BAV, Vat. lat. 3195 in 1366, and he left Petrarch’s household following his breakdown in 1367 or 1368. At that point Petrarch took over the work of copying poems into the manuscript; the final poems in both sections of the *Canzoniere* were copied by Petrarch himself. These two sonnets, 234 and 235, appear in Part I. But because they come toward the end of Part I, they are written in Petrarch’s hand. According to Ernest Hatch Wilkins’s meticulous accounting of the subsequent phases of composition of the *RVF*, these two sonnets were incorporated into the manuscript between 1367 and 1372 (*The Making* 194: Table I). They may have been composed earlier; but even if Petrarch was reworking poems drafted long before, they were edited, perfected, and absorbed into the fair copy of the *RVF* relatively late in the process of composition. If there is a ‘late style’ in the *Canzoniere*, this would be a likely place to find it.

Is there a marked difference between the image of shipwreck in sonnets 234–35 and one that appears in a poem composed by Petrarch in youth or maturity – like, for instance, the shipwreck image discussed earlier in this essay from sonnet 189? In that poem, *Passa la nave mia colma d’oblio*, the self, like a sovereign ship of state, sails serenely toward its appointment with doom; and the metaphor too steers unerringly from the beginning of the poem to its end. The poem depicts catastrophe, but it does so confidently and unhesitatingly. The sonnet sequence 234–35, in contrast, starts with a glancing reference to the ship in peril. The ship sails through sonnet 235, but we catch sight of it only in fragments: a flinty shoreline flaring into beauty as flashes of lightning illuminate it. At times the image is so abstract that it is *ported* into phrases that have nothing to do with ships or with the sea – in the words etymologically related to the *porto* of sonnet 234. Sonnet 189 was present in the early redactions of the *Canzoniere*. In it, we should find the confident and masterful style of the poet in maturity. In the sonnet sequence 234–35, it seems, we have identified something else: the elegant coherence of the image that Petrarch crafted as a young man is exploded into fragments of conventional phrasing that compel, fascinate, even dazzle the read-

er, yet do not fuse into a compact and unified metaphor that illuminates the lover's pain (and, perhaps, reflects our own). Is this an example of what Adorno termed 'late style'?

Before responding to that question, I will add another hermeneutic layer to my interpretation of images of the sea, of sailors, of ships and shipwreck in the *RVF*. Shipwreck is a catastrophe. The *shipwreck metaphor* in a Petrarchan poem, however, is something different: a phenomenon which the twentieth century German philosopher Hans Blumenberg called, in his eponymous book, *Shipwreck with Spectator*. Blumenberg was the innovator of what he termed *metaphorology*: a philosophical approach in which the philosopher, rather than arguing from the philosophical canon to elaborate abstract ideas, studies the literary record of human efforts to make sense of life. More precisely, the philosopher uses one particularly quixotic linguistic behavior – the metaphor – to think about the perils of existence and the human response to them. In this book, Blumenberg works his way through a sequence of metaphorical shipwrecks observed by metaphorical spectators, from Greek antiquity to the twentieth century, and draws a series of conclusions about our ability to make aesthetic hay out of the catastrophe that is life.³⁵

Each of the vignettes that I have described in this essay, drawn from Petrarch's life and work, is precisely a shipwreck observed by the same spectator. From the tavern in Porto Maurizio, on Petrarch's voyage from Avignon to Italy, to the storm in Naples to Leontius Pilatus' horrendous end; from the "nave colma d'oblio" of sonnet 189 to the "nave di merci preciose carcha" of sonnet 235 – in each of these episodes and each of these texts, sailors on ships come to ruin, and Petrarch observes and records. According to Blumenberg, the "shipwreck with spectator" metaphor may be used at times as a wedge to separate the observer from a distant, observed catastrophe. Typically, however, the metaphor puts the reader on board the ship, or at least emphasizes our affective connection to the sailor in distress. In most cases, thus, the metaphor allows us to reflect on the ethical problems posed by catastrophe. By the end of the book, though, in the last variation on the metaphor that Blumenberg discusses, the connotation of the metaphor has shifted. The sea remains a metaphor for life – which is standard in pre-modern metaphors involving sailors, ships and the sea, from philosophy to sermon literature to Petrarchan lyric – but the ship, in this case, represents language. We use language to analyze the world. On board the ship, in this life, we use language to build the metaphors that help us to make sense of the

35. Others before me have used Blumenberg to read the shipwrecks in particular and the travels and upheavals in general in Petrarch's life and works; see Cachey, "From Shipwreck" and "Peregrinus;" and Berra.

world, to aestheticize it and understand how to love it. Only when we reach port will we be able to look back at the stormy sea we have traversed and see it without recourse to the estranging hermeneutic filters, the languages and metaphors that buoyed us in life.

Blumenberg's extended discussion of the shipwreck metaphor encourages the reader to focus on the ethical dimension of Petrarch's use of the image of the ship, the affective connection between the observer on the shore and the unhappy sailor. I would like to use the final pages of Blumenberg's book, in which the ship becomes a metaphor for language as the vehicle that ferries us through this exilic life, to push my reading of the *RVF* one step further. Do Adorno's reflections on late work describe the late poems in the *RVF*, those that Petrarch himself copied into the manuscript? Or can we recognize here the *RVF* as a whole? After all, the attributes Adorno describes (fragmentation, stylization, sublime disregard for the sovereign self) seem typical of the *RVF* from beginning to end, to be found as much (for instance) in canzone 23, the first canzone of the collection – *Nel dolce tempo de la prima etade*, the canzone of the metamorphoses – as in the later shipwreck sonnets I have discussed here. Perhaps the *Canzoniere* itself, in its final form – which is, after all, the work of an old man, work that Petrarch undertook after life and Venice had had their way with him – is 'late work' for Petrarch.

I would like to propose that Adorno's formulation on 'late style' describes not only the late poems added to the *RVF*, not only the *RVF* as a whole, but Petrarch's attitude toward the Italian language itself. Three languages have played starring roles in this essay: Italian, Latin, and Greek. In his conflicted way, Petrarch longed to be able to read the Greek language. He studied classical Greek, but to no avail. And he had a life-long commitment to the Latin language, a language that he ardently loved. Leontius' Latin Homer, when it finally reached him, represented a consummation of that love: the language he most adored brought to him the epics he most desired.³⁶ And yet in his late work, Petrarch turned to a language that seemed to have scant appeal to him as literary instrument: to the meager, stumbling, ephemeral, immature, inexperienced, altogether inchoate Italian vernacular. I believe that we find something like Adorno's 'late style' in Petrarch's response to the antinomy of literary vernacular and Latin – each necessary to the other, yet each inimical to the other. His late work documents the catastrophic collapse of Latinity, its explosion into vernacular shards ("In the history of art, late works are the catastrophes"). In the *RVF*, we see a new and curious affection for this strange

36. In this light, it is interesting to note that Giovanni Malpighini – the copyist who wrote out the first two thirds of the *RVF* – returned to Petrarch's employment after his recovery from his breakdown and copied out the Latin text of the Homeric epics, although he did not again work on the *Canzoniere*; see Pertusi 38–39 and Pacca 241.

animal, the Italian language. The attentiveness to the music of the language, the joy in its lyric potential, the eagerness to watch it perform its arcane exercises without concern to create a coherent, unified monument that might speak to posterity: this is the wonder of the *Canzoniere*. Italian itself, in the *RVF*, is the ‘late style’ of *Latin*: vulgarities illuminated by the occasional flash of light in which we catch glimpses of the grandeur of the cosmopolitan language.

Conclusion

In the anthropomorphic (or, more accurately, vitalistic) images often used to represent language history and literary history, the emergent vernacular literary histories of the late Middle Ages are typically represented as fledglings: young, vibrant, untried, experimental, curious, and yearning toward their own maturity. Certainly in other regional contexts, this dramatic template better represents what happened when a local vernacular pushed aside Latinity and stepped onto the stage of literary history. In the Italian context, however, the opposition between vernacular and Latin was more fraught – even incestuous (to continue the metaphor of familial descent). Latin was a local language. And Italian was not autonomous of it but was its shadow, its doppelganger, the pillow talk of Latinity. In fact, the Humanists’ first fumbling steps back toward vernacular culture took the form of a long debate over the spoken language of the ancient Romans. One position in this debate argued that Italian was no more than corrupt Latin, a form of the language that had decayed over the centuries. The other held that the vernacular was a sempiternal spoken code, co-extensive with the formal cosmopolitan language; modern linguists call such an opposition between the elite, written language and the popular register *diglossia*. And it was in the context of these debates that the metaphor of the *living language* – and by extension its shadow, the *dead language*: in this case, classical Latin – was first coined.³⁷ Thus did the homely vernacular turn the tables on Latin: once seen as the rubble of Latinity, in this metaphorical sleight of hand it raised its lovely, willful, youthful head and overthrew the hegemonic language of the literary past – Latin, a language newly discovered to be long dead.

In this essay I have tried to capture another perspective on the relationship between Latin and emergent Italian by viewing it not as an oedipal struggle between hoary ancestor and headstrong youth

37. On the notion of the vernacular as ‘living language,’ see Faithfull. For an overview of the debates regarding Latinity and the status of the vernacular with editions of relevant texts, see Tavoni.

38. I should point out that Edward Said wrote a book on 'late style' – which, sadly, was published only posthumously. If I have relied on Adorno rather than Said in this essay, it is primarily because I find the poetic condensation of Adorno's essay suggestive. In part, too, I turn to Adorno rather than Said because in *On Late Style*, Said seems mainly interested in (literary and musical) mannerism, and because he grounds his discussion explicitly in biographical criticism – relating it first and foremost to the body (3–4) and to his own critical oeuvre, in particular his early career book, *Beginnings* (4–5). Adorno wrote explicitly that his comments on 'late style' were meant to work against "subjectivist methodology" and biographical criticism (565–66). My reading of Petrarch too has used the work to illuminate the biography, and vice versa – but I hope to resist the temptation to see the work as gloss on the life, or vice versa.

but rather as something less agonistic. Was the vernacular noodling at the end of his life a retreat for Petrarch into the spoken murmurings of his youth, or an advance into new, uncharted territory – an attempt (as it is often read) to overtake Dante? Or did Petrarch move toward the vernacular because, at long last, he no longer thought about legacy (as second term American presidents call it) or about literary futurity? The *Trionfi* – the other vernacular work of his maturity – do not invite this reading. In the *RVF* alone, it seems, we catch a glimpse of Petrarch at play in the fields of language. "Death is imposed only on created beings, not on works of art," Adorno wrote in his essay on 'late style' (566).³⁸ He uses this distinction to argue against the autobiographical criticism that sees late works as the truest and purest expressions of subjectivity. For Adorno, Beethoven's 'late style' is sublimely uninterested in subjectivity, and instead immerses itself in form: "conventions find expression as the naked representation of themselves" (566). So too, one could argue, in the *Canzoniere* Italian no longer competes with Latin, but performs its poetic maneuvers in the dark – in the shadow of Latinity, if you like, but really only for the pleasure of its maker.

There is sweetness in the *Canzoniere*, of course, as there is sweetness in late Beethoven and in the late work of other masters (I think especially of late Titian): here I disagree with Adorno. But it is a music created by a master in colloquy with his medium, with the mistress of the art to which he has devoted his working life. Laura is long gone; the riverbank at Vacluse is a distant memory; Petrarch sits (like the sailors in Blumenberg's *Shipwreck with Spectator*) in a small, frail bark on the fretful sea of language. In the *RVF*, Petrarch writes *in* Italian and *for* Italian; he treats the medium of the Italian language as the late work of Latin. The *RVF* is not a new departure or a fresh start but rather a long look back at cosmopolitan eloquence: a mis-sive from a boat sailing swiftly for another shore; a long goodbye, as Raymond Chandler called it, in his vernacular masterpiece. Other masters of the new vernacular arts – Chrétien de Troyes, Marie de France, or Chaucer, for instance – did not use their own vernaculars this way, because of poetic sensibility but also because for them the line between vernacular and cosmopolitan language was not labile and gossamer-thin, as it was in the Italian context. So I suspect, at least. Then again, maybe I am blinded by my own affection for Italian: the poetic language which I love and to which I have devoted my professional life, as if it were a cosmopolitan language rather than

(merely) the territorially and historically bounded tongue of a modern nation-state.

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Deutsch/Romanisch Lateinisch/Deutsch

Neue Thesen zu den Pariser Gesprächen und zu den Kasseler Glossen

Abstract

Literary history projects the clear image that the beginnings of German literature lie in the 8th and 9th century, the Old High German period, when German literature first flourished with texts like the *Hildebrandslied* or Otfrids *Evangelienbuch*. The Old High German period is presented as a compact formation, precisely defined in time and space, of high literary value and 'national' coinage. The following paper attempts, in a preliminary manner, to question this notion by arguing that it is high time to free Old High German literature from the pathos of 19th century research. Its topic is language contact between German on the one hand and Latin / Romance on the other, albeit not in terms of high culture, but of language acquisition. It therefore deals with literature in the etymological sense of 'written with letters': the so-called 'Old High German' or 'Parisian Conversations' and the 'Kasseler Glosses' or 'Conversations'.

Einleitung

Das Bild der Literaturgeschichte ist eindeutig: Im 8./9. Jahrhundert wurzeln die 'Anfänge' der deutschen Literatur (vgl. z. B. Haubrichs, *Anfänge*; Kartschoke 60), die in althochdeutscher Zeit, vor allem aber mit den Texten des 9. Jahrhunderts, ihre erste Blüte austreibt. Hinter dem Bild steckt die ganze nationalsprachliche Ideologie des langen 19. Jahrhunderts, das sich in diesem Fall bis auf die literarhistorischen Entwürfe der Gegenwart erstreckt. Da werden dann der *Tatian* als erstes deutsches Buch, Otfrids *Evangelienbuch* oder auch der *Heliand* als frühe Meisterwerke der (hoch- bzw. nieder-) deutschen Dichtung gefeiert, das *Hildebrandslied* als einziges Relikt einer verlorenen, aber höchst artifiziellen deutsch-germanischen Kunstübung. Die althochdeutsche Zeit erscheint aus diesem Blickwinkel

als weithin kompaktes Gebilde, zeitlich und regional exakt definiert, mit einem überschaubaren Textkorpus, das sich, anders als bei allen anderen Epochen der deutschen Literaturgeschichte, in handlichen Lesebüchern (traditionell Braune/Ebbinghaus, jüngst Müller) bündeln lässt. Erhalten sind von dieser dermaßen klar umrissenen alt-/hochdeutschen Literatur bekanntermaßen nur aleatorische, nicht selten gar sehr mickrige Relikte: Vieles ist verloren, und alles zwischen den erhaltenen Zeugnissen ist der Rekonstruktion anheimgestellt. Der Illusion, dass sich das Erhaltene dennoch zu einem kohärenten Puzzle fügte – wie immer lückenhaft es wäre –, tat dies allerdings keinen Abbruch, und was der Illusion nicht genügte – miserable Aufzeichnungen, fehlerhafte Texte –, musste eben über die Annahme verlorener, aber dann durchaus makelloser Originale (und deren Counterparts: grässlich stümperhafte Schreiber) passend gemacht werden. Darum auch scheint die Position – wieder genügt ein Blick in die Literaturgeschichten oder auch in die Lesebücher – der einzelnen ‘Fragmente’ kaum verrückbar, vom Wert der Zeugnisse ganz zu schweigen.

Es mag fachgeschichtliche Gründe geben, warum sich gerade im Bereich der althochdeutschen Literatur das Pathos der Gründungszeit der universitären Germanistik, die von den Ideen Ursprung und Nation fasziniert war, so leicht gegen alle Paradigmenwechsel behaupten konnte; einer wird etwa schlicht darin liegen, dass spätestens seit der Zeit der Studentenrevolte der Fokus des Faches sich zusehends auf spätere Situationen der deutschen Literatur verschoben hat. Entscheidender ist, was die prägnante Suggestion der einen und aber durch und durch althochdeutschen Literatur heute noch bewirkt: Sie gibt die Marschrichtung vor, in der die erhaltenen Texte (meist: der Lesebücher) abgeschritten werden, und verstellt andere Zugänge vehement. Dabei lägen diese gerade bei der althochdeutschen Literatur nur allzu nahe:

Wer sich nämlich – und man kann das in Seminaren erproben – diesen frühesten Überbleibseln der deutschen Sprache und Literatur widmete, ohne die *grands récits* zu diesen zu kennen, möchte leicht auf den Gedanken verfallen, dass diese mit Homogenität und Nationalsprachlichkeit nicht viel zu tun hätten. Vielmehr evozieren sie, einerseits, den Eindruck eines zaghaften, immer wieder neu anhebenden, oft experimentellen In-Schrift-Setzens volkssprachlicher Texte, das ungeordnet, polygenetisch, mit sehr unterschiedlichen Mitteln erfolgt, mit ganz verschiedenen Risiken behaftet: von der skizzenhaften Ad-hoc-Notiz (siehe das Folgende) bis hin zu ela-

borierten (und im engeren Sinne) literarischen Denkmälern, von gediegener Buchproduktion (Otfrid, *Heliand*) bis hin zu – bildlich, aber meistens auch literal – Marginalien aller Art (die Hauptmasse der althochdeutschen Literatur). Dieses immer neue In-Schrift-Setzen aber ist – andererseits – eines, das weder typisch nur für die deutsche Literatur des frühen Mittelalters ist, noch diese von anderen volkssprachlichen Literaturen trennt. Auch dies möchte evident sein, würde es nicht anders gelehrt: In den Lesebüchern stehen wie selbstverständlich die deutsch-französischen *Straßburger Eide*, die ein militärisches Rechtsgeschäft zwischen Ludwig dem Deutschen und Karl dem Kahlen und deren Heeren dokumentieren, oder das *Ludwigslied*, das, auf Deutsch, einen gar nicht sehr deutschen König des späteren 9. Jahrhunderts rühmt und besingt. Die Idee aber, die Literatur des frühen Mittelalters aus einer gesamteuropäischen – Ernst Robert Curtius möchte gesagt haben: einer ‘lateinischen’ – Perspektive zu betrachten, scheint zumindest der germanistischen Mediävistik, soweit ich sie überblicke, noch immer reichlich fremd.

Die monolithische Dignität der Zeugnisse aus althochdeutscher Zeit, ihre rigide Separierung von anderen Volkssprachen – das ist gewiss polemisch zugespitzt. Im Kern mag es aber doch etwas Wesentliches treffen (wie sich, am exemplarischen Detail, im Folgenden auch bestätigen wird). Der gegenständliche Beitrag versteht sich darum als ein sehr vorläufiger Versuch, gegen diese beiden Selbstverständnisse anzulaufen, um auf diese Weise den Weg zur althochdeutschen Literatur wenigstens ein kleines Stück weit von den Pathosformeln der ‘alten’ Literaturgeschichte freizuschaukeln. Sein Thema sind Sprachkulturkontakte zwischen Deutsch und Latein/Romanisch, allerdings nicht auf Ebene gleichsam hoher Literatur, sondern auf jener des Spracherwerbs; sein Gegenstand die so genannten *Altdeutschen* oder *Pariser Gespräche* und die *Kasseler Glossen* oder *Gespräche*, die, zumindest wenn man der Phantasie der Philologen Glauben schenkt, so etwas wie Sprachführer *avant la lettre* gewesen wären und die freilich – wie eben das Meiste, das uns aus der althochdeutschen Zeit erhalten ist – Literatur nicht im Sinne von Belletristik als schlicht des In-Buchstaben-Gebrachten sind.

Pariser Gespräche

1. Zur Überlieferung:
Paderborner Repertorium; Steinmeyer und Sievers 5: 521–24;
Haubrichs und Pfister 6f.

Überliefert¹ sind sie unikal in einer Handschrift, die heute größtenteils in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF), Ms. lat. 7641²

2. Digitalisat; dort auch ein kurzes Katalogisat der Handschrift.

3. Die Lokalisierung der Sammlung ist nicht eindeutig möglich, siehe Haubrichs, "Herkunft" 93f.

4. Zu den Handschriften und deren Inhalt Haubrichs, "Herkunft" 87f., zur Bibliotheksgeschichte 89–93. Vgl. das Katalogisat bei Bergmann und Stricker 4: 1597f. (mit älterer Literatur).

5. Bischoff 133 nennt sie eine "schmale, ausgesprochen französische Schrift, die ich ins ausgehende IX. oder frühe X. Jahrhundert setzen möchte."

6. Es fehlt das Gegenstück zu fol. 6v, das vermutlich aus der (heute verlorenen) Hälfte jenes Doppelblatts bestand, dessen erste Hälfte im Vatikan liegt.

(147 fols.) aufbewahrt wird; ihr ursprünglich erstes Blatt mit dem Exlibris *CODEX TITULI SCI MARCELLI*³ wurde vom Codex abgetrennt und liegt heute in Rom als Blatt 50b des Cod. Reg. lat. 566 der Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.⁴ Das separierte Blatt enthält Prolog und Praefatio zum *Abavus*-Glossar (*Abavus maior*, lateinisch-lateinisch), das fol. 1r–74r der Pariser Handschrift füllt; es folgen diverse Kollektionen von Sentenzen und andere kurze Texte, die hier nicht weiter von Belang sind. Der Grundstock des ursprünglichen Codex mit dem (im Übrigen reich lateinisch glossierten) *Abavus*-Glossar, der mit einiger Sicherheit im südlichen Frankreich geschrieben wurde (Haubrichs und Pfister 6), gehört wohl ins frühe 9. Jahrhundert (Bischoff 133). In ihn eingefügt wurden, wohl noch im 9. oder im frühen 10. Jahrhundert (Sonderegger, "Gespräche" 284), wahrscheinlich in der Region um Sens (siehe unten) und ebenfalls mit einer dezidiert französischen Schrift,⁵ althochdeutsche Glossen, die zu zwei Gruppen zerfallen: Am Vatikanischen Blatt (rückseitig) sowie auf fol. 1r, 2v und 3r (also auf zwei Doppelseiten)⁶ stehen marginal die genannten *Altdeutschen Gespräche*, fol. 4v, 5r, 6v, 7v, 8r, 9v, 10r, 11v, 12r, 13v, 14r, 15v, 16r finden sich, wiederum stets auf Doppelseiten, Exzerpte aus dem althochdeutschen *Tatian*, und zwar aus den Kapiteln 185–244, allerdings meistens rückläufig (Edition bei Sievers 290–92, Berichtigungen bei Steinmeyer und Sievers 5: 521, Neueditionen bei Endermann 68–76 und Schmid 396–412).

Die Einsprengsel aus dem *Tatian* zeigen bereits deutlich, dass wer immer diesen Codex an seinen Rändern bearbeitet hat, Interesse an der deutschen Sprache hatte. Zwar ist undeutlich, was die genaue Vorlage war, deutlich ist aber, dass dem deutschen Text das Primat zukommt (nachdrücklich Baesecke, *Vor- und Frühgeschichte* 150): Übernommen aus dem *Tatian* sind nämlich jeweils die lateinische und die deutsche Phrase; allerdings ist der deutsche Text primär, nämlich unten, hat also schon in der Linearität des Schreibprozesses Vorrang, während das Lateinische darüber gesetzt ist. Noch gravierender dominiert die Wortstellung des Deutschen das Lateinische: Wo diese in der St. Galler Handschrift des 'Tatian' differiert, ist sie hier, in den Exzerpten, vereinheitlicht, wobei die natürliche Wortstellung des Deutschen den Ausschlag gab: So wurde etwa *uoce magna* zu *magna uoce*, um ahd. *mihileru stemmu* zu entsprechen, detto *interrogas me* wegen *frages mih* statt *me interrogas* etc. (analoge Beispiele bei Steinmeyer und Sievers 5: 523).

Es ist nicht sicher, ob die vorstehenden *Altdeutschen Gespräche* von derselben Hand stammen wie die Exzerpte aus dem *Tatian*; Son-

deregger nimmt Verschiedenheit der Schreiber an (“Gespräche” 284), während Steinmeyer zwar das unterschiedliche Schriftbild notiert – kleiner, unregelmäßiger in den *Gesprächen*, größer, regelmäßiger bei den ‘Exzerpten’ –, dessen ungeachtet aber wegen der weitgehend identischen Charakteristik der einzelnen Buchstaben von ein und demselben Schreiber ausgeht (so auch Bischoff 133; Haubrichs, “Herkunft” 95; Endermann 62; Klein, “Gespräche” 41f.), der die Einträge vielleicht zu verschiedenen Zeitpunkten vorgenommen hätte (Steinmeyer und Sievers 5: 522f.). Gemeinsam ist den Einträgen in jedem Fall, dass der Fokus auf dem deutschen Text liegt (Sonderegger, “Gespräche” 284): Auch in den *Gesprächen* sind sämtliche über die genannten Blätter verstreuten Einzelwörter und Phrasen zuerst auf deutsch geschrieben, erst dann wurde – danach oder (selten) darüber, häufig eingeleitet mit *i.* (*id est*) – der deutsche Text lateinisch glossiert. Unterschiedlich ist die Orthographie: Die *Tatian*-Exzerpte halten sich über weite Strecken eng an jenes Althochdeutsch, das man aus dem St. Galler *Tatian* kennt. Lediglich drei unter die Exzerpte verstreute deutsche Beispielsätze, die keine Entsprechung im *Tatian* haben (die ersten beiden ediert bei Sievers 290, zu fol. 7^v, der dritte 292, zu fol. 16^r, jeweils durch Sperrdruck aus den *Tatian*-Exzerpten hervorgehoben) und ähnliche inhaltliche Belange thematisieren wie die *Gespräche* (Trinken, Eintreten in ein Haus, jemanden um sein Schwert bitten), sind in deren ziemlich sonderbarer deutsch-romanischer Schreibsprache gehalten, deren konzeptioneller Kern darin besteht, dass deutsche Lautung mit romanischen (französischen) Schreib- bzw. Artikulationsgewohnheiten abgebildet werden soll (charakteristisch ist etwa fehlendes anlautendes *h* oder *gu-* für *uu-*).⁷ Dem Verständnis der *Gespräche* ist dies – zumindest aus Perspektive eines Deutschsprechers des 21. Jahrhunderts – nicht eben förderlich, zumal manches Mal gar nicht klar ist, ob der Schreiber überhaupt so genau verstand, was er da aufgeschrieben hat.

Der Inhalt der *Gespräche* ist höchst divers.⁸ Wiederum zerfallen die Einträge in zwei Gruppen. Die erste, im Umfang wesentlich kleinere, die in der Edition von Steinmeyer und Sievers (Bd. 5)⁹ die (der Handschrift fehlenden) Nummern 1–14 hat, bietet ausschließlich Einzelwörter, größtenteils Körperteile: 1. *Obethe caput*. 2. *Fassen capilli*. 3. *Auren auris* etc. Die Liste ist ganz offensichtlich angeregt von anderen, ähnlich aufgebauten Glossaren – zu diesen später bei den *Kasseler Glossen* –, und dies bis hin zur Reihenfolge der Wörter. Allerdings verliert schon diese kurze Liste ihre Systematik, wenn gegen

7. Eine detaillierte Zusammenstellung dieser romanischen Schreibschicht des Textes bei Haubrichs und Pfister 16–46.

8. “Wortschatz und Satzmuster für Körperteile, Kleidung, Dienstleistungen in der Herberge, Bekanntschaft und Konversation mit Fremden, Verkehr mit Dienstboten, Reiten und Waffentragen” (Sonderegger, “Gespräche” 285). “Dabei herrscht eine frühfeudale Atmosphäre” (Haubrichs und Pfister 7).

9. Ihr folge ich, die Neuedition durch Haubrichs und Pfister ist passim verglichen.

Ende die Körperteil-Ordnung (von oben nach unten, vom Allgemeinen zum Speziellen) z. T. assoziativ, z. T. wirr ausfranst: Nach 11. *Guanbe uenter.* folgt 12. *Follo guanbe plenus uenter.*, dann, ohne erkennbare Systematik, 13. *Elpe adiuua.* 14. *fro min domnus.*

Damit ist das Ende der Einzelwort-Gruppe erreicht und zugleich die Brücke geschlagen zu dem folgenden *Gesprächsteil – Gesprächsbüchlein* hat man es früher auch genannt –, in dem das Verhältnis von Herr und Knecht das regierende thematische Feld ist. Dieser Gruppe von 92 Einträgen – die Nummern 15–106 – fehlt es an jeder offensichtlichen Binnengliederung, was freilich auch schon daran liegt, dass die Phrasen ja im Codex nicht eine nach der anderen stehen, sondern sich über die Ränder der Seiten bunt verteilen. Steinmeyer und Sievers arbeiten (Wilhelm Grimm folgend, von dem auch die Nummerierung herrührt)¹⁰ die Freiräume oberhalb, links, zwischen und rechts der Textspalten von oben nach unten und von links nach rechts ab (der untere Rand trägt keine Einträge).¹¹ Bleibt man der Einfachheit halber bei dieser (wohl auch einzig sinnvollen) Reihenfolge, lassen sich bestenfalls einzelne thematische Cluster ausmachen, die aber immer wieder von Fremdlingen gestört oder von clusterfreien Einzelgängern unterbrochen sind.

Eine erste Sektion (Nr. 15–28) beschäftigt sich mit Aufenthalt, Nächtigung und Essen (z. B. 20. *Gueliche lande cumen ger .i. de qua patria?* 23. *Enbez mer dar .i. disnau me ibi.*), die nächste (Nr. 29–44) mit dem Verhältnis von Herr und Knecht (z. B. 36. *Ubele canet minen terruæ .i. malus uassallus.* 34. *Esconæ chanet .i. bellus uasallus.* 31. *Guer is tin erro .i. ubi est senior tuus?*), darunter auch Drohungen und Beschimpfungen (42. *Vndes ars in tine naso .i. canis culum in tuo naso.*), und inseriert zwei thematisch fremde Einträge, einer didaktisch (82. *En gualiche steta colernen ger .i. in quo loquo hoc didicisti?*), einer obszön (83. *Guanna sarden ger .i. quot uices fotisti?*). Es folgt eine Sektion (Nr. 45–58), die einfache Befehle enthält (z. B. 45. *Guesattilæ min ros .i. mitte sellam.* 51. *Gimer min ros .i. da mihi meum equum.* 52. *Gimer min schelt .i. scutum.*), die man sich gut als herrisch dem Knecht gesagt vorstellen kann, die genannten Gegenstände verweisen aufs Kriegerhandwerk; dann eine Sektion (Nr. 59–67), die um das Verhältnis von Mann und Frau kreist, wiederum mit einigen obszönen Wendungen und Beschimpfungen, die sich thematisch am einfachsten dadurch einfangen lassen, dass man sich die Sektion als schwankhafte Problematisierung der Dreieckskonstellation Herr – Frau – Knecht denkt (siehe unten). Den Schluss macht eine bunte Sektion (Nr. 68–106) mit kurzen Floskeln (77. *Gued est taz .i. quid est hoc?* 78. *Gne guez .i.*

10. Steinmeyer und Sievers weichen von Grimm nur dadurch ab, dass sie dessen Nummern 80–84, die den Anfang von fol. 1^r (oberer Seitenrand) machen, vorziehen und zwischen Nr. 42 (Ende des Vatikanischen Blattes) und 43 (nach Nr. 84 auf fol. 1^r) einordnen.

11. Siehe detailliert Steinmeyer und Sievers 5: 521. Haubrichs und Pfister gehen im Prinzip ähnlich vor, mit einigen Differenzen im Detail, siehe ebd. 84.

12. Ein "Gesprächsbüchlein für einen reisenden Romanen, der sich mit seiner Hilfe in deutschsprachigen Gegenden zurechtfinden will" (Schützeichel 503), "ein eigentliches kurzes Konversationsbüchlein" (Sonderegger, "Reflexe" 180), "ein zweckgebundenes Reisehandbüchlein" "für den praktischen täglichen Gebrauch auf Reisen" (Sonderegger, "Gespräche" 285 und 284). "Sie [die Dialoge] waren wohl für französische Reisende in deutschsprachigem Gebiet bestimmt." (Penzl, "Stulti" 240) "Es war bestimmt für einen Romanen, der genötigt war, sich für Reisen in althochdeutsches Sprachgebiet rudimentäre Sprachkenntnisse anzueignen." (Haubrichs und Pfister 8) "... ein Konversationsbuch, Sprachhilfen für im Grenzgebiet zwischen Romania und Germania wandernde Mönche" (Endermann 76f.). – Dagegen nur Schubert 59, 65.

13. "Der vorliegende Text wird als Abschrift einer älteren Vorlage betrachtet" (Sonderegger, "Gespräche" 284). Vgl. Haubrichs, "Herkunft" 98; ausführlich Haubrichs und Pfister 12–15.

14. Leicht abweichend Klein, "Gespräche" 42f. u. ö., der zwar auch von einer Vorlage ausgeht, den Gutteil der sprachlichen und graphischen Merkwürdigkeiten aber schon in dieser angelegt wähnt. Kardinalzeugnis ist ihm die systematische Differenz zwischen den *Gesprächen* und den *Tatian-Exzerpten*, deren 'besseres' Althochdeutsch deutlich vorführt, dass es nicht alleine am Schreiber (wenn es denn derselbe war) gelegen haben wird.

15. "Das Denkmal entstammt einer sprachlichen Kontaktzone Romanen-Westfrk.-Ahd. Mfrk. Züge lassen sich neben niederfrk. Spuren erweisen (Schützeichel), die Orthographie ist stark romanisiert und westfrk. Herkunft nicht auszuschließen (Huisman). Ausgangspunkt wird eine für Romanen bestimmte Textvorlage für Reisen im nachbarsprachlichen Gebiet gewesen sein, die in das 9. Jh. zurückgehen kann" (Sonderegger, "Gespräche" 285). Eine kurze und prägnante Übersicht über die verschiedenen älteren Vorschläge der

nescio.), Nominalphrasen bzw. Einzelwörtern (68. *Got man .i. bonus homo.* 70. *luzzil .i. parum.*, erneut in 74. ... *Gonoi .i. satis ul. luzer .i. parvm*, vgl. 69. *haben e gonego .i. habeo satis ego.*), Grußformeln (86. *Guolo geb u got .i. bene te donet deus.*) und weiteren Phrasen zum Verhältnis der Geschlechter, wieder z. T. obszön (101. *Gauathere, latz mer serte.*), zur Fortbewegung (87. *Guane gvestu.* [keine Übersetzung]) und (vor allem) zum Essen. Auffällig in dieser letzten Sektion ist, dass sich nun die Wörter und Phrasen zusehends wiederholen, z. T. innerhalb der Sektion (wie Nr. 69f. zu 74), z. T. wird Früheres variiert nochmals aufgegriffen (Nr. 22 zu 104, 48 zu 74, 59 zu 92).

'Gespräch' kann man diese Reihen von Sätzen kaum vernünftig nennen. Zwar gibt es immer wieder kürzere Reihe von Phrasen, die aufeinander zu reagieren scheinen (einige Beispiele gleich), im Großen und Ganzen stehen sie aber zusammenhangschwach nebeneinander. Das hat die Forschung nicht davon abgehalten, hinter diesem alleine durch sein Alter nobilitierten Zeugnis der deutschen Literatur- und Sprachgeschichte so etwas wie einen Sprachführer für Romanen zu sehen, die sich auf Reisen ins deutschsprachige Gebiet wagen und sich mit den aus dem Alltag gegriffenen Redewendungen halbwegs durchzuschlagen wüssten.¹² Freilich: "hinter," und nicht: "in diesem Zeugnis." Wie das Meiste, was aus der alten Zeit auf uns gekommen ist, wollte man auch dieses Sammelsurium von Wort- und Satzblinguen nicht für original gelten lassen. Es sei die Abschrift einer Vorlage,¹³ deshalb so katastrophal in seinem (schreib-)sprachlichen Zustand, schuld wie immer der Schreiber, ein Franzose, der kaum etwas verstand und im Abschreiben doch vieles ruiniert hätte (einige Wörter und Sätze sind der Forschung trotz emsigen Bemühens bis heute dunkel).¹⁴

Mir scheinen beide Hypothesen zweifelhaft. Weder halte ich es für ausgemacht, dass die Sammlung, wie sie uns vorliegt, die Abschrift (der Abschrift der Abschrift ...) einer makellosen Vorlage wäre, die gleichsam 'gutes' (oder wenigstens 'besseres') Althochdeutsch – verlorenes Westfränkisch am besten¹⁵ – geboten und dieses polyglott-luzide in Latein aufgelöst hätte; noch glaube ich, dass der Zweck dieser Kollektion darin liegt, einen Sprachkundigen im fremdsprachigen Gebiet vor peinlicher Aphasie zu bewahren. Wenn die *Altdeutschen Gespräche* aber kein verderbter Sprachführer sind, was sind sie dann? Ich will mich der Frage über die Rückweisung der althergebrachten Hypothesen nähern.

Abschrift oder Original: Dafür, dass es sich um eine Abschrift einer gleich wie beschaffenen Vorlage handelt, wird zweierlei ins Tref-

fen geführt (am ausführlichsten Haubrachs und Pfister 12–15): Erstens die bescheidene schreibsprachliche Qualität der Einträge, die suggerieren mag, dass der, der das geschrieben hat, gar nicht über die sprachliche Kompetenz verfügte, um die Kürzesttexte selbst zu konzipieren. Wer nicht deutsch schreiben kann, kann auch kein Deutsch, steht hinter dieser Annahme. Zweitens die Tatsache, dass die Einträge voller Korrekturen stecken, die anscheinend im Schreibfluss getätigt wurden, was wiederum nahe legt, dass hier ein Abschreibfehler nach dem anderen sofort gebessert wurde. Aber könnte es nicht auch sein, dass hier ein Romane, der (gebrochen) Deutsch spricht, dieses vielleicht gerade erst (mündlich) erlernt, sich im Aufschreiben von fremdsprachlichen Wörtern und Phrasen versucht, ganz ohne Vorlage, wobei ihm, gerade weil er in dieser Sprache unsicher ist, eine Reihe von Fehlern unterlaufen und er sich, weil er es nicht anders (bzw. gar nicht) gelernt hat, einer grotesken Schreibweise bedient?

Sichtet man die Korrekturen (die der Apparat von Steinmeyer und Sievers penibel dokumentiert), erhärtet sich dieser Eindruck der schreibenden Unsicherheit. So setzt der Schreiber etwa häufig *e* für *et* und verwendet diese Abbrüviatur auch dort, wo zwischen *e* und *t* eine Wortgrenze liegt (z. B. *b&az* in Nr. 47). Man kann das als Hinweise auf eine Vorlage werten, bei der die Worte eng zusammengeschrieben waren, und auf einen Schreiber, der zu schlecht Deutsch konnte, um diese Grenzen selbst zu ziehen. Wie aber wäre dann zu erklären, dass in Nr. 36 *minen teruæ* ('meiner Treu') als *min&ruæ* mit überschriebenem *e* versehen ist? Wird hier nicht im Nachhinein genau jene Wortgrenze markiert, die der Schreiber nicht verstanden haben soll? Das erklärt noch immer nicht, warum er hier anzeigt, was ihn sonst nicht tangiert. Es demonstriert aber, dass sowohl ein Bewusstsein als auch ein Wissen um das Problem vorhanden war. Darum ist auch *dodon* (Nr. 18) für *dodon us* "(des) Herren Haus" völlig abschreibunverdächtig: Wie fließend Wortgrenzen im Gesprochenen sind, weiß jeder, der je eine fremde Sprache gelernt hat, und *h* fehlt regulär. *Seh tutafäh normall.*

Wieder andere Korrekturen belegen mehr die Nachlässigkeit des Schreibens (die Einträge sind ja schon optisch äußerst unregelmäßig und wirken flüchtig gesetzt) als die sprachliche Inkompetenz des Schreibenden. Darunter fallen beispielsweise *Semergot* < *Semigot* (Nr. 48), *Gimer* < *Gimen* (Nr. 51) oder *thon ich* < *tonic* (Nr. 73) und eine ganze Reihe restituerter *h*. An diesen Fällen wird die *petitio principii* der Vorlagensuche besonders deutlich. So verbucht Pfister

16. Ganz klar ist die Sache nicht, da in unmittelbarer Nähe (es ist eine der Wiederholungen) *luzzil* (Nr. 70) steht.

17. *diere* < **dare* (Nr. 100), das Haubrichs und Pfister 13 anführt, ist in der Deutung strittig und damit wenig aussagekräftig, dasselbe gilt für fehlende oder überschüssige Nasale (dazu ebd.), die Abschreibfehler sein können, aber genauso gut Versehen der Niederschrift oder aber sogar schreibsprachliche Eigenheit.

18. In diese Richtung weisen die Analysen bei Haubrichs und Pfister, die zwar an einer Trennung von Verfasser (bei ihnen: ‘Redaktor’) und Schreiber festhalten, einen Gutteil der Mängel des Textes aber schon dem Redaktor anlasten (Fehler der Flexion, des Genus, des Kasus, des Tempus, der Deklination- und Konjugationsklassen etc., dann aber sogar einen “Teil der phonetischen und wohl auch der graphischen Interferenzen”; ebd. 50–52), sodass für den Schreiber wenig Übeltat übrig bleibt und die Instanzen zusehends zusammenfallen. Vgl. ähnlich Penzl, “Gimer” 399f. u. ö. Weiter gedacht hat den Ansatz Klein, “Gespräche” und aus sprachhistorischer Perspektive gezeigt, welche Fehlleistungen der *Gespräche* als typisch für Interimsprachen bzw. Lerner Sprachen gelten können (bes. ebd. 43). Klein will seine These aber nicht primär auf die erhaltenen *Gespräche*, sondern auf deren Vorlage bezogen haben. Seine Überlegungen sind im Fach wenig rezipiert worden. In der jüngsten kommentierten Ausgabe wird Kleins Aufsatz zwar zitiert, im Kommentar aber nicht weiter berücksichtigt (Müller 373–75).

(Haubrichs und Pfister 22) die häufige *h*-Aphärese auf das Konto des ignoranten Schreibers, wofür die nicht seltenen Korrekturen (also Restitutionen über der Zeile) sprächen. Auf der nächsten Seite (Haubrichs und Pfister 23) werden demselben Schreiber hyperkorrekte Graphien vom Typus *hiih* (Nr. 98) für ahd. *ich* angelastet. Aber zeigen nicht gerade diese hyperkorrekten Schreibweisen, dass genau dieser ignorante Schreiber auf die Setzung von ahd. *h* sensibilisiert ist? Und warum soll er sich dann aber nicht auch im Schreibprozess hin und wieder dafür entscheiden, *h* nachzutragen, wo er es zuerst nicht setzen wollte? Das ist doch eine typische Unsicherheit des Zweisprachenerwerbs, für einen Deutschsprecher und -schreiber vergleichbar der Akzentsetzung im Französischen!

Instruktiv ist auch *Guare guan cher* < *Guar quantu* (Nr. 89), das auf *Guane gvestu* (Nr. 87) folgt. Ist das nicht ein typischer Flexionsfehler eines Sprachlerner? Vielleicht wären unter dieser Rubrik auch zweimaliges (!) *cunt* (Nr. 18f.) statt *cum* sowie *habent* statt *habem* zu verzeichnen – das ist so auffällig und unauffällig, wie wenn heute ein Deutscher, der Französisch lernt, *je va* schreibt, zumal derartige Flexionsfehler in den *Gesprächen* nicht selten sind (Haubrichs und Pfister 51; Klein, “Gespräche” 39–44 u. ö.). Eines Sprachlerner übrigen, der im Lateinischen merklich sicherer ist als im Deutschen, der aber trotzdem auch dort immer wieder Flüchtigkeitsfehler produziert und diese, nicht anders als im Deutschen, dann sofort bessert (*meum* < *eum* [Nr. 51], *parvm* < *parom* [Nr. 74]). Gerade dass der Übergang zwischen ‘Fehlern’ im Deutschen und dem romanischen Gepräge der Graphie fließend ist (Beispiele bei Haubrichs und Pfister 13), spricht dafür, dass das Problem primär nicht eines des Kopierens, sondern des Aufschreibens von Gehörtem ist. Klare Abschreibfehler vermag ich in all dem jedenfalls nicht zu erkennen, allenfalls lägen solche vor in *luzer* (Nr. 74), das vielleicht *luzec* heißen müsste,¹⁶ *andrer* < *aridrer* (Nr. 103) und *tata* < *tara* (Nr. 104),¹⁷ aber ähnliche Buchstaben werden auch in der Flüchtigkeit gerne verwechselt (davon nicht zu reden, dass das Gestrichene in den letzten beiden Fällen kaum zu entziffern ist).

Und selbst wenn diese Einträge Abschrift von Vorhandenem wären, ist doch unbestreitbar, dass dahinter eine Vorlage gestanden haben müsste, die selbst schon von der eigenwilligen Graphie geprägt gewesen wäre.¹⁸ Denn diese ist nicht als Abschreibartefakt erklärlich, sondern nur als Relikt eines (gleichwohl bescheidenen) mündlichen Sprachvermögens, das auf völlige schreibsprachliche Inkompetenz trifft. Auch wenn dies also Abschrift wäre, müsste die Vorlage (der

Vorlage der Vorlage ...) aus der Mündlichkeit gekommen sein. Das Instrumentarium, das die Philologie des 19. Jahrhunderts für 'alte' Texte entwickelt hat, zielt darum an diesem Zeugnis vorbei, weil es nicht dafür gemacht ist, Texte zu analysieren und deren diachrone Tiefe abzuschätzen, die *von vornherein* keinen verlässlichen Wortlaut bieten, sondern durch und durch fehlerhaft und defizitär sind. Es genügt, sich vorzustellen, was Karl Lachmann mit der Schularbeit eines 15-jährigen Deutschen gemacht hätte, der seit wenigen Monaten Französisch lernt. Mit einiger Sicherheit hätte er alle Worte und Sätze richtig gestellt; aber das Original wäre damit unendlich weit verfehlt. Einen "tatsächlichen Urzustand des Gesprächsbüchleins," über den "die Kopie [...] verfälschende Auskunft gibt" (Schützeichel 503; zit. auch bei Haubrichs und Pfister 15), existiert nur als Philologenphantasma; viel spricht dafür, dass die Kopie selbst der Urzustand des schriftlichen Textes ist, verfälschend ist es, dahinter einen 'besseren' deutschen Text zu suchen, richtig wäre es, sich Gedanken über die mündliche Sprechpraxis dahinter zu machen.¹⁹

19. Wegweisend dafür sind die linguistischen Analysen bei Klein, "Gespräche" 48–57, der in erster Linie zeigt, dass das Kategorien- und Formsystem (im Zentrum stehen Flexionslehre und Endsilben) einer radikalen Vereinfachung unterworfen ist. Erste Ansätze zur Syntax der *Gespräche* bietet Meineke.

Haubrichs, der freilich von der Vorlagenhypothese aus argumentiert, ortet in der "althochdeutsche[n] Grundschrift" eine eigentümliche Mischung aus mittel- (Zweite Lautverschiebung) und niederfränkischen Elementen (durchgehende Monophthongierung), was ihn zur These bringt, dass "die Heimat jenes althochdeutschen Dialektes, den der Redaktor – sicherlich als Zweitsprache – beherrschte, entweder im bilingualen Kontaktgebiet am Westrand des Mittelfränkischen gesucht werden [muß] oder in bisher nicht weiter bekannten westfränkischen Sprachinseln" (Haubrichs und Pfister, die Zitate 73 und 82; ähnlich schon Penzl, "Gimer" 394f.). Das Westfränkische ist dabei so etwas wie ein sprachhistorischer Joker für eine Varietät, die Elemente verschiedener anderer, mehr oder weniger unterschiedlicher Varietäten des Althochdeutschen eklektisch kombiniert (so noch als favorisierte Variante bei Klein, "Gespräche" 47f., 57 u. ö., außerdem Gusmani). Ich frage mich, ob man nicht besser daran täte, die volle Heterogenität des Befundes nicht hinter einem solchen harmonisierenden Konstrukt zu verbergen: Denn könnte nicht die sprachliche Hybridität ebenfalls ein Zeugnis für die schwache Sprachkompetenz dessen sein, der dies zuerst aufgeschrieben hat (vgl. in Ansätzen Penzl, "Gimer" 396)? Wer heute in Europa eine Fremdsprache lernt und nicht das Glück hat, diese von einem *native speaker* vermittelt zu bekommen, der wird am Ende ein ganz ähnliches Dialektkauderwelsch sprechen (dies die andere von Klein, "Ge-

sprache” 47f. vorgeschlagene Variante), und dies, obwohl es heute so etwas wie ‘Standardsprachen’ gibt!

Sowohl die schreibsprachlichen Defizite als auch die Korrekturen also signalisieren möglicherweise genau das Gegenteil dessen, was man in ihnen angezeigt sehen wollte. Erhärtet werden die Zweifel an der Vorstellung einer durch inkompetente Abschrift(en) ruinierten ‘guten’ Vorlage von der chaotischen Ordnung der Einträge (auch dort, wo sie, etwa am oberen Seitenrand oder zwischen den Spalten, in unmittelbarer Folge stehen). Die 14 Einträge umfassende Wortliste zu Beginn ist, es war oben schon gesagt worden, offenbar geschult an der Glossarpraxis der Zeit. Während aber dort, etwa in den *Kasseler Glossen* oder im *Vocabularius Sancti Galli*, diese Listen, auch nur jene der Körperteile, von erheblicher Länge und Detailverliebtheit (bis hin zu einzelnen Knöchlein) ist, wirkt die Liste in den *Gesprächen* kurzatmig. Dass sie bald in eine unvorhersehbare Richtung abbiegt und dann die Lexikonstruktur ganz verlassen wird, ließe sich bequem darüber erklären, dass hier aus dem Gedächtnis geschrieben wird, was mündlich gelernt worden ist. Vielleicht erklärt dies auch das irritierende Wortpaar Nr. 6: *Zunguen dentes*. Man hat dies früher (siehe die Anmerkung von Steinmeyer und Sievers) als Abschreibfehler gewertet. Aber warum sollten gleich zwei Wörter übersprungen werden? Kann das nicht einfach auch ein schlichter Vokabelfehler sein?

Nichts anderes ergibt sich aus dem Aufbau der folgenden, längeren Phrasengruppe. Dass sie sich so schwer in Binnenpartien gliedern lässt, hat seinen Grund in ihrer heterogenen Strukturierung. Es sind mindestens drei Strukturmuster, die einander überlagern und in Summe dazu führen, dass die *Gespräche* eigentümlich vage dahinfließen. Das erste dieser Strukturmuster besteht darin, dass thematisch Ähnliches zusammensteht. Auf diese Weise hatte ich mich oben an einer Grobgliederung versucht, es muss hier nicht wiederholt werden. Das zweite Strukturmuster arbeitet gegen dieses erste an, indem es – wie im Sprachlehrbuch – Beispielsätze mit geringer Variation wiederholt, um Wortfelder abzustecken und zugleich Flexionsübungen zu unternehmen: 51. *Gimer min ros .i. da mihi meum equum*. 52. *Gimer min schelt .i. scutum*. 53. *Gimer min spera*. 54. *Gimer min suarda*. [i.] *spata*. 55. *Gimer min ansco .i. quantos*. 56. *Gimer min stap .i. fustum*. 57. *Gimer min matzer .i. cultellum*. 58. *Gimer cherize .i. candela*. Die Beispielreihe demonstriert zugleich, dass hier nicht geschrieben wird, um irgendeine Art verbindlichen Wort- oder Phrasenschatz festzulegen: Lateinisch übersetzt wird nur, was – von einem Spre-

cherindividuum – vergessen zu werden droht. Bei einigen Wörtern ist der Schreibende sich offenbar sicherer als bei anderen und lässt die Übersetzung weg, in jedem Fall verzichtet er (hier und auch sonst systematisch) auf die Wiederholung gleich bleibender Satzteile, an anderer Stelle (siehe das Zitat ab Nr. 60 im Folgenden) begnügt er sich mit ungefähren Übertragungen. Auch die (nicht sehr häufigen) Einträge, bei denen im Eintrag selbst Varianten gegeben werden, fallen in dieses Strukturmuster, z. B.: *gueselle* neben *guenoz* in Nr. 15 oder 91. *Cat henens cindes .i. uade uiam l cad henens huegues.*

Das dritte Strukturmuster ist das elaborierteste; es hat die größte Aufmerksamkeit der Forschung auf sich gezogen und letztlich auch dazu geführt, dass man diese Sammlung an Einträgen *Gespräche* hat nennen wollen. Es besteht darin, die einfachen Sätze zu beispielhaften Dialogen auszubauen, ohne dass immer klar wäre, wie sich hier Zufall und Absicht, wie bewusstes, halbbewusstes und unbewusstes Arrangement sich zueinander verhalten. Die komplizierteste und längste, vielleicht auch komplexeste Stelle ist diese:

59. Guar es taz uip .i. ubi est tua femina? 60. Quandi næ guarin ger za metina .i. quare non fuisti ad matutinas? 61. En ualde .i. ego nolui. 62. Ger ensclephen bitte uip in ore bette .i. tu iacuisti ad feminam in tuo lecto. 63. Guez or erre az pe de semauda [pe desem auda ‘bei diesem Haupte’, vgl. die Anm. bei Haubrichs und Pfister] ger enslcephen pe dez uip sesterai [so est er ai nach Martin, vgl. die Anm. der Ausg.] rebulga .i. si sciuerit hoc senior tuvs²⁰ iratus erit tibi per meum caput. 64. Guaz queten ger, erra .i. quid dicitis uos? 65. Coorestu, narra .i. ausculta, fol. 66. Gualdestu abe de tinen rose ter uht [‘Haut’] ze tine ruge .i. uelles corium de tuo equo habere in ollo tuo? 67. Narra er sarda gerra .i. stultus uoluntarie fvttit.²¹

20. Korrigiert aus *tuis*.

21. Korrigiert aus *fottit*.

Die Passage steht am rechten Seitenrand von fol. 1^r wie aus einem Guss, davor ein Umbruch (mit Nr. 59 beginnt diese ‘Marginalspalte’), darunter freier Raum vor dem nächsten Eintrag. Das alleine bedeutet noch nichts, und vielleicht hat hier der eine Satz mit dem anderen nichts zu tun. Vielleicht verbirgt sich dahinter aber auch eine sprachlich holprig realisierte burleske Szene. Mit einigem *good will* könnte man sich einen Dialog oder eine Verschachtelung mehrerer Minimaldialoge denken, der oder die irgendwie mit Herr/Knecht, Matutinschwänzen, Ehebruch und drohender Strafe zu tun hätte(n). Natürlich knarzt der Dialog an allen Ecken und Enden – das Assoziationsgeflecht aber ist latent.

In welche makrostrukturellen Nöte die Überlagerung der drei Strukturprinzipien führen kann, lässt sich an einer viel schlichteren Passage zeigen. Sie firmiert ganz am Beginn der Phrasengruppe. Zuerst stehen zwei Phrasen, die als Frage-Antwort-Struktur funktionieren: 15. *Guare uenge inat selida, gueselle t guenoz .i. par .i. ubi abuisti mansionem ac nocte, conpagn?* 16. *Ze garaben us selida .i. ad mansionem comitis.* Durch Assoziation (Weggehen > Kommen) folgt wiederum Frage-Antwort: 17. *Guane cumet ger, brothro .i. unde uenis, frater?* 18. *E cunt mino dodon us .i. de domo domni mei.* 19. *ul e cunt mer min erre us .i. de domo senioris mei.* Wobei die Antwort ihrerseits durch eine Variationsreihe *en miniature* aufgeschwellt ist. Dann wird die ganze Frage-Antwort-Struktur variiert: 20. *Gueliche lande cumen ger .i. de qua patria?* 21. *E guas mer in gene francia .i. in francia fui.* Und nochmals assoziativ (Aufenthalt > Zeitvertreib): 22. *Guæz ge dar daden .i. quid fecisti ibi?* 23. *Enbez mer dar .i. disnau me ibi.*

Das Spiel ließe sich noch über einige Phrasen hinweg fortsetzen. Es änderte nichts an der Beobachtung, dass im ständigen Schwanken zwischen Assoziationsreihe, Variationsreihe und Dialogreihe eine Art *stream of lexicological consciousness* entsteht, der sich aber nun durchaus nicht über eine wie auch immer katastrophale Abschrift einer wohlgeordneten Vorlage erklären lässt. Hier springt ganz offensichtlich der auf eine fremde Sprache gerichtete Gedanke hin und her zwischen verschiedenen Modi des Sprachlernens, wie man sie im Grunde auch aus der Subgliederung moderner Fremdsprachenlehrbücher kennt.

Warum sollte also diese in ihrer Anlage einzigartige Sammlung nicht schlicht eine Sammlung von Lernnotizen sein, aufgeschrieben, um sich daran zu erinnern, von einem individuellen Sprecher, der hier kein Glossar für irgendeine Nachwelt bewahrt, sondern sich einen Lernbehelf für den Eigenbedarf geschaffen hat,²² einem ‚Deutschschüler‘, der aus dem Gedächtnis einen Teil seines Vokabel- und Phrasenwissens festschreibt, getragen von thematischen Assoziationen, didaktischen Variationen und kurzen Gesprächsexperimenten? Das Vulgärlatein mit dem starken romanischen Einschlag (ausführlich die Untersuchungen bei Haubrichs und Pfister, zusammenfassend 46) passt zur Lokalisierung der Handschrift im zentralen Frankreich, wofür nicht zuletzt auch spricht, dass von derselben Hand, die die Bilinguen eingetragen hat, eine Liste französischer Ortsnamen stammt, die in die Region um Sens fallen (fol. 23v; vgl. Steinmeyer und Sievers 5: 523f.; Bischoff 133; detailliert Haubrichs, „Herkunft“ 95–98 und Haubrichs und Pfister 9–11). Die romanisierende Graphie

22. Vgl. in Ansätzen Steinmeyer und Sievers 5: 524. Dazu passt auch, dass die Schrift „einen ‚für persönliche Einträge und Glossen in Frankreich verbreiteten Typ‘ vertritt“ (Haubrichs, „Herkunft“ 95, das Binnenzeitat ist eine briefliche Mitteilung von Bernhard Bischoff). Vgl. Haubrichs und Pfister 6.

23. Schmid 420–25 listet als Kategorien: Kontaktaufnahme und -pflege, Konflikt, Aufforderungen und Ansprüche, Formelhaftes, Körperteile, Leute: Benennungen und Verbleib, räumliche und zeitliche Orientierung.

24. Ob sie unbedingt den ‘Predigtvorbereitungen’ dienen (Endermann 77), sei dahingestellt.

25. Haubrichs, der für die *Gespräche* an der These eines Sprachführers festhält (siehe oben), gibt für die *Tatian*-Exzerpte immerhin vorsichtig zu bedenken: “Vielleicht drückt sich hierin bereits ein sekundärer Gebrauch der Sammlung, etwa im Sinne einer über Reiseprobleme hinausgehenden Förderung der Sprachkompetenz aus” (Haubrichs und Pfister 8). Aber warum muss das ‘sekundär’ sein? Und wenn dies für die wohl von derselben Hand stammenden *Tatian*-Exzerpte gilt, wäre es dann nicht nahe liegend, dasselbe auch für die vorstehenden *Gespräche* zu vermuten?

26. Darum ist der Vergleich der *Gespräche* mit einem heutigen Sprachführer bei Schubert 55 irreführend: Schubert stellt dort Sachgruppen der *Gespräche* und des modernen Sprachführers einander gegenüber und suggeriert eine Deckungsgleichheit, die nicht besteht: Erstens ist die Gewichtung der Sachgruppen völlig verschieden, zweitens fehlt die Hauptmasse der Sachgruppen aus dem *Langenscheidt* den *Gesprächen*. Dass wiederum die Sachgruppen der *Gespräche* im *Langenscheidt* lückenlos erfasst sind, erstaunt nicht: Der *Langenscheidt* versteht sich als universal, also beinhaltet er – unter anderem! – auch die Themenbereiche der *Gespräche*.

27. In die Sphäre der Prostitution verweist allenfalls der dritte ‘Ficken’-Satz, vgl. Penzl, “Gimer” 395.

28. Haubrichs und Pfister lesen danach *scio. n[on]* (das ich am Digitalisat nicht ansatzweise sehen kann) und verstehen **nast e* als ‘nicht weiß ich’.

des Deutschen sowie der lexikologisch-phraseologische Bewusstseinsstrom passen wiederum zur mündlichen Aneignung einer fremden Sprache – das Gesamtbild ist ein durchaus stimmiges. Auch die *Tatian*-Exzerpte, die den Wortschatz der *Gespräche* (ohne unmittelbar erkennbare Systematik;²³ nur ein religiöser Einschlag ist unverkennbar) erweitern,²⁴ fügen sich diesem ein: Wenn sie von derselben Hand stammen, zeigen sie die andere Seite der Sprachlernmedaille, denn hier wird, wie die weitgehend konventionelle althochdeutsche Graphie zeigt, nicht mündlich Erlerntes unbeholfen aufgeschrieben, sondern schriftlich Vorliegendes abgeschrieben. Sobald aber die Vorlage auslässt – es ist der Fall bei den drei Einfügungen, die keine Entsprechung im *Tatian* haben –, verlässt sich der Schreiber wieder auf seine eigenwillige Graphie.²⁵

Die Annahme eines Sprachreisebüchleins erübrigt sich damit gleich doppelt: Erstens ist ihr die hypothetische Vorlage abhanden gekommen, ohne die diese Annahme nicht funktioniert (niemand wird das *Abavus*-Glossar in dieser Buchgestalt mit auf Reisen genommen haben), zweitens sperrt sich die ganze Charakteristik (Anordnung, Auswahl) der Wörter und Sätze gegen diese Vorstellung. Im Übrigen sollte man bedenken: Wer nur diese Sätze im Gepäck trägt, sollte vielleicht besser gleich zuhause bleiben.²⁶

Es bleibt die Frage, woher die markanten Obszönitäten und Malediktionen rühren. Mit der Vorstellung eines Sprachlerner wollen sie nicht so recht zusammengehen. Und doch sind sie dominant. In den wenigen dutzend Einträgen wird heftig geflucht (Nr. 42 – oben zitiert) und gleich dreimal ‘gefickt’ (Nr. 83, 67 und 101 – ebenfalls oben zitiert). Mit diesen Einsprengseln hat sich die Forschung bislang schwer getan: In einen Sprachführer gehören sie nicht, und bei aller opportunen witzigen Auflockerung des Sprachunterrichts mag man sich eine derart krasse Alterität (Schubert 64) des Spracherwerbs nicht vorstellen. ‘Ein Narr, wer gerne fickt.’ als Schluss eines brüchigen Dialogs (?), die Frage ‘Wie oft hast du gefickt?’,²⁷ deren Antwort dunkel bleibt (84. *Terue †nastet .i. ...*),²⁸ dann die fast absurde Malediktion ‘Einen Hundsarsch in deine Nase!’ – man würde es anders erwartet haben. Aber könnte dies nicht vielleicht ein gezieltes Aufbrechen der trockenen Sobrietee des mühsamen Sprachlernens sein, verbunden mit einer fremdsprachlichen Faszination für das Experimentieren mit sprachlichen Tabus? Vielleicht wäre dann der Nase-Arsch-Tausch nicht nur saublöd, sondern auf seine sonderbare Weise originell noch dazu? Und steht deshalb die gerade trak-

tierte Nr. 83 unmittelbar nach 82. *En gualiche steta colernen ger .i. in quo loquo hoc didicisti?*

Ich tue mir sehr schwer, dabei nicht an halbwüchsige Gymnasiasten zu denken, die Englisch- oder Französischübungsbücher mit deftigen Kraftausdrücken aller Art ausschmücken. Oder auch – nun doch ein Sprachführer – an Monty Python's Sketch vom *Dirty Hungarian Phrase Book*. Wörterbücher ihrem Zweck zu entfremden, die platte Nüchternheit von Glossaren ins Absurde kippen zu lassen, ihre unerträgliche Sinnfestigkeit zu unterlaufen, ist dem Sprachwitz das Nächstliegende. Dass die Entfremdung dabei häufig über die Sexualsphäre gespielt wird, muss ebenfalls nicht wundernehmen: Die Faszination von Lernern für tabuisierte Bereiche der Sprache – für Fäkal- und Sexualsprache insbesondere – lässt sich in jeder halbwüchsigen Schulklasse beobachten. Gewiss ist das pubertär – aber doch irgendwie ohne rigide Altersbeschränkung.²⁹

Es wäre im Übrigen nicht der einzige Ort dieser Handschrift, der sich als Hinterlassenschaft eines – ich phantasie – Klostersnovizen erklären ließe (der freilich, wie die Schrift zeigt, schon erklecklich gut zu schreiben versteht). Am Ende des *Abavus*-Glossars fol. 74r, wo etwas freier Raum geblieben ist, hat sich ein völlig unbeholfener Federzeichner geübt (der auch an anderen Stellen der Handschrift gewütet hat: fol. 53v, 85v). Die Kritzeleien zeigen einmal einen Drachen-Hund (?), dann eine von drei Köpfen gerahmte Szene: zwei davon links untereinander, überschrieben mit *cherubin* und *serafin*, der dritte rechts unten, den Blick aufs Zentrum der Szene gerichtet. Dort steht ein riesenhafter Mann, der ganz aus den anatomischen Proportionen geraten ist, in beiden Händen eine Axt, mit der er gerade einen anderen Mann köpft (von dem kaum mehr ausgeführt ist als eben dieser Kopf). Um den Kopf des Axtführers herum wird erklärt *mortalitas est iste homo.*, links davon, leicht nach unten versetzt, zwischen diesem Spruch und dem *cherubin* die (vermutlich) Überschrift der Szene: *in timotum*. Auch wenn die Axt keine Keule ist und auch wenn die Steine fehlen, so dürfte es doch das berüchtigt brutale Martyrium des Heiligen Timotheus sein, das hier am Ende eines Glossars, inmitten einer Handschrift eingefangen wird, die mit diesem inhaltlich nichts, institutionell aber doch sehr viel zu tun hat, wenn man sie im klösterlichen Schulbetrieb verortet. Und wie bei den obszönen und groben Wendungen der *Gespräche*, die keine Gespräche sind, wäre auch hier der Gestus ein (im weiteren Sinne) pubertärer: Wer sich so primitiv fürs 'Ficken' begeistern kann, hat oft auch ein Herz fürs Blutige.

29. In der jüngsten Anthologie althochdeutscher Literatur stehen die *Gespräche* nicht ohne Zufall – wie auch die *Kasseler Glossen* – in der Sektion "Schule und Spracharbeit" (Müller 224–29). Die Kommentierung (ebd., 373–75) aber bleibt durchaus traditionell, z. B. ebd. 373: "Die beiden Zeugnisse waren wohl als Sprachführer auf Reisen gedacht."

Kasseler Glossen

Die *Pariser Gespräche* werden in der Forschung traditionell mit einem weiteren Relikt der althochdeutschen Zeit zusammengesehen, das man meist *Kasseler Glossen*, seltener auch *Kasseler Gespräche* (Edition: Steinmeyer und Sievers 3: 9–13) nennt. Erhalten sind sie in einer Handschrift des frühen 9. Jahrhunderts, die heute in der Universitätsbibliothek Kassel bzw. der Landesbibliothek und Murhardtschen Bibliothek der Stadt Kassel unter der Signatur 4° Ms. theol. 24 aufbewahrt wird;³⁰ ursprünglich dürfte sie aus Bayern, vielleicht aus Regensburg stammen.³¹

30. Digitalisat.

31. Datierung und Lokalisierung nach Bischoff 123. Vgl. Schröder 62. – Die These von Mettke, die *Kasseler Glossen* wären wegen der (vermeintlich) engen Verwandtschaft mit den Pariser Gesprächen ins französisch-deutsche Grenzgebiet zu setzen, hat soweit ich sehe keinen Zuspuch gefunden.

Die Sammelhandschrift (Katalogisat bei Bergmann und Stricker 2: 739–41 [mit älterer Literatur]) enthält überwiegend lateinische Texte: die *Canones apostolorum* (fol. 2r–13r), die *Constitutio et fides Nicaeni concilii* (fol. 18r–29r) – beide Exzerpte der *Canones conciliorum* der Dionysio-Hadriana –, ein *Ordo ad paenitentiam dandam* samt einiger *Orationen* (fol. 29v–32v), schließlich ein *Paenitentiale* (fol. 32v–60r). Mitten unter den lateinischen Texten stehen die beiden deutschen, zuerst fol. 13v–15r die so genannte *Exhortatio ad plebem christianam*, anders als die lateinischen Texte ohne einleitende Rubrik, beginnend auf einer neuen, allerdings der Rückseite des vorhergehenden lateinischen Textes. Die ‘Exhortatio’, die außerdem noch in ähnlicher Anlage in München, Staatsbibliothek, Clm 6244 (südbair., Anfang 9. Jh.) überliefert ist, bietet einen zweisprachigen Mahnruf an jeden Christen, die zentralen Wahrheiten seines Glaubens zu kennen und weiterzugeben. Lateinischer (links) und deutscher Text (rechts) stehen in einer Spaltensynopse, die Spalten sind durch einen Trennstrich separiert. Unmittelbar auf die *Exhortatio* folgen, wiederum ohne Rubrik und mitten in der Seite, die *Kasseler Glossen* (fol. 15r–17v), die zunächst ebenfalls mit Spalten operieren, wiederum links Latein, rechts Deutsch. Die Spaltenzahl variiert von Seite zu Seite: 6 Spalten (also drei Doppelspalten) auf fol. 15r, 4 auf 15v, detto 16r, 5 (!) Spalten aber auf 16v, was dazu führt, dass in der fünften Spalte lateinischer und deutscher Text nicht nebeneinander, sondern untereinander geführt werden (die Einträge 11/27–11/38; 11/39 steht unter dem Spaltenspiegel). Dieses System wird für die restlichen beiden Seiten beibehalten: Auf fol. 17r sind die Einträge fortlaufend lateinisch-deutsch geschrieben, ebenso auf fol. 17v, die von den Glossen ganz ausgefüllt wird. Die deutschen Partien scheinen von derselben oder einer ähnlichen Hand geschrieben wie die lateinischen, auffällig ist die merklich kleinere Schrift bei den *Glos-*

sen, die außerdem vergleichsweise stark abgerieben, vielleicht auch mit einer etwas helleren Tinte gesetzt sind.

Tatsächlich ähnelt die Anlage der *Kasseler Glossen* über weite Strecken jener der *Pariser Gespräche*, mit dem Unterschied allerdings, dass die *Kasseler Glossen* wesentlich stärker reguliert sind und dadurch in mehrfacher Hinsicht nicht von jener spektakulären Extravaganz wie die *Pariser Gespräche*. Ich will kurz die Parallelen und Differenzen sammeln:

Auch die *Kasseler Glossen* bestehen, wie die *Gespräche*, aus einem lexikalischen und einem phraseologischen Teil. Allerdings ist die Wortliste nun deutlich länger – sie zählt bei Steinmeyer und Sievers 180 Einträge –, während die anschließenden Sätze lediglich aus 46 Nummern bestehen.

Wiederum scheint der lexikalische Teil von bestehenden Glossaren abhängig, aber während die *Gespräche* den Eindruck vermitteln, dass hier jemand eine Körperteilliste aus dem kurzen Gedächtnis aufgeschrieben hat, wurde die Wortliste der *Glossen* mit ziemlicher Sicherheit abgeschrieben (siehe unten). Es stehen wiederum zuerst die Körperteile (9/1–10/14), dann folgen die (Haus-)Tiere (10/15–43), dann Teile des Hauses (10/44–11/1), Kleidung (11/2–10), Hausgerät (11/11–42) und eine bunte Restkategorie Diverses (11/43–12/23; vgl. Schröder 62; Stricker, “Glossen” 225). Und auch innerhalb der Subeinheiten ist die Gliederung strenger als in den *Gesprächen*. Während sich dort die Körperteilordnung bereits innerhalb von 14 Einträgen verflüchtigt, kommen thematisch fremde Einträge zwar auch in den *Glossen* vor, aber nur selten und vereinzelt. Beispiel ist etwa *Unctura smero* (10/11), also ‘Schmier, Salbe’, die von diversen Teilen des Torso umschlossen wird – wohl weil sie dort ihre Anwendung findet. Auch die Separierung von Wort- und Satzlisten ist strenger als in den ‘Gesprächen’: Hin und wieder werden die Wortlisten von Beispielsätzen unterbrochen, die Ordnung wird davon aber stets nur gestört, nie wirklich instabil. So stehen nach einigen Körperteilen – *Capilli fahs* (9/4) war bereits gelistet worden, wir befinden uns am Übergang vom Gesichts zu Hals und Schulter – die Phrasen: *Tondit skirit*, *Tundi meo capilli skirminfahs*, *Radi me meo collo skirminanhals*, *Radi meo parba skirminanpart* (9/16–19). Darauf wird wohl noch homonymisch *Radices uurzun* (9/20) inseriert, dann geht es weiter mit Lippen und Brauen.

Diese Tendenz zur stärkeren Regulierung ist auch aus der Anlage der *Kasseler Glossen* ersichtlich: Sie sind nicht mehr oder minder unregelmäßig in einen bestehenden Text hineingeschrieben, zufäl-

lig frei gebliebenen Raum nutzend, sondern sie bilden eine eigene und als solche geplante Sektion des Codex von nicht minder planvoller Anlage. Auch bei den *Glossen* werden (nun: stets und ohne Ausnahme) lateinisch-deutsche Wort- und Satzpaare geboten, doch nun stehen sie (meistenteils) fein säuberlich in Spalten sortiert. Besonders bei den Wortlisten funktioniert diese Systematik gut. Bei den Sätzen ist sie mitunter dysfunktional, weil dann Umbrüche nötig werden und die Handschrift keinerlei graphische Orientierungshilfe bietet, wie viele lateinisch-deutsche Einträge zu einem Satz zusammengehören und wo der nächste Eintrag beginnt; da es sich dabei bereits um die fortlaufend geschriebene Partie der *Glossen* handelt und dort keinerlei Notwendigkeit besteht, die Sätze derart zu zerschneiden, liegt es nahe, den Text als Abschrift einer Vorlage zu begreifen, die durchgehend in Spalten angelegt war. Dafür spricht auch, dass einige Lemmata auf eine Weise zerschnitten sind, wie es nur bei einer Abschrift denkbar ist, z. B. unter der Fingerliste, *Medicus laahhi. Articulata altee. Minimus minnisto* (9/46–10/1), das ein Rätsel aufgibt. Da sowohl der *auricularis* als auch der *minimus* den kleinen Finger (*minnisto*) bezeichnen – *medicus*, der ‘Arzt’, benennt den Ringfinger (mhd. *lâchenære*) –, muss *altee* aus *alde* oder dergleichen verschrieben sein; wieder ist der Zeilenfall abschriftbedingt gestört.

Ordnung herrscht schließlich innerhalb jener Schlusssektion, die man auch bei dieser Handschrift früher ‘Gesprächsbüchlein’ genannt hat. Während in den *Gesprächen* die Überlagerung dreier Ordnungsschemata Grenzziehungen erschwert hat, scheint in den *Glossen* alles reguliert; die Phrasen sind thematisch geordnet, innerhalb der thematischen Einheiten dominieren Flexionsübungen im Paradigma, die “in Richtung Konversationsgrammatik weisen” (Sonderregger, “Reflexe” 180). Der phraseologische Teil, dessen Anfang von einer Initiale markiert ist (*I*),³² beginnt mit Sätzen, die nach der Identität einer Person und ihrer Herkunft fragen (12/24–39), beginnend mit (ich ziehe die lateinischen und deutschen Partien zusammen): *Indica mih / Quomodo / Nomen habet / Homo iste = sagemir / uueo / namunhabê / deser man* (12/24–27). Eingeschoben ist, thematisch passend, eine kurze Flexionspassage zu *transire/faran* und *venire/queman* (12/31–38). Dann folgen Phrasen zum Bestreben und Begehren (12/40–51), im Zentrum Sätze mit *nesesse/durft*, der komplexeste Satz am Ende, wie bei einer guten Vokabelübung: *Necessitas est / Nobis / Tua / Gratia / Habere = durftist / uns / dina / huldi / zaha-penne* (12/47–51). Dann einige Minimalphrasen rund um *intellegere*,

32. Gesehen hat es Sonja Glauch, der ich für den Hinweis danke.

die ich mir mit der didaktischen Ausrichtung der *Glossen* erkläre (12/52–56; vgl. Penzl, “Gimer” 399), danach eine Sektion zum Befehlen, Befolgen und Verweigern (12/57–66) um *mandare/capeotan*, nach momenthaft imaginiertes Befehlsverweigerung (*Quare non / Facis = uuantani / tois*, 12/63f.) mit versöhnlichem (?; vgl. Penzl, “Stulti” 244; Schubert 60) Finale: *Sic potest / Fieri = somac uuesan* (12/65f.).

Danach ändert sich die Struktur: Es regieren nun Paare von Einzelwörtern: *sapiens/stultus = spahe/tole* (12/67–13/11), *velle/cogitare = uuellan/hogazan* (13/12–14. 15–19), *bonum/malum = cot/upile* (13,20–22). Die beiden letzten Sektionen bieten lediglich Minimalphrasen, z. B. *Uoluerunt = uueltun* (13/13) oder *Bonum est = cotist* (13/20). Umso elaborierter ist das Beispiel zu Klugheit und Dummheit; es ist das mit Abstand längste (und berühmteste) der gesamten Sammlung: *Stulti sunt / Romani / Sapienti sunt / Paioari / Modica est / Sapienti [sic!] / In romana / Plus habent / Stultitia / Quam sapientia = tolesint / uualha / spahesint / peigira / luzic ist / spahe / in-uualhum / merahapent / tolaheiti / dennespahi* (13/2–11).

Auch in dieser Sammlung wollte man einen (freilich abgeschrieben) Sprachführer für Romanen, die in deutsche Lande ziehen, sehen,³³ und auch hier überzeugt die Argumentation nicht. Zwar herrscht nun Ordnung, man findet sich in den Wort- und Satzlisten problemlos und rasch zurecht, aber als Minimalwortschatz und Minimalgrammatik ist mit diesen Wörtern und Sätzen wenig angefangen. Die Wortlisten sind viel zu spezifisch und gehen in einer Weise ins Detail, dass sie mitunter wohl auch einen thematisch desinteressierten Muttersprachler auf dem kalten Fuß erwischen könnten. Die Sätze wiederum sind eigentümlich blass und abstrakt, für alltägliche Gesprächssituationen ungeeignet (gegen Penzl, “Gimer” 397f., der diese Abstraktheit als Höflichkeit deutet).

Ich halte darum auch diese Sammlung für eine didaktische, auch wenn ihre Grundkoordinaten anders gelagert sind als bei den *Pariser Gesprächen*. Denn von okkasionellen Notizen eines individuellen Lerners wird man hier ebenso wenig sprechen können wie von einem Primat mündlicher Sprachkompetenz. Die *Kasseler Glossen* sind ein ‘guter’ Schrifttext, die Systematisierung und auch die Schreibkompetenz (sowohl der lateinischen wie auch der deutschen Wörter und Sätze) lässt auf einen geübten Schriftsprachler schließen, sodass die Vermutung nahe liegt, dass hier ein Lehrer für seine Lerner nützliche (und weniger nützliche) Vokabeln und Beispielsätze festgehalten hat. Darum ist es auch nun ungleich schwerer zu beurtei-

33. “einfache Redewendungen [...], die ein Romane, der nur Latein verstand, zur Verständigung in Bayern brauchte” (Schröder 62; Stricker, “Glossen” 225); “möglicherweise für einen Lateinkundigen gedacht [...], der sich mit Ahd.-Sprechern verständigen will” (Stricker, “Glossen” 226 [zum ‘Gesprächsteil’]). Dagegen wiederum nur Schubert (wie Anm. 12).

len, ob diese Sammlung Original oder Abschrift einer Vorlage ist: weil sich diese Art Text didaktisch mehrfach verwerten lässt. Wundern darf man sich allenfalls über die blassen Beispielsätze und die (wenig vollständigen) Flexionsübungen: Sie ähneln jenen der *Pariser Gespräche* durchaus, und es ist kaum sicher zu sagen, ob dies die (dann schwach systematische) Sprachlernpraxis der Zeit widerspiegelt oder ob hier schnell hingeworfene Notizen einer Vorlage, die vielleicht den *Gesprächen* geähnelt hat, *qua* Abschrift nobilitiert worden wären, nach dem Prinzip: Was einmal geschrieben steht, ist es auch wert, weiter abgeschrieben zu werden. Der Zufall hätte in diesem Fall 'Verbrauchssprachmaterial' als stabilen 'literarischen' Text stilisiert.

Wie dem auch sei: Dass hier Sprache gelernt wird, ist unbestreitbar, und der Kontext der Handschrift befördert diese Hypothese mit der zweisprachigen *Exhortatio* und den lateinischen Texten, die wohl ebenfalls Schulwissen vermitteln. Aber: Welche Sprache wird gelernt? Deutsch oder Latein? Die Forschung geht, vielleicht angeregt von den *Pariser Gesprächen*, davon aus, dass auch hier ein Romane (Franzose) Deutsch lernt. Ich meine, dass es gerade andersherum ist: Hier sollen Deutschsprecher ein romanisiertes Latein lernen. Die Frage lässt sich anhand des Layouts der Sammlung und der in ihr greifbaren Sprachkompetenz ihres Autors bzw. Schreibers (die Trennung fällt in dieser Sache sehr schwer) diskutieren.

Es war bereits gesagt worden, dass die Seitengestaltung der *Kasseler Glossen* eine durchaus luzide ist. Links Latein, rechts Deutsch. Man hat auf diese Anordnung bislang wenig Acht gegeben. Dabei ist es gerade sie, die auf eine denkbar einfache und doch schlagende Weise demonstriert, welches die zu lernende (Ziel-)Sprache ist und was das muttersprachliche (?) Vehikel, das deren Sinn transportiert: Im Abendland wird von links nach rechts gelesen, und dies gilt bis heute für fremdsprachliche Vokabel- und Phrasenlisten aller Art. Natürlich haben sich daneben auch gegengleiche Glossare als Behelfsmittel für den praktischen Spracherwerb längst eingebürgert, aber der didaktisch konservative Normalfall ist – seit jeher und bis heute –, dass eine fremde Sprache links durch die vertraute Sprache rechts erklärt wird. Auch in anderen Glossaren der althochdeutschen Zeit ist das die Regel; Beispiele wären der Sankt Galler *Abrogans*, der *Vocabularius Sancti Galli*, aber auch – im Lateinischen – beispielsweise das *Abavus-Glossar* der Pariser Handschrift oder eben die *Pariser Gespräche* selbst, die zwar nicht in Spaltenform stehen, aber trotzdem das Fremde links mit *i.* ins Vertraute rechts übersetzen.

Wie man angesichts dieser Gesetzmäßigkeit auf den Gedanken verfallen konnte, hier wäre ein Sprachführer für Romanen konserviert, ist mir unverständlich.

Passt dazu aber auch der sprachliche Befund? Immerhin fällt auf – und war lange bemerkt worden –, dass das Latein der *Kasseler Glossen* in den Wortlisten – kaum im ‘Gesprächsteil’ – einen immens starken romanisch-französischen Einschlag hat. Ein erheblicher Teil der Wörter ist bestenfalls gemeinromanisch, gewiss auch nicht mehr vulgärlateinisch, z. B. *mantun chinni* (9/11; frz. *menton*), *ordigas zaehun* (9/35; lat. *articulus*). Und damit nicht genug: Auch die Kasusendungen stimmen oft nicht bzw. sind durch altfranzösische ersetzt. Systematisch ist etwa lat. *-ae* für den Nominativ Plural der Feminina der *a*-Deklination durch *-as* ersetzt (vgl. dazu Stotz § 20). Wäre dies nicht doch ein stichhaltiges Zeugnis dafür, dass hier ein Wort- und Satz-glossar auf romanische Sprachkompetenz hingeschrieben wurde?

Zwei Hypothesen sind vorstellbar. Die eine nimmt Bezug auf die Textgeschichte des Glossars, die über den in Manchem ähnlichen *Vocabularius Sancti Galli* ins Angelsächsische verweist.³⁴ Soweit es sich rekonstruieren lässt, hätte ein insulares Glossar im späteren 8. Jahrhundert seinen Weg über den Kontinent angetreten; dass es dabei romanisch weiter- und umgeprägt wurde, ist dann eigentlich nur natürlich.³⁵ Ob es auch die Intensität des romanischen Einschlags in den *Kasseler Glossen* erklärt, sei dahingestellt, zumal dieser im *Vocabularius* erheblich geringer ist. Die andere ist kühner: Ließe sich die These vom Sprachführer für einen Romanen nicht schlicht ins Negative verkehren, sodass mit den *Kasseler Glossen* – von dem Irrsinn eines Sprachführers einmal abgesehen – ein Dokument des lateinisch-romanischen Spracherwerbs durch Deutsche vorläge? Wenn man bedenkt, dass die französische Sprach- und Literaturgeschichte zur Zeit der Niederschrift der *Kasseler Glossen* noch eine blutjunge ist und die romanischen Sprachen wohl noch eine viel engere Einheit bilden als in späteren Jahrhunderten, noch nahe mit dem Mittellatein der Zeit verschwägert, wäre es dann nicht gut denkbar, dass hier eine Art Gemeinromanisch didaktisch aufbereitet wird, ein Esperanto des 9. Jahrhunderts, wie es Salvatore in Umberto Eco's *Il nome della rosa* spricht, eine Kunstsprache, die es so vielleicht nie gegeben hat (oder doch? als Verkehrssprache eben?), die aber dem Deutschsprecher durchaus hilfreich ist, wenn er sich mit Romanen verständigen will?

Dies genauer zu beurteilen, mangelt es mir an Kompetenz, so dass diese Frage nach der Natur der zu lernenden Zielsprache offen

34. Bischoff 118 weist darauf hin, dass der ‘Vocabularius’ in der zweiten Hälfte des 8. Jahrhunderts zwar auf dem Kontinent, jedoch von einem Schreiber, der in der angelsächsischen Tradition ausgebildet war, geschrieben worden sei. Vgl. Stricker, ‘Vocabularius.’

35. Man muss deshalb nicht gleich die schwer zu belegende These Georg Baeseckes adoptieren (Baesecke, ‘Vocabularius’), der aus *Kasseler Glossen*, *Vocabularius* und (!) den *Pariser Gesprächen* auf eine gemeinsame (angelsächsische?) Vorlage schließt, die wiederum durch die ‘Hermeneumata’ des Pseudo-Do-sitheus, ein antikes Schulbuch, beeinflusst worden wäre. Ähnlich Penzl, ‘Gimer’ 395f.; Schubert 54; vorsichtig kritisch Schröder 63; zuletzt grundlegend (und Baeseckes Thesen weitgehend revidierend) Klein, ‘Vocabularius.’

36. Ich beschränke mich hier auf den ‘Gesprächsteil’, aber auch in den Wortlisten davor zeugen gerade die lateinischen Kasusendungen von einiger Unsicherheit.

37. Gewiss ließe sich der Spieß hier auch umkehren und fragen, ob die Flexionsfehler nicht im Deutschen liegen. Dagegen spricht, dass sich die anderen genannten Fehlleistungen allesamt im Bereich des Lateinischen/Gemeinromanischen konzentrieren.

38. So Schubert 57 u. ö. Ob man deshalb aber alle “Sprunghaftigkeit” (58) der *Gespräche* als Ausdruck einer “Sprachkomik des Non-sequitur” (49) nehmen muss, scheint mir zweifelhaft. Eine Zusammenstellung von Phrasen wird nicht alleine dadurch komisch, dass sie lose geartet ist; die Pointen, die Schubert aus den Diskontinuitäten der *Gespräche* entwickelt, sind durchwegs bemüht (58–65).

39. Anders als das zweite *sapienti* (für *sapientia*) kann dieses kein Flüchtigkeitsfehler sein.

40. Die Form scheint auch mlat. singular zu sein; vgl. Stotz § 12.5 (mit Verzeichnung des Belegs), der unmittelbar dazu notiert: “Man gewinnt dabei allgemein den Eindruck, daß Lautformen, die nirgendwo im jeweils regulären Paradigma vorkommen, auf anspruchslöse Texte beschränkt geblieben sind.”

bleiben muss. Eindeutig aber bleibt, dass diese nicht das Deutsche ist. Dafür gibt es nun wieder solideren Grund: Wer immer die *Glossen* konzipiert und/oder aufgeschrieben hat, war im Deutschen merklich trittfester als im romanisierten Latein. Das (vermutlich) Regensburger Bairisch ist fast fehlerfrei, die deutsche Graphie ist – gerade im Vergleich mit den *Gesprächen* – so makellos, wie sie im 9. Jahrhundert sein kann. Das romanisierte Latein ist im Vergleich dazu viel unsicherer. Das zeigt das bereits erwähnte Schwanken zwischen Latein und Französisch in den Wortlisten, das zeigen aber noch mehr eine Reihe von (Grammatik-)Fehlern. Diese Fehler³⁶ sind wenige und keine dramatischen – solche eben, wie sie auch heutigen Fremdsprachenlehrern (!), wenn diese keine *native speakers* sind (und das ist der Regelfall), passieren. Ein banales und doch signifikantes Beispiel ist eine der Flexionsreihen: *Intellexisti* [statt: *Intellegis*] = *fir nimis*, *Non ego* = *niih. firnimu*, *Ego intellego* = *ih firnimu*, *Intellexistis* = *firnamut*, *Intellexistis* [statt: *Intellegimus*] = *firnemames* (12/52–56). Selbst wenn das Aufmerksamkeitsfehler sind, wären sie signifikant, denn fremde Sprachen brauchen mehr Konzentration als die eigene.³⁷ Und man könnte schließlich nochmals an den bereits zitierten kuriosen Satz von den klugen Baiern und dummen Romanen denken, der die didaktische Stoßrichtung dieses Glossars vielleicht deutlicher markiert als alles andere: Wer ihn entworfen hat, verrät nicht nur chauvinistisch seine eigene Position. (Denn auch wenn der Satz, was gut denkbar ist, eine witzige Auflockerung des mühevollen Sprachunterrichts sein soll,³⁸ bleibt er doch chauvinistisch durch und durch und funktioniert nur in die eine Richtung.) Wer ihn entworfen hat, der unterläuft seine prahlerische Aussage auch, gewiss *volens*, mit einem Grammatikfehler, der diese Position – eine Spur außerhalb der vulgärlatein-romanischen Sprachgemeinschaft – zumindest indiziert: *sapienti* (statt *sapientes*)³⁹ ist vermutlich noch nicht einmal gutes Mittellatein.⁴⁰

Ergebnisse

Kontextualisierung ist bei der alten Literatur immer Spurensuche. Für die althochdeutsche Zeit gilt dies verschärft. In Ermangelung harter Zeugnisse zum Produktions- und Rezeptionsumfeld der erhaltenen Texte ist man auf ‘weiche’ Indizien zurückverwiesen, oft auf eine Mixtur aus immanenter Analyse und *common sense*-Analogien, die das Alte mit Bekanntem verrechnen. Bei den *Pariser Gesprächen*

und *Kasseler Glossen* ist dies nicht anders. Wer sich darauf nicht einlassen mag, dem bleiben die beiden Zeugnisse erratisch. Wer es doch wagt, wird das oben vorgeschlagene Setzen ins Leben der beiden Texte mit früheren Versuchen zu verrechnen haben; welchem Vorschlag dann der Plausibilitätsvortritt gebührt, entzieht sich parteiisch der hiesigen Argumentation. Es bleibt, ihre Ergebnisse zu bündeln und ihre Relevanz für die frühe deutsche bzw. europäische Sprach- und Literaturgeschichte zu bedenken.

Den *Pariser Gesprächen* und den *Kasseler Glossen* ist gemeinsam, dass sie der Vermittlung von Althochdeutsch und Gemeinromänisch/Altfranzösisch in sprachdidaktischer (Schubert 59, 65) bzw. sprechdidaktischer (Sonderegger, "Reflexe" 18of.) Hinsicht dienen. In welcher Weise sie dies bewerkstelligen, ist aber höchst unterschiedlich, auch wenn beide verbindet, dass sie alles andere sind als Sprachführer. Die *Pariser Gespräche* sind Ad-hoc-Sekundäreinträge eines Sprachlerner in ein bereits vorhandenes (lateinisches) Glossar, ihre Ordnung ist lose, die Graphie ungeübt, die Orthographie, gerade bei der fremden (deutschen) Sprache, krass unorthodox; mit wenigen Abstrichen (Graphie) gilt dies auch für die *Tatian*-Einträge des Codex. Umso verständlicher ist die Katharsis, die sich der Schreiber selbst mit seinen groben und obszönen Einträgen angesichts seines ernstesten und zehrenden Gegenstands verschafft. In den *Kasseler Glossen* ist diese mit dem kleinen Ausfallsatz gegen die dummen Romanen ungleich harmloser, wie auch sonst die Anlage wesentlich normativer ist. Hier hat anscheinend nicht ein einzelner Lerner geschrieben, sondern jemand, der bereits eine gewisse Zweisprachenkompetenz innehat, für andere – ein Lehrer wohl (vgl. Penzl, "Gimer" 394 u. ö.). Er verlässt sich ganz auf Gesetze der Schriftlichkeit, beherrscht die Orthographie einigermaßen (Grammatikfehler im Latein-Romanischen fallen in eine andere Kategorie) und fabriziert so einen Text, der seinen Weg in den Codex nicht erst sekundär finden muss, der es vielmehr lohnt, bewahrt zu werden, wofür auch spricht, dass die *Kasseler Glossen* kein Original sind, sondern eine Abschrift. Bemerkenswerter aber als all diese konzeptionellen Details ist, dass die *Pariser Gespräche* und die *Kasseler Glossen* fremdsprachendidaktisch zueinander gegengleich sind: Die *Pariser Gespräche* sind von einem Romanen geschrieben, der Latein gut beherrscht und offenbar daran ist, mündlich Deutsch zu lernen. Die *Kasseler Glossen* sind von einem Baiern geschrieben, der besser Latein-Romanisch kann als der Schreiber der *Pariser Gespräche* Deutsch, aber doch merklich schlechter als Deutsch; sein Ziel dürfte es gewesen

sein, seinesgleichen eine Handreichung für den Erwerb der fremden Sprache zu hinterlassen.

Rein phänomenologisch ist all dies unspektakulär. Sprache gelernt hat man immer, und die Beispiele zeigen nicht mehr, als dass man dies vor mehr als tausend Jahren nicht sehr viel anders angegangen hat als heute auch noch⁴¹ – bis hin zur Verballhornung der trockenen Gegenstände und bis hin zum Ausleben von Sprachtrieben aller Art. Und doch ist es nicht einzig die Altehrwürdigkeit ältester deutscher Zeugnisse, mit der die *Pariser Gespräche* und die *Kasseler Glossen* Aufmerksamkeit verdient haben. Es will vielmehr scheinen, als würde hier, am Beispiel des Fremdsprachenerwerbs, so etwas wie der Basissatz jenes Aspektes der karolingischen Renaissance sichtbar, der sich der Pflege auch der vernakulären Sprachen und Traditionen verschrieben hat.

All dies ist gut bekannt, von der älteren Forschung bestens dokumentiert, es muss hier nicht in allen Details wiederholt werden – von der angeblichen karlischen Festlegung deutscher Wind- und Monatsnamen, Karls Grundlegung einer deutschen Grammatik und seiner Initiative zur Konservierung deutscher Heldenepik, wie sie Einhard behauptet, bis hin zu großepischen Entwürfen wie Otfrids *Evangelienbuch* und dem *Heliand*, die nur im weiteren kaiserlichen Umfeld des 9. Jahrhunderts denkbar sind. Auch dass dieselben Bestrebungen Hand in Hand gehen mit einem (wohl) intensiveren Austausch zwischen dem deutschen und dem romanischen bzw. französischen Sprachgebiet, weiß man; angesichts der politischen Geschichte der frühen althochdeutschen Zeit ist es auch alles andere als verwunderlich.

Bemerkenswert an den hier diskutierten Fällen aber ist, wie gravierend diese kulturellen Strömungen dem Bildungsbetrieb ihrer Zeit sind. Die *Pariser Gespräche* und die *Kasseler Glossen* stehen weit ab von jeglicher höfischer ‘Bildungsakademie’, sie sind Gebrauchstexte (verschiedenen Ranges) und – der Überlieferung nach zu schließen – am ehesten im monastischen Kontext beheimatet (vgl. Schubert 58 u. ö.).⁴² Genau dorthin aber sind dann vielleicht auch einige jener Zeugnisse der (nun im schon etwas engeren Sinne) Literatur dieser Zeit zu stellen, die – durch Überlieferungssymbiosen – genau jene Sprachgrenzen transzendieren, die zu überschreiten die *Gespräche* und *Glossen* ihre Benutzer anleiten möchten. Man muss nicht gleich an den *Althochdeutschen Isidor* denken, dessen sprachliche Qualität zur Schlichtheit der *Gespräche* und *Glossen* weit distant ist. Man kann aber durchaus denken an die Überlieferungsgemein-

41. Die Geschichte des Fremdsprachenunterrichts ist allerdings wenig erforscht, vgl. Schubert 53. Nur kurz erwähnt sind die *Pariser Gespräche* und die *Kasseler Glossen* bei Glück 68f.

42. Dorthin verweisen auch die Ortsnamen auf fol. 23^v des Parisinus (vgl. Haubrichs und Pfister 10f.) sowie die Funde Haubrichs zu tatsächlichen romanischen Sprachreisenden des 9. Jahrhunderts, die sich zu diesem Zweck die deutsche Sprache aneignen. Zugleich wird in der oberen Herrschaftsschicht Zweisprachigkeit nicht selten gewesen sein, aber damit dürften sich die hier besprochenen Zeugnisse bestenfalls peripher berühren. Siehe die Belege zum historischen Sprachaaustausch bei Haubrichs, “Herkunft” 99–103; Haubrichs und Pfister 8f.

43. Ein "wohl kaum mehr bestimm-
bares Zentrum des linksrheinischen,
niederlothringischen Gebiets"
(Bischoff 132).

schaft von *Eulalia*-Sequenz und *Ludwigslied*, die vermutlich unweit der Sprachgrenze, sicherlich auf französischem (!) Gebiet⁴³ von ein und derselben Hand im späten 9. Jahrhundert (Bischoff 132) in eine Handschrift (Valenciennes, Bibliothèque Municipale, ms. 150) nachgetragen wurden, die hauptsächlich Werke des Gregor von Nazianz enthält; "ein eindrucksvolles Zeugnis dafür, daß im späten IX. Jahrhundert ein Sammler und Freund der Dichtung beider Volkssprachen mächtig war" (Bischoff 132). Man kann denken an die *Straßburger Eide*, die in den *Historiarum libri IV* Nithards überliefert sind und eine deutsch-französische Dialogszene von enormer politischer Bedeutung einfangen (Paris, BNF, Ms. lat. 9768). Die *Eide*, die Pariser Handschrift des *Isidor* (Paris, BNF, Ms. lat. 2326), das *Ludwigslied* und die *Pariser Gespräche* sind, wenn man von einzelnen verstreuten Glossen absieht, nicht ohne Zufall die einzigen Zeugnisse der althochdeutschen Literatur, die nicht im deutschsprachigen Gebiet zu Pergament kamen (Bischoff 133). Und man kann aber auch, noch gegenständlicher, denken daran, dass unmittelbar vor den *Kasseler Glossen* die erwähnte *Exhortatio* erhalten ist, synoptisch auf Deutsch und (nun 'klassischem mittlerem') Latein, die sich sehr wahrscheinlich dem missionarischen Anliegen der Zentralgewalt verpflichtet weiß. Dass es der *Tatian*, der gewiss zu den größten literarischen Projekten der althochdeutschen Zeit rechnet und der fest im deutschsprachigen Gebiet verankert scheint, so zeitnah zur Phrasensammlung für Deutsch lernende Romanen geschafft hat, führt schließlich eindrücklich vor Augen, wie durchlässig die Sprachräume waren und wie untrennbar die Literaturwelten verwoben.

Rechnet man all diese Splitter einer wohl größtenteils untergegangenen Textwelt des 8. bis 10. Jahrhunderts zusammen, wird der Befund der gegengleichen *Pariser Gespräche* und *Kasseler Glossen*, die beide zur Vermittlung zwischen Deutsch und Romanisch beitragen und von ihr zeugen, zur Synekdoche für die literarhistorische Situation als ganze. Eine 'althochdeutsche' freilich dürfte man diese dann nicht nennen. Vielmehr wird deutlich, dass ganz am Anfang jener Literaturgeschichten, die man im 19. Jahrhundert als nationalsprachliche erfand, eine – nämlich: deren – Einheit stand, die man, unter der Last der Fachgeschichte, heute mühsam aus den nationalen Sprengeln zusammensehen muss, der aber doch der Sache nach der Vorrang gebührt: die europäische Literatur.

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SVEND ERIK LARSEN

From Comparatism to Comparativity

Comparative Reasoning Reconsidered

Abstract

Comparative literature was born with the national paradigm of literary historiography in the early nineteenth century when literary studies, together with other historical and comparative studies, were institutionalized as a particular field of research and higher education. The cognitive pattern generated by this paradigm comprises both national literary studies and comparative literature. They are both instances of comparatism, solidly anchored in a national context as its basic and indispensable point of reference rather than in the border-crossing life of literary texts. In contrast, the comparative reasoning of the twenty-first century, as exemplified by the emerging interest in world literature studies, attempts to cultivate the comparativity of the literary texts themselves – their potential to engage with several possible contexts of comparison beyond the standard theories and methods of comparatism and without giving an axiomatic priority to one of them. In the traditional aesthetics of imitation, European and non-European, the double nature of any text as being organized around both an external centre and a domestic centre is already an integral part of the definition of literature in view, first of all, of their degree of canonicity. Today, more radically, all literary texts, irrespective of canonical position but as part of their status and function as literary texts, are assumed to possess the capacity to be part of several textual and cultural contexts beyond that of their place and time of origin. The paper traces the history of comparative reasoning, leading both to the national paradigm and the nineteenth-century-inspired comparatism and to the consequences for modern literary studies, opening a broader view of the comparative potentials of texts across time and space.¹

1. This paper is dedicated to colleagues and students in Comparative Literature, Aarhus University, in gratitude for collaboration and inspiration during my service as professor 1998–2014.

The National Paradigm

The core question in comparative literature today is how to get out of the constraints produced by the institutionalized thinking and practice of comparative literature that first shaped the discipline. This

happened in the early nineteenth century Europe of emerging nation states in tandem with other comparative studies in linguistics, anthropology, art history and other disciplines. Comparative literature is one of a set of interwoven comparative studies, sharing its genealogy, methods and theories with them, but also having its own issues and perspectives. Today, we still benefit from the accumulated results of 200 years of practice of comparative literature and will continue to do so. But we also have to bear in mind that the discipline generated a cognitive pattern which does not necessarily respond to the challenges of comparative studies in the twenty-first century, and may even prevent us from asking the relevant questions.

Across the globe, the early nineteenth century was a period of transition in culture, politics, science and ideology, with Europe as the dynamic centre. Here the build-up of new sovereign nation states within a larger colonial framework and an emerging modern globalization, fueled by urbanization and industrialization, exercised a decisive influence on cultures and societies all over the world. This period may be seen as a huge cultural laboratory for a yet unknown future, organized around a geopolitical model with clearly marked centres and peripheries, placing the nation state at the core of the centres. Places or epochs, whether inside or outside Europe, without an organization identical or analogous with the proto-typical European nation state were, by definition, denigratingly considered to be peripheral social formations at worst and embryonic nations at best and so were their thinking, products, literatures, arts, politics, religions, morals and everyday culture.

Around 1800 literature more than other art forms acquired an essential role in the new European nation states. They were considered to be the *telos* of the overall historical processes, and their identity was reflected in and propelled by the national languages, the new term for the vernaculars which now were elevated to the same status as Latin in Middle Ages. Hence, being the verbal art form *par excellence*, national literature was celebrated, spearheaded by German Idealism, as a major contributor to the creation of national identity and as the primary medium for reflection on the values and goals of the nation, which was perceived as the most accomplished social and cultural form of a collective historical development.

If certain local literatures did not correspond to European textual forms or ideas of national literature they were reduced to *ethnographica*, perhaps valuable, but not 'real' literature, and thus left to other comparative studies in anthropology, linguistics, ethnography

or religious studies. As a consequence the cultures that produced them were not judged as capable of reaching the same level of civilization as the contemporary European national cultures. Before the Middle Ages were recontextualized by the Romantics as the cradle of the nation states this period was supposed to be dark, while the African continent throughout European history was seen as the awe-inspiring dark continent and Asia contained fascinating but fallen cultures, bypassed by history. This complex web of literary and cultural ideas constitutes the still active national paradigm in literary studies which also gave rise to comparative literary studies. The basic research focus became the study of relations between literatures defined as national literatures and their authors defined as national icons. This type of comparative study I will call comparatism. The topic of this paper is how it came into being and how we can and why we must reconsider it today.

An Ongoing Experiment

In spite of its celebratory national ideological underpinning, from its very beginning the national paradigm worked within literary studies, comparative studies included, as an open, although predominantly Eurocentric cultural and scientific project, engaged in an incessant search for its practice. As an ongoing cultural experiment its aim was to explore how to represent the mutual relationship between nation states and literatures without yet knowing how to do it. Today, we face a task similar to that of the founders of the national paradigm and of comparative literature. We, too, are searching for common historical denominators for literatures past and present relevant for the attempts to come to grips with our own contemporary cultural conditions, now located in the increasingly globalized world of the twenty-first century (Larsen, “Other Eyes,” “National”).

Although in opposition to the ideas of the national paradigm and its subsequently institutionalized normative practices during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, today’s investigations are still based on the same two foundational principles that shaped the emerging national paradigm as a research quest:

- 1 The basic research question concerns the *dynamic reciprocity* between culture and literature that sparks an ongoing change in both.

- 2 The answer to that question presupposes that *contemporary culture* serves as the point of departure for the understanding of earlier periods.

I have chosen to highlight these two mostly implicit cognitive features instead of the more obvious issues of national propaganda and fake historicism which most often have showcased the paradigm and therefore also have been the main and somewhat easy target of harsh criticism during the post-Second World War literary debate, particularly in postcolonial studies. But as long as such practices continue to assume a self-evident monopoly around the globe today, which they do, such criticism is still legitimized.

An example of the persistence of the traditional paradigmatic thinking was highlighted when the prestigious Booker Prize changed from a national award to an international award for all literatures in English in 2013. Some critics said that “It’s rather like a British company being taken over by some worldwide conglomerate,” or that “it means that the prize will be dominated by big publishing houses who maybe aren’t taking as many risks. Good novels will be overlooked” (*International Herald Tribune*, September 21–22, 2013). One may add that only in 1987 was the first non-European Francophone writer, Tahar Ben Jelloun, awarded the equally prestigious French Prix Goncourt, founded in 1903. The national paradigm continues at the same time to shape ideology and critical thinking. It is time to open a more profound and difficult debate and greater self-reflection in comparative research.

One difficulty in doing precisely that stems from the fact that the two principles just mentioned still confront literary historiography with pertinent theoretical and methodological challenges. Therefore, our major goal for comparative studies today is again to open the field for new experiments which, precisely as experiments, allow for a non-dogmatic recycling of still relevant components from the national paradigm and turn them into a new viable historiographical practice.² In the developed globalized and multicultural world of the twenty-first century, the immanent essentialism of particular locations, nations among them, is subject to simultaneous intrinsic and extrinsic pressure. More than ever, local lives and identities are recognized as unfolding on translocal and increasingly global conditions. From economy and politics via social institutions to language, literature, communication and media, local histories are refractions

2. For a survey of literary historiography, see Larsen, “What is Literary”.

of globalized conditions. Moreover, the immediate and inescapable everyday life experience in the overwhelming majority of places around the world is modulated in different ways by the co-presence of many cultures and histories involving peoples, commodities and media, a situation that as early as 1935 Ernst Bloch in *Erbschaft dieser Zeit* (2nd Part) called 'Ungleichzeitigkeit,' or 'non-synchronicity.'

Referring again to the two principles, today the dynamics between literature and culture is cast in terms of networks, links and relations determining what we perceive as local spaces and places, and contemporaneity is defined as the presence of the global in the local. Tracing the histories of such features back in time is a way of rewriting literary and other histories to make them the histories of *our* present world and also grounding its future perspectives, in the same way as the early nineteenth century shaped national histories in various disciplines as the histories of *its* time, rewriting both Antiquity and the Middle Ages for that purpose and reshaping them into forms that still reign supreme in widespread conceptions of our history and thereby impeding our access to that history as *our* history today. Reconsidering the Middle Ages (or Antiquity, perhaps late Antiquity in particular) in a new comparative perspective is one essential moment in a necessary modern reshaping of that history.

The process has been evolving in literary studies over the last 25 years. I shall list only a few examples. More and more attention is paid to translation studies as an activity interacting with original language studies as mutually interdependent studies of equal importance, without attributing only an ancillary and at times negative status to translation; studies of transnational reception and dissemination of literature can no longer be separated from studies of individual and local literary creativity and production; traditions are rather seen as ongoing processes of rewritings and transformations than as accumulated repositories of canons; studies of cross-media adaptations are conceived of as important factors in cross-cultural interactions in today's interactive media landscape and not denigratingly taken to be distortions of the supremacy of literary originals; a focus on former colonial literatures hitherto deprived of the status of national literatures shows how they, for that very reason, reflect the global complexity of entangled cultural realities of any locality today more clearly and imaginatively than national literatures in the classical sense; the rapidly increasing importance of a world literature perspective emphasises the mutual relationship between the local and the trans-local or global as the basic dynamics of literatures and their history;

and digital humanities offer new resources and open new comparative perspectives beyond literary studies.

This situation also influences studies of earlier historical periods in Europe as well as elsewhere where nation-building was not on the agenda. In more recent studies, the European Middle Ages, cross-Atlantic literary clusters including in particular the Caribbean, and African literatures all stand out as independent historical complexes in their own right, forcing the studies of literature within a national confinement to reconsider their positions – the empire writes back, as Salman Rushdie wittily has pointed out.³ We only need to think of the change from backward-looking terms such as ‘Renaissance’ and ‘Middle Ages’ to forward-looking notions such as ‘Early Modern’ and the corresponding take on the Middle Ages as a transnational European phenomenon, not as a set of more or less separate national forerunners for the later nation states or as a homogenous Latin universe on the one hand and a separate and heterogeneous vernacular ‘folkish’ universe on the other.

However, accepting the two basic principles of the national paradigm as a potentially positive inspiration must not seduce us into overlooking two important constraints that are more damaging to comparative literature today than to other types of literary studies – institutional and historical constraints.

1) *The institutional constraint*: Modern literary studies, including comparative literature, are shaped by the national paradigm, and we owe our institutional as well as our cultural position in education and research to its success. Until recently, the standard institutional make-up for universities followed, with some variations, the division between departments of national philologies and comparative studies of various kinds, each hosting their own programs. With the present merger of departments in many universities, the departmental boundaries may have changed, but not those of the programs, which to a large extent are generated by the traditional structure. Hence we are not facing a paradigm outside ourselves from which we can simply distance ourselves in today’s global culture or alternatively which we can just passively take for granted without betraying the historical nature of literature and literary history and neglecting our own historical conditions. As literary scholars we all bear the birthmark of the paradigm, both as culturally anchored individuals and as professionals.

Moreover, we still subscribe to its two foundational ideas of cultural reciprocity and contemporary perspective on literary history.

3. The phrase is a tongue-in-cheek quote of the title *Star Wars. The Empire Strikes Back*.

But if we are not able to recast such assumptions as new guidelines for the actual rewriting of literary histories in the context of today's globalized cultures, we will continue to reinscribe ourselves into the national paradigm. By its very institutional nature it will always give priority to national literary studies in education, criticism and research and marginalise comparative studies, although the comparative perspective is precisely what is needed today and also appears to be most innovative in the contemporary literary research landscape, in particular within the framework of redefined local literary studies.

2) *The historical constraint*: The second constraint is also imposed on us from inside comparative literature itself. The constitution of the discipline in France and Germany in the nineteenth century has acquired the status of its starting point, almost *ex nihilo*, with the result that comparative ancestors and followers will always be judged relative to this originating moment, never in their own right. First of all, the basic notion of comparison is then closely linked to a *discipline*. This situation implies that we at the outset are working on a meta-level in relation to literary texts. In teaching and research we are more preoccupied with the life and death of the discipline and its institutionalized manifestations than with the life and death of the texts and literary culture at large in the broad landscape of languages and media where texts emerge, move, are translated, canonized or transformed and eventually sink into oblivion.

In other words, situating our point of departure on the level of the discipline in order to establish a conception of comparison will unavoidably highlight questions of methodology and theory and pay less attention to the production and the reading of texts. The standard corpus of comparative literature studies only rarely investigate aspects of texts that challenge the established method, or if they do (for example Charles Sainte Beuve as opposed to Fernand Brunetière) they usually only suggest a new theory and methodology that will operate in the same self-asserting way, only with other isolated textual details. *Les petits faits vrais* according to the discipline set the comparative agenda in a comparison between texts that are considered as literature within the national paradigm. In a nutshell, this is what characterizes comparatism as the type of comparative studies generated by the national paradigm.

However, a proper comparative reasoning should always be concerned with three interdependent and maybe at times discordant levels of comparison of equal importance for any comparative enterprise: 1) the meta-level of theory and methodology, 2) the level of

production of texts and 3) the level of reading and reception of texts. These levels in themselves are not new, but two requirements for them are: 1) in an adequate comparative analysis, they have to be seen as interdependent; 2) the priority is not *a priori* given to one level, but will have to be defined by the comparison under scrutiny. Unfortunately, with the emergence of our discipline, the meta-level gained most prominence, and, step by step, comparatism became institutionalized as an authoritative theoretical and methodological paradigm which blinded us to other relevant aspects of comparative reasoning concerned with both textual dynamics and reception, which mostly became separate preoccupations in individual sub-disciplines like close reading or reception studies. Nevertheless, I shall consider each level in turn to unravel in more detail the potential of the suggested change of perspective in comparative studies.

The Meta-Level: from Cognition to Comparison

In order to expand and revive our ideas of comparison I will briefly trace the history of comparative reasoning without a primary reference to its established time of birth around 1800 and with a view beyond its disciplinary meta-level toward the level of texts. This move will, I believe, make us more sensitive to changes not only in the contemporary literary landscape, but also invite us to reinterpret its history or histories. In other words, I intend to open comparatism to what I will call the comparativity of literary texts.

By comparativity I understand the potential of any phenomenon, texts included, to be compared with something else not specified in advance. Textual comparativity – comparativity for short – is the potential of any text to suggest not only one context, as the national paradigm requires, but several contexts where relevant comparisons may take place, perhaps including complementary or even irreconcilable dimensions. Any systematic exercise of comparison is not only a way of exploiting that potential, but also a way of reducing it by activating only some of the possible contexts through explicitly adapting a certain focus, and thus also self-reflexively pointing to the constraints and shortcomings of that focus. In contrast to comparatism, a valid comparative analysis cannot just focus on results that can be obtained by suggested causal explanations of influences or by way of a convincing demonstration of the historical rep-

4. I use the phrase “what we today would call literature” to highlight that the very notion of ‘literature’ has changed in Europe over time, and that similar notions and their histories in other cultures today may both differ and overlap. The broad notion of *poiesis* places literature under the much broader umbrella of human creativity and thus in a relation of continuity with other manifestations of the human potential for changing natural things. This idea was later incorporated in Giambattista Vico’s use of the term *poiesis* in his *Scienza Nuova* (1725/1744) to evoke a new understanding of the fundamental historicity of the human life world. With the Latin term *litteratura* the fundamental relation to writing is emphasized and has remained so in literary studies, but until European Romanticism still with a much broader view of what is included in *belles lettres* than is usual today, although new genres like docu-fiction and autobiographical writing challenge our present-day ideas. Later, with the Romantic idea of the individual creativity of the poet, the notion of fictionality came forward, emphasizing the power and freedom of the imaginative abilities of the individual poet to create a highly personal invented possible world, separate from reality and the types of texts that deal with that reality. In the twentieth century the idea of literature as verbal art, a particular use of language different from other discursive practices, gained ground. Here, the experiments with the material medium of literature became important, as in other art forms, and prepared for our understanding of literature as interacting with the larger media landscape of today, from film to digital art. In short, “what we today would call literature” could instead be called “fictionalizing verbal art.” Other textual canons, like the Chinese canon used for millennia as part of the education of administrators, cut across any Western categorization. But today, in China and elsewhere, the westernized ideas of literature have gone global, propelled by the many international awards, not least the Nobel Prize, and

representativity of texts within periods predefined on the basis of dogmatically accepted European post-Enlightenment ideas about the sequel of historical periods. Often forgotten in the history of our discipline, or occurring with a severe delay, is the criticism of the standard Eurocentric periodization that became a necessary part of the constitution of literary studies within the national paradigm.

A glance at most surveys of world literary histories shows that they are divided into Antiquity, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance or Early Modern eras etc., and the presentation of non-European literatures is derived from this epochal structure as being contemporary with each of the large European epochs but with no historical trajectory of their own (*Miner passim*). Discussions of competing conceptions of history in different cultures are absent for comparative literary studies, and relevant features of texts risk being defined solely by their capacity to be absorbed by an established method, historical conceptualization of history or theory of literariness, making what is left out of sight irrelevant.

We also have to bear in mind that the comparativity of objects in general, not only of texts, plays an important role for the understanding of human cognition as such, beyond the particular causal and representative take on comparative literature or any other particular discipline. Aristotle already insisted on this point in Part IV of his *Poetics* when he introduced the fundamental cognitive process of imitation through comparison as an underlying theoretical prerequisite for the understanding of *mimesis* as a basic feature of literary strategies, particularly when it comes to drama. His genre-based conception of what we today would call literature⁴ builds on a comparative analogy with natural things, which as first substances (*ousiai*), are understood within a system of kinds, *genos/eidos* (genus/species). But according to Aristotle, literary practice could transcend the natural order through comparative strategies. This assumption gave rise to his theory of metaphor as analogical reasoning whereby elements that do not belong to the same natural kind nevertheless, experimentally as it were, are being linked to each other through comparative, analogical inference. For Aristotle, comparative reasoning is a cognitive experiment, not an application of a given theory and methodology.

Aristotle finds a more recent supporter in the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce, who in his 1903 Harvard “Lectures on Pragmatism” differentiated three types of reasoning: the deductive type, moving from axioms to individual instances; the inductive one, moving from individual cases to general principles; and finally the

abductive type (Lecture 7, 3) which is where comparativity comes in. When encountering an unknown phenomenon, we try to integrate it experimentally in known categories by comparing details in the unknown phenomenon with what we know. This analogical reasoning, as Peirce says, uses metaphors and heuristic similarities to establish an experimental but qualified guess about the nature of the unknown phenomenon based on previous experience which then later has to be tested rigorously. Analogical reasoning as scientific reasoning proper is essential to medieval thinking, which is a crucial source of inspiration for Peirce. Instead of abandoning analogical reasoning altogether as unscientific parallelisms without any explanatory power, as may happen in modern science, Peirce insists on its importance for a necessary prescientific hypothesizing leading to scientific reasoning, also beyond chains of causality. Thus, analogical reasoning is instrumental in avoiding the simplicity of causal dogmatism and in accepting a more differentiated take on explanations, as is needed in comparative studies.

5. See also Leatherdale (science) and Fishelov (comparative literature).

With a modern resonance in Peirce among others,⁵ Aristotle's approach to the field of literature seems to me to be an abductive attempt to ground a discipline that was framed by his epistemology and his general philosophy of things, not only a particular literary or aesthetic theory. I believe that this broader cognitive view opens the discipline to a much larger and also more experimental sense and practice of comparing than is legitimized by the established practice of comparative literature. Then, the building blocks of comparative literature, causality and representativity in relation to European national histories are just two of several possible constituents of a comparative meta-level, which allows for a much more context-sensitive comparative take on cognition and a broader view of comparative reasoning. This is a lesson that Aristotle has already taught us but which our discipline has forgotten, and with this oblivion an important potential also disappeared for productive self-criticism of theories, methods and perspectives.

Textual Production: from Comparativity to Comparatism

On the level of textual production, the second interdependent level, it is clear that the long tradition of *imitatio* in European literature, and similar trends in other cultures with an equally rigid canon forma-

tion, is a principle of textual production based on the comparativity of the texts of the predecessors. Look to the Greek models, Horace teaches in his letter to the Piso family, or *Ars poetica* (v. 304–32). The many treatises on poetics and on textual production were two sides of the same coin; there was no need to single out a specific academic discipline like comparative literature. All cultures practicing canonically-based imitations automatically created a huge intertextual universe constituting the literary tradition based on the comparativity of texts as a resounding echo of the tradition. For written literature, China is a case in point; for oral literature the aboriginal Australian songs of the dreamtime is a privileged example.

The French *querelle des anciens et des modernes* that broke out at the end of the seventeenth century is the most widespread sign in Europe that this tradition was about to collapse. It is not the only one, as the earlier Italian debate around Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* in relation to the newly translated Aristotle shows (Finucci), but the French debate set the agenda across Europe. One of the reasons for its prominent role is that the focus of the controversy was the emerging genre of the modern novel and the new acceptance of prose fiction as a potentially canonical literary form. In a way, the debate paved the way for a genre that grew to be *the* dominant literary genre across the world today. The fierce discussion revolved around a historical problem: was literature in the modern vernaculars able to develop not merely new works but also new forms and discursive types that would surpass the authoritative classical authors? Ancients like Nicolas Boileau said no; moderns like Charles Perrault said yes.⁶ A special position was occupied by Pierre-Daniel Huet. Using the novels of Mme de Lafayette as a case in point, he tried in *Traité de l'origine des romans* (1670) to provide the emerging modern multi-focalized novel with a recognized literary status as a genre on a par with tragedy and other canonical genres. Here it may be important to note that the term 'modern' was not identical with later terms as 'modernism,' 'modernity,' 'modernization' and such like. The French debate used the word 'modern' in its sense of 'modo' in medieval Latin: "recently, right now" (cf. the adjective *modernus*, also in medieval Latin). The modern therefore refers to what has recently occurred, in short to the contemporary.

On the one hand, on both sides the debate was fully embedded in Aristotelian thinking: genres are the basic natural forms which legitimize literature as genuine imitations of nature, and the competitive *aemulatio* only concerned the production of even better exam-

6. See Hans-Robert Jauss' large introduction to Charles Perrault's *Parallèle des anciens et des modernes*.

ples within the given genres according to accepted rhetorical standards. On the other hand, the new idea which took shape in the French debate was that the contemporary period existing at any time has in itself a normative value, also comprising the evaluation of literatures of the past and without giving priority to the standards of the earlier periods. According to the dawning new insight, it is in the nature of norms to change, foundational norms included, in a process propelled by the literary practice itself. From Huet and the other 'moderns' there is a straight road to the programmatic evocations in the early literary modernism in the second half of the nineteenth century, in particular with Charles Baudelaire and Arthur Rimbaud. There is however an important difference: for Huet the modern is still qualified in its deviation from very precise past standards and the creation of a possible new type of canonicity, whereas in Rimbaud's outcry the modern is taken as something absolute, the contemporary as an autonomous temporal bubble, only oriented, if oriented at all, beyond the contemporary toward the future. As for canonicity, past or future, he could not care less.

Placed at the beginning of this process of terminological and ideological transformation, Huet is less radical. For him the emergence of a new genre in itself is not the decisive aspect, but its claim to a competing canonicity is. The aesthetics of *imitatio* could no longer provide the only necessary conceptual framework to cope with this situation. Therefore, the later adoration of the unique creativity of the individual genius or of the particular canonicity of each emerging national literature called for a new independent meta-level to replace the classical set of normative transnational rhetorical guidelines. Its role should be to enable us to establish a theoretical and methodological platform for a discussion not only of competing examples of the genres and styles handed down to us since Antiquity, but also of competing definitions of literary canonicity in relation to new literary trends. Without new guiding principles literary culture could end up being completely atomized by following whatever appeared as new, and thus it required some kind of ideological support. Aristotle's meta-level was constituted in relation to his natural philosophy and thus opposed to the historical change of literature. In contrast, the new type of meta-level grew out of evolving literary practice itself, transcending the existing norms of textual comparativity related to the fixed genres. It became a meta-level that should steer the preoccupation with literature through its unavoidable historical changes without losing a shared sense of literary quality and

importance or, as became the case with the national paradigm, should aim at controlling this changeability through new institutionalized practices in education, criticism and research.

If, for a moment, instead of our own discipline from around 1800 we take as our basic point of reference the long period of imitation as a comparative literary practice, we can see from the very outset how deeply conservative and traditional the new discipline of comparative literature also became in spite of its innovative ambitions. In fact, imitation as a normative practice to be left behind and the new discipline of historically concerned comparatism share the same argumentative structure. In both cases, comparison is a bipolar event, or, in more complex cases, it can be broken down into a series of such bipolar events. From the starting point of a basic invariable – the canonical text, the text exercising an influence, or the core characteristics of a representative text, author or national literature – this invariable component, by way of more or less rigidly conceived causal links, produces variables, to wit, new examples of a genre, new authors influenced by the stable canon, or new texts dominated by the features most prominently present in a representative author.

‘Invariable’ is here used in analogy with formal logic, but not in the same strict sense. What is invariable is the reference itself, not the use of it. One cannot *not* refer to a preceding text with a canonical status, a causal effect etc. But, as we know, all the standard references to for example Homer and other classics often go beyond passive imitation or mere quotation and, in the spirit of *aemulatio*, create re-writings but without transcending the normative standards.

The much acclaimed radical new orientation of comparative studies by the introduction in the 1960s of terms like ‘intertextuality’ and ‘palimpsest’ clearly falls within this traditional cognitive pattern of comparatism. However, these new terms gave the traditional thinking a twist that already began to turn in the debate between *les anciens et les modernes*, and similar debates across Europe, and eventually changed the comparative agenda. Here, the point of departure was an emerging and unstable new phenomenon, the variable, in the shape of the outline of the modern novel. That is to say, a reference that is chosen, not ordered and therefore a matter of debate, in contrast to the obligatory invariable traditional standards. This variable then serves as the point of reference for a re-evaluation of the status of the tradition itself, the invariable, beyond the possible imitative recycling in individual texts, with the aim of discovering new and

hitherto neglected literary potentials within or, more importantly, beyond it.

What does this mean? We shall take a brief look at Derek Walcott's *Omeros* (1990). It is clearly influenced by Homer in a way that can be subsumed under the category of causality, from the reference to Homer as the canonical invariable to Walcott as the variable. But this is only half the truth, and not the most important half. More importantly, Walcott allows us, retrospectively, to reinterpret and thus actually change the tradition by taking a new position vis-à-vis the comparativity of Homer. He reshapes Homer and unravels or even produces new Homeric potentials, changing him from an obligatory reference to a chosen reference in this particular postcolonial context. The comparativity of a new genre or text can only unfold in future texts when they also reshape the past in a dialectical movement. Thus, both Homer and Walcott are recontextualized historically and open up new comparative perspectives.

In contrast, traditional comparatism, either manifested in imitative textual production or in the academic methodology of comparative literature, is a unilateral movement, inevitably turned toward the past before it turns to the present, but never to the future and never back again. While the creative textual production of Romanticism indulged in hybrid genres, emergent forms, fragments, arabesques, grotesque and phantasmagorical prose etc., the newly established contemporary comparative academic disciplines recapitulated, as it were, the principle of imitation on the meta-level of literature and translated it into a normative methodology, separating it from the explosively unfolding literary practice of its time.

At this historical juncture Germaine de Staël's erratic but innovative *De la littérature considérée dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales* (1800) is considered to have laid the ground for comparative literature within the national paradigm. It is inspired both by the new historical and national ideas from the end of the eighteenth century and by the older French debate. The first part, "De la littérature chez les Anciens et chez les Modernes," refers directly to the old debate but also amalgamates it with the ideas about nation and literature formulated by contemporary German Idealism:

In all literatures we have to distinguish between that which is national, and that which belongs to imitation [...]. Imitation as artistic principle, as I have shown, does not allow for infinite improvement, and in this perspective the moderns

incessantly create and recreate the old anew. [...] Even the greatest genius transcends only to a minor degree the intellectual level of his time. (vol. 1: 92, 149, 147, my transl.).

Particular literatures are locally anchored and typical of their period, and also depend on social institutions and a regional, climatic, and, consequently, naturally determined mentality. (Mme de Staël advocated the revived climate theory of the eighteenth century). On this basis, literatures old and new are assumed to contribute to a society's and a culture's historical transformation toward a more profound and comprehensive sense of humanity in line with Enlightenment thinking. Literature does not just *have* a history, but *creates* history.

Beginning in France by the end of the seventeenth century, spreading to other European intellectual centres, and recapitulated by Mme de Staël, the two principles evolve that I have pointed to earlier as the cornerstones of the national paradigm: the dynamic interaction between literature and culture and the priority given to contemporary criteria for quality and relevance. What is also clear from Mme de Staël is that the comparative discipline was born as the Siamese twin of the national philologies – the latter provided the map of the nationally or regionally based body of texts which the former exploited for its comparisons. This map presented the cultural hierarchies of texts at the superior producing end or inferior receiving end of causal influences, extended to a hierarchy between national literatures upgrading those regarded as most representative of their time as a whole – mainly England, France and Germany, the so-called golden triangle of comparative literature. They act as the most persistent invariables of comparison. Hence, when national literature is challenged, not as a category but as *the* basic category, so inevitably are comparative literature and the notion of comparatism that goes with it.

Although agreeing on this fundamental cognitive pattern, two diverging methodological directions evolved from the early foundation of the discipline. One was the *positivist* direction, rigorously pursuing influences between textual pairs with a meticulous eye for textual details (and also some contextual biographical details), but without any sense of the text as a whole. With influence as a key term, the basic principle was one of *causality* between elements supplemented by various theoretical superstructures. A few representative examples range from Wilhelm Scherer via Ferdinand Brunetière to Fernand Baldensberger and Paul Tieghem and, to a certain extent, right up to René Wellek or René Etiemble.

The other trend was the *developmental* direction, looking for the ways in which literature was a historical agent within a proto-Hege-
lian notion of history. Here, the main interest was to single out typi-
cal textual or contextual details which as a *pars pro toto* were seen as
embodiments of an entire cultural or textual dynamics. The basic
principle was *representativity*, not causality, with Georg Brandes as
an important proponent together with Jacob Burckhardt, Wilhelm
Wölfflin, Benedetto Croce and later György Lukács, Erich Auerbach
and maybe Ernst Robert Curtius. Both major comparative trends are
situated within the tradition of individual human agency shaped by
European Enlightenment and Romanticism. The positivist school
set out to explain the emergence of texts from psychological or so-
cial features conceived as causal drivers for the authors, while the
other school saw the personality of the great author as a type, a com-
prehensive representation of his (rarely her) epoch and an embodi-
ment of its developmental potential.

What was marked, positively, with the new comparative disci-
pline, but hardly integrated in its thinking, was the necessity in any
comparative practice to continue to consider the relation between at
least two interacting levels: 1) the meta-level, which, however, can no
longer provide the necessary initial definition of an invariable basis
of comparison; 2) the production of literary texts, where imitation,
although abandoned as *the* unquestioned basic principle, generated
together with experiments a double driving force of literary produc-
tion, as manifested in a flourishing genre hybridity on the one hand
and an active neo-classicism on the other.

What follows today from this situation is that in the literary field
– the texts and the study of them taken as a whole – comparative rea-
soning can take as its point of departure no unchallenged invariable,
like a canon, a dominating author or literature, or a certain method-
ology and explanatory paradigm. There will always be multiple con-
text-dependent perspectives on comparison and several relevant
points of departure to be considered and reconsidered according to
the concrete comparative project at hand.

The basic tension between the local and the global, or the trans-
national, which now has become the core of the world literature per-
spective, in each case requires a definition based on a careful argu-
mentation for what is actually local in a given context and what is
translocal, what is central and what is peripheral, what is minor and
what is major, what is original and what is translation, and a clarifi-

cation of what the relevant focus of comparisons between such entities may be.

In today's comparative reasoning we always have to work with variables, as is also the case on the level of theory and methodology. One may say that traditional comparatism works *between* predefined national literatures, while modern comparative reasoning, in line with world literature studies, works *beyond* them and between entities defined contextually together with the given comparative project. As in the case of Newtonian physics being challenged by quantum theory, the latter does not refute the former completely, but outlines its boundaries by transcending them.

Textual Reading: from Methodological Application to Explorative Comparison

Therefore, a third interdependent level of comparison will have to be introduced, the reading practice, but as a practice which does not apply but requires or initiates a particular theory and methodology and takes a more complex view of the comparativity of texts. In "The Location of Literature" (2006) Rebecca Walkowitz introduces this perspective through her concept 'comparison literature' in a critique of what has more often been labeled 'migrant literature.' First, she distances herself from the temptation to accept a new invariable: the biography of the writer as a migrant. Instead, she opts for the term 'literature of migration' as the literature of cultures defined by processes of migration that embrace everyone who belongs to it, although not in the same way, whether this literature is written by migrants or indigenous writers (a separation at times difficult to make). For her, then, comparison literature is understood as literature that defies our reading protocols as they have been developed in accordance with the methodologies of the national paradigm, presupposing a clear-cut distinction between what is inside and what is outside a culture. Instead, and on any level of the text, reading requires a particular definition of the boundaries across which comparisons have to be made in order to produce an adequate comprehension of the text, be it boundaries of circulation, of travel, of characters, of genres, of metaphors, of languages or of cultural values.

This reading practice implies a call for theory to enable the reader to compare differences which cannot be harmonized by a similarity, as was the case of both traditional comparatist trends: influenc-

es are detected through similarities which in turn are explained by chains of causality; representativity is revealed by analogies between, on the one hand, micro-features in texts and personalities and, on the other, macro-features in the contemporary cultural context. In the type of reading envisioned by Walkowitz, comparisons connect different elements without abandoning their difference and without placing them in a hierarchy that reinforces the theory of centre and periphery as it happens in classical comparatism or in post-colonialism. There may be influences involved and also representative elements, but they will never be the whole story and not always the most important story.

More recently the Australian literary scholar Ken Gelder has worked along the same lines in his paper from 2010, "Proximate Reading: Australian Literature in Transnational Reading Frameworks." As the title suggests, he proposes a 'proximate reading.' With this term he is not suggesting a reading on the basis of what is proximate, but what by the adopted literary strategy is *brought* into a proximate relationship – as when the East is made proximate to Europe by the orientalist projection, or when the Middle Ages is made proximate to Romanticism by the latter's medievalism. Reading in a transnational perspective, according to Gelder, is to study the proximity strategies of texts involving elements that are not in and by themselves proximate, and thus explaining what it means in a particular context that they appear in proximity, how it is brought about and how the difference or remoteness between the compared dimensions is dealt with across linguistic, cultural or regional boundaries.⁷

What comparison on such conditions requires is a meta-level that does not define what the right way of comparing is by building on at least one pre-established invariable component, but rather a meta-level that sets the theoretical and historical conditions for a recontextualization of the text on the basis of the possible contexts opened by its comparativity. This is actually what literature itself does when inspired by non-European cultures, and vice versa, or what literary studies do when reinscribing earlier periods in the present, as is the case with *e.g.* the recontextualization of medieval literature in contemporary culture different from the medievalism of Romanticism and also from the denigration of it used to underpin the self-understanding of the Renaissance. Recontextualization is the key word for experimental comparative reasoning.

If traditional comparatism were to pursue the same project the verdict would be harsh and immediate: unscientific anachronisms

7. Similar ideas are developed by the Chinese comparatist Shunqing Cao in his *The Variation Theory of Comparative Literature* (2013) with a comparative East-West view on texts, histories and theories.

and analogies. But today's multicultural life world is characterized by the interaction of such differences, where multiple and non-synchronous histories inside or outside the European linear and proto-teleological take on historical epochs coexist in the same cultural space without causal links between them or without an unquestioned representative status ascribed to just one of them. When similarities are pointed out they are not taken to be analogies *in re* but eye-opening invitations to engage in recontextualizing experiments in theory and analysis (*cf.* above on Aristotle's *Poetics*). For Walkowitz and Gelder, the task of comparative readings is to make literatures that are shaped on this cultural condition an object of study. The overall ambition is both to create a new dialogue with literatures of the past, as exemplified in the case of Walcott, and also to redefine the task and tools of comparative studies.

In line with comparative reasoning prior to the national paradigm and traditional comparatism, this approach is built on a productive awareness of the multifaceted comparativity within the texts, which calls for a particular formulation of theory and methodology depending on the chosen context and the focus of comparison, but also has a clear recognition of the need for theoretical rigor in the theories and methods brought into play with regard to the production and the reading of the texts. The self-criticism inherent in this type of comparative reasoning is directed toward the focus of the investigation, the particular exploitation of the text-based comparativity and the relevance and sharpness of the theoretical underpinning.

Comparative Reading 1: a Case of Comparatism

I will conclude my reflections with two sketches of alternative readings of the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1957). The novel is written in a society in transition from a colonial to a post-colonial status modeled after the European nation state, pushing the traditional tribal social and cultural structures across the Nigerian borders into the background. But the new state cannot erase the power of tribalism in the everyday life of people, their values, norms and world view, and the traditional culture penetrates into the political life which often appears as a failed projection of Europe onto the African map. Before independence the literature of this proto-national state had, in accordance with the national paradigm, no status as a genuine literature and was hardly published or read anywhere.

Achebe's novel marked the first major international breakthrough of African literature with global repercussions, but was written in English and published in London. It launched a heated debate about which language to use in order to create a Nigerian, or indeed African, literature – the indigenous languages with a strong oral tradition or the colonial languages? At the same time, the purpose of African literature opened another important debate: did writers want to create a national literature, and thereby support self-awareness and also elementary literacy, or to place African literature in the world as a literature on the level of any literary body of text, but different? Achebe's solution was to use English in order to change it according to African conditions (Achebe, "English"), and he has actually become both an icon in Nigeria and also a strong African voice in the international community. In other words, he succeeded both in inscribing himself into the national paradigm of the immediate colonial past and revising it in the new cultural conditions of the independent nation in a postcolonial and more broadly speaking in a global culture.

After Achebe's novel appeared, there was no doubt that African literature had gained the status of a modern canon competing with the traditional national literatures in the European languages. The number of prizes, the Nobel Prize included, translations and sales figures inside and outside Africa proves it. At the same time, the contribution of literature to the debate of national languages and differentiation of national identities has gained a growing importance across the continent, also having an impact in the old empirical centres through a wave of migrant writers.

In a sense, Achebe's groundbreaking novel has made possible a new understanding of the national paradigm. The novel and the debates it occasioned have the potential to reorient the basic components of the paradigm. Achebe was instrumental in breaking up the hierarchies between European and non-European literatures, between original languages and translations, between the oral and the written, between European and local vernaculars, between past traditions and modern conditions, between the ideal shape of a national culture and the protonational cultures emerging in postcolonial environments. Although adapting to the literary standards of European genres and forms, by their literary practice the new African literatures challenge the national paradigm beyond the African continent and therefore also the type of comparative reasoning that goes with it.

The novel is not only written in a country in transition; it also deals with a community in transition, the tribal Igbo community of the 1890s when colonialism was finally established in Nigeria. At the centre stands Okonkwo, a headstrong and powerful man from the village of Umuofia and a member of a powerful Igbo clan that inhabits the neighboring villages. Confronted with increasing pressure from the colonial representatives, from priests to administrators supported by soldiers and police force, Okonkwo is compelled with growing desperation to defend the Igbo way of life, at the end as a lonely rider pushed to commit suicide after repeated humiliations. However, such an act violates the tradition he vehemently wants to defend and his tribe is left with no choice but to suppress any memory of him. The icon of the local culture self-destructively has brought down both himself and his culture precisely in an attempt to stay loyal to it. In a European perspective he becomes a tragic hero, in a local context he has become an outcast.

My first comparative reading plays on the double perspective of Africa and Europe, clearly marked in the title. This is a quote from William Butler Yeats' poem *The Second Coming* (1920), "Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold" signaling the fragmentation of the post-First World War world, but now projected onto Africa. More profoundly embedded in the text is, however, the particular use of a subtle omniscient narrator who establishes a complex relation between Africa and Europe on the level of the aesthetic strategy of the text. The narrator's position is built up of several intertwined levels of storytelling as a complicated African-European dialogue. In some cases inserted stories are integrated in the novel as part of the plot, or of the description of the settings or the characters; in other cases distinct aspects of the narration are related to the direct and indirect interventions of the narrator; finally, some discursive parts serve as mirrors of others in parallel or contrast.

From the very first pages there is always a double view:

Having spoken plainly so far, Okoye said the next half a dozen sentences in proverbs. *Among the Igbo the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten.* [...] The night was very quiet. *It was always quiet except on moonlight nights.* Darkness held a vague terror for *these people*, even the bravest among them. [...] *As the Igbo say: 'When the moon is shining the cripple becomes hungry for a walk.'* (7–9).

The passages I have italicized are clearly written to inform a non-Igbo reader, possibly an enlightened European, but without a condescending colonial labeling of the Igbo people as primitive. The proverbial oral style is then demonstrated in the following sentence about the palm-oil and in the Igbo-quote about the moon. However, the short phrase written in bold italics, “these people,” which occurs more than once in the novel, marks a distance in line with a white colonial perspective. Once the local culture is invaded by colonisers, it becomes forever changed and can only be grasped by a simultaneous internal and external view of itself (*cf.* Glissant). Achebe’s narrator embodies a culture in transition and the colonial encounter that prompted it.

As the story develops the proverbs are mostly used without comments, but the informative remarks are inserted whenever phenomena occur which, presumably, are foreign to modern readers. This effect also pertains to the embedded stories. Okonkwo tells about war, killing and heroism, but only to his sons, while the women relate the stories about the mythical animals to all the children. The storytelling is performed with the aim of teaching them their culture, its norms and traditions and the identity of the people in their community, but also in order to place the modern reader in the same learning environment, stripped of any prejudice.

The mention on the last page of an anthropological study planned by the British District Commissioner is a reverse recall of the first pages of the novel quoted above. His self-sufficiency is badly disguised as positivistic anthropological science, completely in line with the attitude to Africa produced by the national paradigm. Shrouded in the narrator’s sarcasm, we learn in the mode of free indirect speech about his plans for a treatise on *The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger*: “One could almost write a whole chapter on [Okonkwo]. Perhaps not a whole chapter but a reasonable paragraph, at any rate” (146). What he is going to write from his supposedly superior perspective is what we have just read as a novel but from the opposite African perspective. The British civil servant is seen from inside by the free indirect speech, but also via the narrator’s ironic gaze on his thought. In the same way, the Igbo community is depicted in its full complexity from inside, but also exposing a stubborn short-sightedness toward its own past, present and future that equals the arrogance of the anthropologizing commissioner.

In spite of its awareness of the sophisticated narration, this reading is firmly placed within the national paradigm, even if we would

refine our reading by introducing terms like ‘intertextuality’ or read the use of Yeats or phrases like “these people” as a European palimpsest. The narration is the result of an implementation of the traditional comparative paradigm, although in a critical mode: a bipolar opposition between the invariable colonial centre and the variable periphery, easily translatable into terms of influences from Europe and the representativity of characters like Okonkwo. As in many postcolonial readings, the comparative recontextualization is trapped by the cognitive pattern of the same national paradigm it wants to defy.

Comparative Reading 2: a Case of Proximity

A different reading is made possible by another dimension of the comparativity of the text. When I stated that both Achebe’s own life world and the universe represented in the novel are bound to a society in transition, the former leaving colonialism, the latter entering it, we immediately included both within the centre/periphery dichotomy inscribed in the national paradigm. We may however change the focus from the bipolar framework to the transition itself and see the universe represented in the novel as a transition from an honor and shame culture, based on the family, the clan and the tribe, to a culture of individual choices and responsibilities.

This recontextualization is not necessarily absorbed by the dichotomies of the national paradigm; it is transnational and also transhistorical, although not ahistorical, in as much as it allows for comparisons between texts from different periods and cultures, past and present, provided we can establish a theoretical platform that also enables us to discuss the limits of this recontextualization without relying on simple analogies. The existence of honor and shame cultures across cultural regions and historical periods, and their coexistence with alternative cultures, may support the establishment of such a platform, often related to societies in transition.⁸

Assuming that this is possible, the reference to Yeats will no longer be seen as a confirmation of the bipolar structure of centre and periphery pointing to the origin of both colonialism and the disruptive individualism of modernity, but as a reference to a culture being uprooted, different in nature from Yeats’ perspective but similar in its complexity. What is falling apart in Nigeria, as in many other cultures in transition, is the collective honor culture.⁹

Okonkwo, the main character, is guided by local codes of honor and shame and equipped with an emotional make-up that transcends

8. In my current book project *Forgiveness as a Cultural and Literary Challenge* I discuss this type of transhistorical comparative framework more closely, cf. Larsen, “Battle” and “Emotion.”

9. *Things Fall Apart* is the first of Achebe’s *African Trilogy*, followed by *No Longer at Ease* (1960) and *Arrow of God* (1964), on the transition through Okonkwo’s family and Igbo tribes during the twentieth century into an increasingly global world. The changing conception of what is often called personhood in African philosophy mirrors the tension of this transition between shifting local and translocal perspectives (see e.g. Kaphagawani, Onwuanibe and also Shweder and Bourne).

the bipolar structure of coloniser and colonized. Instead, it reaches out to other contemporary and past cultural contexts where honor cultures of a different but also overlapping composition once guided the collective norms and behaviour which, however, dissolved through a painful transition. The story is not about a victimized protagonist and his culture brought to the brink of self-destruction by colonizing invaders. Okonkwo becomes a character who is both pressed from the outside and also by his own disruption of the honor culture he wants to sustain when he transgresses its norms in his attempts to defend it against all odds, ultimately and paradoxically by his absolutely dishonorable suicide.

With the village of Umuofia as the point of gravity of his life, Okonkwo embodies the core values of his culture. His identity is firmly anchored in the collectivity of this entire context where the honor and shame of each individual reflects its position in the entire community. It is a culture of personhood where Okonkwo's personal fear for his own fate in the same move makes him "mourn for the clan" (129). Okonkwo's embodiment of both the local cultures and the complexity of their encounter with the British colonisers reach beyond his own understanding. He is the agent but also the victim of cultural trespasses of increasing aggravating fatality both in relation to his own people and to the colonisers.

Before the white people enter the stage, Okonkwo also, almost paradoxically, challenges the cultural limits of his own community which he serves with an unconditional loyalty. By his abrasive self-righteousness in relation to others and his at times ill-tempered forgetfulness toward the ancestral spirits, he breaks the code of honor precisely by doing his utmost to practice it. In the three parts of the novel, the internal cohesiveness of the local community is fractured through a series of acts which breaks the honor code and has Okonkwo as the central agent. Most importantly, in a state of fury he disobeys the divine powers on a holiday and, later, he happens to cause a fatal shooting accident.

Although these events are extraordinary, in most cases local religious and legal customs offer coping strategies to remedy the social and metaphysical harm inflicted upon the community by dishonorable acts. But when such limits are being challenged from within, it also leaves the cultural fabric more vulnerable to external suppression from the advancing British colonial power. The whole foundation of the local culture with its core values and complex handling of liminal acts simultaneously involving both religious and social norms

is shattered. Okonkwo also embodies this growing vulnerability within the larger colonial context which at the end, after his swift killing of a black British official, pushes him to commit the unpardonable act of suicide. The fact that he is increasingly isolated shows that gradually by his acts, but against his own will, he becomes an individualized being existing in cultural conditions more like a Europe-based individual responsibility than the locally rooted collective loyalty. He no longer believes in the clan and acts on a purely individual basis, although he claims he does so precisely on behalf of the village. “I shall leave then and plan my own revenge [...] I shall fight them alone *if I choose*” (140–41, my ital.).

In an individual act of free volition Okonkwo decides on the course of his own life, an act which is also an involuntary, or at least non-reflected, reproduction of the free and self-responsible European individual emerging out of the Enlightenment anthropology and embodied in the colonisers. However, in his case it is a desperate act of defense against oppression in the heat of the moment and not a long-term future-oriented change of the course of personal development. What is at work here is a blend of local and non-local values which, as happens in all cultures in transition, deprives both of their status as uncontested cultural invariables.

Both the first and the second reading refer to European influence. After all, the novel is disseminated within a primarily Anglophone western circulation, its theme is informed by European colonialism, and its aesthetic strategies are rooted in the European tradition of cultural criticism. However, through the use of the narrator in the first reading and of the personal development of Okonkwo in the second, Achebe goes beyond Eurocentrism and – to use Dipesh Chakrabarty’s term – provincializes Europe. In his seminal book *Provincializing Europe* (2000) Chakrabarty points to the importance of using the critical and self-critical tradition from European science and thinking in general as a tool to be exploited also beyond Europe to criticize its own origin. In the first reading, this reversal takes place as a postcolonial criticism which still stays within the conceptual confinement of colonial dichotomies and its embedding in the national paradigm; in the second reading, however, a broader comparative landscape with no *a priori* centre is opened.

When I concentrate on the fate of honor and shame as a collective and individual value, I do so in an attempt to open for comparative contexts beyond the national paradigm in line with the ideas of Walkowitz and Gelder. Literatures reflecting cultures where such val-

ues are challenged by cultural transitions can be found along different historical trajectories, some of which coexist in many multicultural places today where the individualized values of Western culture blend with those of Muslim, Indian, African or Asian communities. Other cultures with a similar normative make-up may belong to the history of a local culture, present or past, as for example the tribal culture of Nigeria or the Old Norse culture of Scandinavia. Moreover, honor and shame also survived in new forms in the bourgeois culture when it established its dominance across Europe, partly absorbing and modifying components from the fading nobility. Thus, comparisons contextualized by a focus on honor and shame bring such universes closer to each other, not as an analogy *in re* but as a cognitive experiment exploring the nature, the conditions and the limits of such similarities and thereby confronting us with the intricacies of living in cultures where different histories interact in a simultaneous presence.

This is the case in the global multicultural universes to which we all belong. Here the national paradigm, even in its self-critical modes, cannot embrace or define the comparisons needed to bring together texts and values from the still living past and the present cultural universes beyond any isolated influences and binary centre/periphery constructions. Honor and shame cultures are both of our time and of its past and bring those dimensions in a proximity to each other in a cultural simultaneity that defies the numeric chronology which, together with the national paradigm, is then revealed as a cultural abstraction that is only relevant in certain contexts.

Comparative Reasoning Reconsidered

Globalization has often been regarded as a cultural process only working in the contemporary world. But it has also forced us to take a fresh look at the complex history that allowed globalization to emerge and evolve. First of all, it has forced researchers in the various historical disciplines within the humanities to redefine their take on historical developments. On the one hand, we have to pay more attention to the multiple temporal and spatial networks and interactions between localities than to the local events themselves at a certain specific time or along a simple time line. On the other hand, we also have to be aware of parallel developments in different places where causal links are difficult to establish and a shared sense of rep-

10. There are several cross-cultural studies of honor and shame cultures, insisting precisely on similar conditions leading to cultural differences of a historical specificity beyond simple analogies (see e.g. Peristiany).

representativity is hard to describe and, most importantly, where apparent similarities are never simple *de facto* analogies but indicate a textually based instance of comparativity that points to different possibilities of recontextualization requiring experimental comparative reasoning in theory and practice.¹⁰

In short, comparative studies in a globalized world have to be reconsidered in terms of theories, goals and methods with the potential of embracing any period in history, and at the same time the study of local cultures will have to change its perspective from the study of local features of closed entities to the translocal interactions that defined them and allowed them to occur. To regard all periods as a process of transition, not only the early nineteenth century or postcolonial Nigeria, seems to me a more fruitful view of history that could inspire us to revise the standard Eurocentric delimitations of periods. This move would force us always to understand any place located in time in relation to the larger context with which it interacts in order to be what it is, and not only or primarily in relation to its alleged immanent characteristics and its position in a linear European epochal sense of historicity.

There are visionary examples among our precursors worth remembering. I will end on this note with Georg Brandes, a provocative *bête noir* in comparative literature in his own day (Larsen “Georg Brandes”). One of the most important comparative studies from the nineteenth century is his comparative European literary history, *Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature* 1–6 (1872–90). In his lifetime his *opus magnum* was heavily criticized for not respecting the standard methods and criteria of the national paradigm, but nevertheless, and perhaps because of this, he became the most global in his generation of European comparatists. In his own life time *Main Currents* saw complete translations into German – two translations – English, Russian, Japanese and Yiddish, and after his death in 1927 it also appeared in Chinese and Spanish, supplemented by translations of single volumes in French, Czech, Finnish and Polish.

It is worth recalling first his approach to literary history which, with a focus on contemporary literature, aimed at transcending the nation as the basic frame of reference of literature and its history. His context and focus was transnational by taking the vicissitudes of the quest for freedom and its counterforces as the shared and transnational driving force of nineteenth-century literatures in Europe. With this reference, Brandes set out to build a pan-European contempo-

rary literary history, exploring overlapping and contrasting developments as they were expressed across European literatures. Considering that the nineteenth century was the period where the emerging nation states dominated the view of history, supported by a collective self-reflection shaped by a cultivation of national languages, literatures and histories, this approach was both innovative and provocative, as was later recognized by a critic. For the first time, “European literature is treated as the totality it has been since the Renaissance” (Nolin 26).

Second, Brandes adapted Goethe’s idea of world literature as a core notion in literary studies. The final words in his book *Wolfgang Goethe 1–2* (1915) celebrate Goethe’s innovative take on world literature:

When Goethe died the term *World Literature*, which he had created, had become a reality and through the joined efforts of many people he had himself become the centre of world literature (vol. 2: 331, my transl.).¹¹

11. Goethe did not coin the term, but he made it known in its modern sense as a challenge to the national paradigm.

Brandes also wrote the essay “World Literature” [Verdenslitteratur] (1899) for Goethe’s 150th anniversary, emphasizing that world literature is not a transnational canon but a transnational process within local or national literatures. He defined world literature as a locally anchored literature that transcends its local constraints by opening the local perspective to a larger world:

World literature of the future will appear the more appealing the stronger it represents the national particularity, and the more diversified it is, but only when it also has a general human dimension as art and science. (*Samlede* 12, 28, my transl.)

He expressed this idea using the image of a telescope: we can, and must, look at literature from two alternating or rather complementary positions, both through the magnifying and the diminishing lens.

The comparative approach to literature has a dual nature: it brings us closer to what is foreign to us in such a way that we can appropriate it, and at the same time distances us from what is familiar to us so that we can survey it. One never clearly observes what is right in front of our eyes nor what is too distant. The academic study of literature hands us a

telescope: one end magnifies, the other reduces. The heart of the matter is to use it in such a way that we can make up for the illusions of immediate perception (*Hovedstrømninger* 1, 14, my transl.).

Although he only comments on the use of the telescope, not on its lenses, Brandes' intuition has been the subtext of this article. The lenses are the texts exposing their comparativity that compels us to adapt a double perspective. When we look closely at the comparativity of the texts, this will enable us to distance ourselves from the individual text through a comparative study involving more than its immediately perceived contexts, and this move will also give us the opportunity to shed new light on our own context. But we cannot look simultaneously from both ends as the national paradigm invites us to do, like with modern binoculars. We see the national frame together with the representative national text, or we see the invariable together with the variable as linked by causality. If we want to exploit the multifaceted comparativity, we have to turn the telescope and thus recontextualize what we saw in a close-up. This is the experiment Brandes invites us to perform every time we read, a risky endeavor of trying to bring together texts which do not belong to the same context. Literature itself has always done so. Comparative reasoning today is this experiment independent of the period and continent we study.

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Nation/Translation

An Afterword

Abstract

Taking points of departure from each essay, the *Afterword* considers the peculiarities of distinct literary historical traditions across Europe, the enduring influence of nineteenth-century paradigms, and some aspirations for future work.

These essays employ a remarkable range of strategies to out-think strong paradigms for literary history laid down in the later eighteenth and earlier nineteenth centuries. The talismanic term *nation* emerges as most powerful signifier of all: for as Pavlína Rychterová (Vienna) observes, its metaphysical charge proved able, in a self-fulfillingly prophetic kind of way, to join, explain, or represent almost anything, from past to present. Mere textual evidence hardly stymied its progress: where texts prove obstructive, forgeries might do, or (sometimes better) no texts at all. It perhaps seems belated of us to engage in such Laocoönic struggles, but such seems the state of play across the languages and literatures represented in these essays. It is fitting, then, that this initiative is truly cross-national: e-published and launched in a Mediterranean country, at the University of Milan, building on the initiatives of a North Sea alliance between a large and a small country – the universities of York in England and Odense in Denmark;¹ and shaped by the international ‘Interfaces’ network, with its inclusive and porous conception of Europe, past and present. Scandinavians have for some decades now pioneered forms of academic exchange that overflow national limits. This begins with their conversation: for when Danes, Swedes, Swedish-speaking Finns, Norwegians, and Icelanders meet, an inter-language develops in which no speaker can be quite at home, but all can be understood – either in an intermediate Scandinavian, or in English. Such exchanges themselves counteract the separatist tendencies emphasized in that crucial time evoked above: for the Romantic period of emergent nationalism, c. 1800, emphasized the distinctive genius of each literary tradition. Now, however, Scandinavians are taking the liberty to

1. Institutionalized through the [Centre for Medieval Literature](#), established in 2012.

2. See Hoffman 4–5. “Iceland’s successful negotiations opened the door,” Hoffman argues, “to former colonies worldwide to petition for redress against historical imbalances of power that permitted the removal of valuable goods” (5).

3. See Hoffman 4–5. Lord Elgin offered his marbles for sale to the British Parliament in 1816. For a rationale for the continuing presence of the Elgin marbles in London, see MacGregor, “The Whole World in Our Hands.” Neil MacGregor has served as director of the British Museum from 2002–15.

consider what lies, literarily, between them (or just beside them), a development that has led *inter alia* to much greater interest being taken in widely-circulating, and locally instantiated, Latin texts. Perhaps the most impressive act of cultural repatriation yet achieved, anywhere, has been transacted between Scandinavian countries: for in 1971, Denmark willingly began shipping a good share of its treasured Old Norse texts to Reykjavik, acceding to demands first formally expressed by Icelanders in 1830.² The shared small-country, small-literature experience has both drawbacks and strengths, of course, but it serves as a point of departure that can stand in for a number of smaller European languages and countries and thus supplement, for instance, the French, Italian and English views of Europe – where a rhetoric of cultural export rather than import is easily played out.

There is little likelihood that the “Elgin marbles,” now at least re-labeled as the “Parthenon sculptures,” will be moving from London to Athens anytime soon – even though the Romantic poet Byron was one of the first to deplore their removal,³ and even though modern Athenians have recently provided a building to accommodate them. The imperial style projected by the British Museum’s nineteenth-century neo-Greek colonnades replicates itself most every time an Anglophone scholar joins the circle of Scandinavian colleagues: for the inter-linguistic conversation of many needs must switch to accommodate the needs, and the limitations, of one. The fact that the essays in this collection appear in a range of European languages, then, represents a challenge, if not a penance, for any self-respecting English speaker. For in struggling to comprehend issues of common interest differently expressed in different languages we best come to relativize, and hence enlarge, our own conceptual capacities. And we also grasp quite how privileged we are as practitioners of first-language English, spared the frustration (as experienced by Scandinavians) of conveying, say, 90% of what lies in your head.

Writing from Aarhus, Denmark, Svend Erik Larsen points out that cognitive patterns associated with comparative literature, as long practised, first developed in that crucial, early nineteenth-century period associated with emerging nationalisms. This accounts for their frustrating limitations: for texts were to be claimed by and solidly anchored in *one* national tradition before passing or translating to another. They could not be considered as texts bridging borders, as birds in flight. Still today much anxiety arises as to where, to what nation, a text belongs, and anxiety intensifies the further back we go. Oxford, Bodleian Library, 340, a manuscript associated with Roch-

4. See Kwakkel; de Grauwe; Van Oostrum; Van Houts.

ester abbey, features a Latin pen trial text immediately followed by a translation: “Hebben olla uogola nestas...” (169v). Should this sentence on the nesting habits of birds, and the hopes of human lovers, be acclaimed as the earliest fragment of Dutch literature, or is it Old Kentish?⁴ Much has been built upon the answer. Florian Kragl (Erlangen-Nürnberg) considers a pair of vernacular texts that stand in complex relation to the Latin texts that accompany them, namely the “glossaries” known as the *Pariser Gespräche* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 7641) and the *Kasseler Glossen* or *Glossae Cassellanae* (Kassel, Universitäts Bibliothek, Codex Theol. 4.24, 15r–17v). The term *glossary* suggests a robust relation between one language (which the reader knows well) and another (less well), although it is worth recalling that the Middle English term *glose* is complex, indicative of intensive hermeneutics: still today we both reach for a *glossary* to uncover the meaning of words foreign to us, while yet *glossing over* unpalatable facts. Kragl, surveying his examples, finds no generalizable rule as to which language is more ‘native’ to the compiler: is this a Latin speaker needing help with German, or *vice versa*? Similarly, Kragl finds that the Germanic terms stand in no normative relation to any kind of standard or ‘national’ German. These texts are designed to do a job of work for a particular speaker in specific local circumstances: they are *Gebrauchstexte*, a useful compound term that might be translated as “use-texts.” As such, they are not to be associated with any courtly *Bildungsakademie*. Nor do they satisfy the hunger for nationalizing Ur-texts, as unleashed in the earlier nineteenth century: for before these texts could be claimed or constructed as any kind of German, they were European.

5. On 14 February 842 oaths of mutual alliance were recorded as sworn by half-brothers Louis (Ludwig) and Karl (Charles), with the former, the elder, speaking in “romana lingua” and the latter in “teudisca lingua.” See Sonderegger 220.

6. See for example Wogan-Browne et al.

Simon Gaunt (London) stands as it were on the far side of *Die Straßburger Eide*,⁵ or *Les serments de Strasbourg*, engaging issues in French rather than German literary history, but he too resists evaluating local texts against any *a priori* notion of a centred and achieved national language. The power of *fons et origo* French in spreading from France to irrigate all literary Europe has long been a working commonplace, but Gaunt invites us to consider the reverse possibility: that in many instances, the literary uses and possibilities of French were developed far from French ground before, as it were, being repatriated by literary historians (or ostracized as regional oddities). The ‘French of England’ has been much discussed in recent years,⁶ but Gaunt pushes things further to suggest, baldly put, that Anglo-Saxon and Latin ‘invent’ literary French: that is, twelfth-century scripts first developed for Old English and insular Latin help

7. See now the opening chapter of Turner.

form a *scripta* for French, a textual culture that gains traction on (in-sular) English ground before any equivalent developments on (continental) French territory. Gaunt then acquaints us with the *Estoire des Engleis* (c. 1136–37) by Geoffrey Gaimar, who is both the earliest known French-language historiographer and the first translator from English (Anglo-Saxon) to French: a *translatio studii* that has escaped most textbooks in France.⁷ Avatars of Gaunt’s next text, the *Histoire ancienne jusqu’à César*, travel from Flanders to Acre to Naples and then ‘France,’ evoking ‘the French’ as “bedraggled refugees of uncertain provenance.” In considering, finally, the *mises en prose* of Benoît de Sainte-Maure’s *Roman de Troie* produced in Italy, c. 1270, Gaunt refuses to characterize such Franco-Italian works as ‘hybrid’ – for that would imply, again, clear distinction between items of lexicon, and of syntax, regarded as properly or originally ‘French,’ on the one hand, and ‘Italian,’ on the other. For Gaunt, the most striking feature of French in our period is “that it belongs to no one, or perhaps more accurately to everyone.” And readers of French in Italy did not require ‘perfect’ texts, but *Gebrauchstexte*, designed to meet local needs and pleasures. Pietro Bembo (1470–1547) and his Venetian printers, several centuries later, did not aspire to purvey text-perfect Petrarch. Bembo happily emended readings from his own autograph manuscript of Petrarch where Petrarch fell short, in Bembo’s opinion, of authentic Trecento Tuscan: for such Tuscan was by then, in the Cinquecento, the stable product that Venetian printers could sell across the world as authentic and imitable Italian, freed of local variation.⁸ Gaunt detects in the *Histoire*, much earlier, “a deliberate supralocal koinization of the language, one intended to be at home wherever it travels.”

8. See Dionisotti; Beltrami.

Petrarch, notes Karla Mallette (Michigan), made his home at Venice from 1362–68, living in a house looking out across the lagoon, “one of the busiest liquid highways in the Veneto.” Petrarch is often deployed as a period marker, signifying a turn to humanism and proto-Renaissance sensibilities, but Mallette here anatomizes the man himself, poised at that time between mature achievement and incipient decline. One intuition of her essay resonates with that of Kenelm Foster, OP, who, in writing his own last book, suggests (never quite overtly) that in championing Latin over Italian, Petrarch belatedly realized that he had backed the wrong horse.⁹ Petrarch’s literary posterity is unevenly distributed, Mallette notes, between Latin (more than 91%) and Italian (less than 9%); yet during the 2004 sept centennial birthday celebrations scant attention was paid, beyond

9. *Petrarch: Poet and Humanist*.

the Academy, to the *Latinitas* once thought epoch-defining. In a bold variation on conventional literary history, Mallette anatomizes a motif from Petrarch's own corpus suggestive of his turbulence of mind: *shipwreck*. She couples this with deft analysis of the particular relation of Latin to Italian, and with reflections on late style (generally *catastrophic*, according to Adorno). Venice, as apex and entrepôt of trade down the Adriatic, and as point of departure for Palestinian pilgrimages, knew much about disasters at sea: Leontius Pilatus, the Calabrian who had brought Homer to Petrarch in Latin, died within sight of Venice harbour in 1366; and slaves from beyond the Crimea were sold on the quayside.¹⁰ Petrarch himself, Mallette tells us, was averse to travelling by water in later life and preferred, in poetry and prose, to describe and prescribe the travels of others. All this feeds into his Italian poetry, including the first sonnet to be shipped to England.¹¹ And such vernacular poetry, as penned by the "lauriat poete,"¹² is locally related to Latin, the imperial language for which Italian supplies, as Mallette suggestively has it, "the pillowtalk."

Latin's kinship to peninsular languages was recognized many centuries before Petrarch, *in bono et in malo*. Monks at Wearmouth-Jarrow at the time of Bede were prized across Europe as Latin copyists, since their un-Latinate native vernaculars made them less likely to contaminate texts (*contaminatio*) while copying. Anxieties over maintaining clear boundaries between languages recur throughout the literary history of our period and, indeed, erupt into present-day regions such as Bosnia, Croatia, Montenegro, and Serbia. As a professional Byzantinist, Panagiotis Agapitos (Nicosia) has been bumped and buffeted by attempts down the centuries, extending into the present, to separate one kind of Greek from another – classical Greek, Greek of Late Antiquity (a fairly recent disciplinary category), Byzantine Greek, and modern Greek – *while yet* effecting internal transfers between them. 'Early Byzantine literature,' for example, is now effectively covered by the disciplinary umbrellas of Late Antique and Early Christian Studies, while livelier vernacular Byzantine material is transferred forward to modern Greek. What's left, one wonders? Hymnography, according to Karl Krumbacher (1856–1909), the Bavarian 'founding father' of Byzantine Studies, should be recognized as the true poetry of Byzantines. The work of Byzantinists is further over-shadowed by the authority of a watershed date: 1453. The relationship of this date to actual literary production, Agapitos argues, is generally assumed but rarely questioned, and here one thinks of English literary histories that terminate or originate with

10. See *Seniles* 10.2, as discussed and contextualized in trans-European slaving contexts in Wallace, *Premodern Places* 190–94.

11. "S'amor non è," as digested into Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, I, 400–20. See *Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson 478–79.

12. Chaucer, *Clerk's Tale*, in *CT*, ed. Benson, line 31.

too little explanation in 1066. Battles and military catastrophes, Agapitos suggests, have too often formed a convenient date-structure device for literary history, with little actual investigation of cause and effect. And here one might conversely think of battles ‘beyond the frame’ effecting social life, hence literary production, in places far from the battlefield. Constantinople was effectively gifted a further fifty years as an Orthodox city following the defeat of the Ottomans by Timurid forces at Çubuk (near Ankara) on 20 July 1402.

German philosophers and philologists have exerted great influence over Byzantine literary history, and the same holds true for their sway over Czech. The term ‘Czech’ seems an especially fragile designator of statehood, being adjectival rather than substantive and hence somewhat orphaned (following amicable separation from Slovakia in 1993). Such fragility and anxiety about compounding has long been felt in the region, with the term ‘Bohemia’ often invoked as protective cover. Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV (1316–78) was keen to suggest that his was an *imperium* of east and west, embracing both Latin and Slavic spheres. But there has been much misgiving down the centuries about compounding Czech with German, or even in analysing them as neighbouring, co-habiting tongues. As Rychterová argues, Czech literature emerged in the fourteenth century in close relationship to German; but philological traditions have tended not to dwell on trafficking between them. Czech philologists, bent on isolating a distinctive national tradition, have struggled to apply conceptual categories minted by Germans to their own uses. Thus they sought “the poetic soul of the Volk,” in ways pioneered by Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), and for a while they upheld Ossian-like, neo-medieval, neo-epical forgeries, penned c. 1810–20, as integral to Czech literary tradition. Jan Hus was commended for developing the diacritic orthography of a ‘new’ Czech, but deplored for importing non-native ideas from John Wyclif’s England. Byzantine, Slavic, and Hebrew contributions to the literary culture of the Bohemian basin were inevitably sidelined by this *Kulturkampf*. Czech literature was taught as a ‘national’ literature after 1945, and even after 1989 German has been slow to make a comeback in Czech educational institutions. Crucial texts such as the *Damilil chronicle*, however, exfoliating across Czech, Latin, and German avatars, demand comparative approaches.

As an alternative to single nation teleology, Rychterová suggests intensive investigation of the “very specific context” from which textual avatars (such as those of the *Damilil chronicle*) are generated. Ste-

phan Müller (Vienna) advocates comparable strategies for escaping over-determinations of grand theory – to which a German language author, and an *early* medievalist, will be especially well-attuned. As an alternative to “literarhistorischen Großerzählungen,” Müller proposes that we turn to “gute Geschichte/n,” smaller units of textual analysis freed from such *a priori* baggage. Intensive analysis of material texts, as pioneered in the United States, does not part company with historical *hors-texte* or *hors-objet* entirely (unless taken to binding-sniffing, fetishistic extremes). Müller, too, keeps faith with history or histories, “Geschichte/n,” tracing them out in a variety of ways. Literary texts should not be straightforwardly adduced to illustrate” social conditions at the moment of their composition: scenes depicted (such as those of the tavern) have prior generic conventions, conserved by generations of textual transmission, although each scene will resonate differently with each new textual instantiation.¹³ The meaning and uses of a text at the moment of its dedication to a specific ruler will change, Müller argues, once that ruler dies and the text enters into more complex networks of manuscript transmission, keeping company with textual neighbours that, a generation earlier, it could never have imagined. What Otfrid von Weißenburg’s *Gospel Book* first meant *c.* 870 AD, what it meant to multiple dedicatees, to a female reader, and to various users and adaptors down to the nineteenth century makes for complex but good *Geschichte*. Dedicatory remarks and prologues offer fruitful instances of the Middle Ages, Müller notes, writing its own literary history.¹⁴ There is always a risk, however, that in exiting ‘grand narrative’ by one door we may re-enter it by another. Müller concludes by expressing the hope that many strands of “guten Geschichte/n” may combine *not* to reveal the total truth of literary history, but rather to narrate something to which the discourse of research might attach. This discourse might then turn to the subjects with which older literary histories have been concerned, such as love, death, and struggle, grief and solace, right and wrong, rulership, victory, and defeat, for these are the things that really matter (“die Dinge, auf die es eigentlich ankommt”). But medieval ‘love’ is not the same as the ‘love’ of nineteenth-century literary historians, nor of today. *Truth* is not a term that translates easily over time, or between languages.¹⁵ And although certain literary themes might seem always to be with us, categories such as love, death, and violence (“Liebe, Tod, Gewalt”) are not transcendent; emotions have their histories, too.¹⁶

13. See Hanna.

14. See, in addition to the (chiefly German) scholarship cited by Müller; Copeland, *Rhetoric*; and Copeland and Sluiter.

15. See Green, *A Crisis of Truth*.

16. See the [Australian](#) and the [British](#) Centres for the History of Emotions.

Tension between desire to escape literarhistorische Großzählung and the need to lean upon it, by way of structuring a long narrative, may be read in the most impressive achievement in literary history of recent years, the *Atlante della letteratura italiana*, published in 3 large volumes by Einaudi in 2010. Medieval Italian literary history has long been shaped by *tre corone*, the three great writers who proleptically wrote Italy into existence before Italy proper could realize itself as a political entity, c. 1860. As recently as 1999, *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature* thought to represent the Trecento via the triad codified by Bembo in the sixteenth century, while dedicating one further chapter to A.N. Other: we thus have “Dante,” “Boccaccio,” “Petrarch,” and “Minor writers.” And in 2014 a prestigious publishing house, backed by a hall of fame editorial board, launched a new periodical entitled *Tre Corone*. The Einaudi *Atlante*, or *Atlas of Italian Literary History*, breaks the mold by opting, as its title implies, for literary history organized by *location*, rather than by Big Names. Its editors also battle deterministic strains of historicism reaching back deep into the nineteenth century, via Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937), Benedetto Croce (1866–1952), and Francesco de Sanctis (1817–83). Their volumes deliver locally mapped and contextualized studies in exemplary detail, providing very many fine examples of the “guten Geschichte/n” called for by Müller. Yet they also structure their first volume through the kind of *Großzählung* that Müller struggles to escape, progressing from “L’età di Padova (1222–1309),” the “Age of Padua,” to “the Age of Avignon (1309–78),” “the Age of Florence (1378–1494),” and then finally “the Age of Venice (1494–1530).” The nineteenth century thus lives on as its *Zeitgeist* progresses from one great city to the next.

Two of the essays in this collection explore an imperial theme, although the acronym IMpEriaL is perhaps more fitting.¹⁷ Benoît Grévin (Paris) maps out the “pan-European textual universe” of Latin *dictamen*, a form that evolved from Monte Cassino and from papal and imperial chancelleries, and their rivalries, to influence literary composition from Sicily (where it first prospered) to England. It was to distinguish between official and merely personal letters that a system of rhythmic ornamentation was developed in chancelleries, with *cursus rhythmicus* lending plain prose composition a distinctive and hence authoritative valence. Notaries who became expert in such complex Latin forms might swop sides in an argument, leaving the chancellery of Republican Florence for that of despotic Milan,¹⁸ or they might (behind high walls of privileged discourse) become play-

17. This acronym IMpEriaL was devised for a new research consortium project, on ‘Imperial Languages of Medieval Europe,’ by CML Southern Denmark and York, in conjunction with Ghent; its typography both asserts and challenges the hegemonic claims advanced by such a topic.

18. See Wallace, *Chaucerian Polity* 60.

ful in ways that foreshadow exchanges between Erasmus and Thomas More. Archbishop James of Capua (Jacques de Capoue) and Peter de Vinea (Pier de la Vigna) undertook serious work for Emperor Frederick II of Sicily, codifying laws, yet found time to mock-duel one another in epistolary form. This is that same Pier della Vigna (c. 1190–1240) found among the suicide-trees of *Inferno* 13, and it is instructive to consider how each of our *tre corone* (whom I have just deposed as arbiters of Trecento literary history) engages the *dictamen* of which Pier was an acknowledged master. Perhaps the most distinctive feature of *dictamen* is its mixing of prose and verse-like elements, a *mélange* characteristic of certain Arabic forms. From the evidence of the *Vita nuova* and *Convivio*, Dante appeared to favour clean separation between verse and straightforward (*prorsus*) prose; perhaps their admixture was as problematical to him as (again perhaps) Brunetto Latini's dalliance with both Italian and French. Petrarch, given his pursuit of classical Latin and his contempt for curial culture, bountifully expressed re Avignon, could harbour little love for *dictamen*; yet he corresponded with John of Neumarkt (Johannes von Neumarkt, Jan of Středa) who worked in the imperial chancery at Prague.¹⁹ Boccaccio was trained in *dictamen* while a student of canon law at Naples, notionally one half of the “Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.” The rhythms of *cursus tardus*, *planus*, and *velox* wind through his *Decameron*, a foundational text for European novelistic prose, and the verses of his *Filostrato* and *Teseida* unspool prose-like across line endings. Remarkably, at the very same time, and just as *dictamen* was reaching its apogee in Italy, Richard of Bury was allowing dictaminal rhythms learned at Oxford, “à la sicilienne,” to help shape his *Philobiblon*. And the same Oxonian teachers of *dictamen* were commending the Latinizing of Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Histoire de Troie* by the thirteenth-century Sicilian judge Guido delle Colonne as exemplary of their art.²⁰ Aspects of literary art practised in Naples and Florence, then, were isomorphic with Oxford writing at about the time Chaucer first saw the light. “L'univers du *dictamen* latin” is not a global empire, but it does encourage literary history to connect and compare unlikely places.

Enrico Fenzi (Genoa) traces the long, complex, and sometimes contradictory history of *translatio imperii*, finding points of origin in the Biblical *Book of Daniel* and ending as things get even more complex (with translations from Troy, of the Holy Grail, and of other *materia*). The relation of power to wisdom, *potere* to *sapienza*, remains perennially problematic. There are times when worldly power, as

19. See further the chapter of Pavlína Rychterová above.

20. See Spampinato. Grévin here cites two important articles by Martin Camargo.

with ancient Rome at its apogee, figures as a carrier of wisdom, or revealed truth; and there are other historical phases, with barbarians at the gate, when alternative cities must be imagined (with truth domiciled in the clouds, beyond reach). When peace reigns, as during the *pax romana*, or later under Charlemagne, values of an outward-expanding, universalizing *humanitas* can be expounded by a Cicero, or an Alcuin. When Rome teeters, as at the time of Gregory the Great, ancient Roman values may fall away, including belief in *grammatica* (now tagged as idolatrous). Alcuin conceded Gregory's right to reject ancient grammar, but insisted that another must be supplied, since, as Fenzi has it, "una grammatica è indispensabile." Passionate and ambivalent love of Vergil permeates our period, from Augustine to Alcuin to Dante. Successive polities polish claims to be true heirs of Rome, imperial or otherwise, including German- and Sicilian-based emperors and the university and city of Paris. But when *translatio studii* cannot smoothly align with *translatio imperii*, the fruits of study, wisdom, and culture might be rudely grabbed, or abducted. The language of *raptus*, familiarly associated with imperial conquest, is also invoked for the carrying off of desirable goods, gifts of *sapientia*, that have somehow fallen into pagan hands. Origen, famously associated in the Middle Ages with self-castration, employs violently gendered language here: the law laid down in *Deuteronomy* 21.10–14, he argues, proposes that the beautiful and desirable woman should be taken from the enemy, with her hair to be cut and her nails clipped. There is a violence, too, in Augustine's more familiar injunction about taking gold out of Egypt: as the people of Israel took vessels and ornaments of silver and gold with them, when fleeing from the Egyptians, so should Christian believers take what they need from all branches of heathen learning.²¹

21. Thereby adapting or converting it to Christian use ("in usum convertenda christianum." *De Doctrina Christiana*, ed. Martin, Book II, ch. XL (60), 25–26).

Mention of Egypt prompts us to ask what might be missing from these medieval accounts of *translatio imperii et studii*, the transfer of power and wisdom across the face of Europe, from east to west. One immediate answer is Arabic, and the Islamic world. Much of Aristotle, referred to by Dante as simply "the philosopher," had been brought to the west due to impetus created by Muslim scholars of Aristotle; some translations were made from from Greek to Arabic, and from Arabic to Latin (or, later, Castilian Spanish), and others directly from Greek to Latin (most famously by William of Moerbeke in the thirteenth century). Many of the translators at Toledo, in the first generation (earlier twelfth century), were Jews or Arabs. Arabic science had dazzled the west even earlier than this: tenth-century

22. Burnett 2.

23. Burnett 10, 22.

24. Burnett 60.

25. Citation is here made from the edition employed by Ricklin, namely *Gesta*, ed. and trans. Mynors; here 11, 167.1.

Córdoba, Charles Burnett argues, far exceeded any city in the Latin West in size and opulence, “and the contrast between the scientific cultures of al-Andalus and Latin Christendom was just as extreme.”²²

Many bright young scholars of the time engaged in reverse *translatio* to amend defective western education: Gerbert d’Aurillac (d. 1002) went from Rheims to Vich in Catalonia to study the quadrivium, and Adelard of Bath traveled even further east for *studia Arabum*, having found *Gallica studia* inadequate.²³ Henry II Plantagenet, usually dubbed ‘of England,’ but with titles attaching him to Aquitaine, Anjou, Maine, Nantes, Normandy, Ireland, and other locales, ruled over Arabic-speaking Jews and once threatened, so his followers said, to convert to Islam and follow the sultan of Aleppo (were the pope not to depose archbishop Thomas Becket).²⁴

Thomas Ricklin (Munich) shows how anxieties generated in England by Arabic learning from Spain, or rumors of such learning, themselves generated legends of necromantic philosophers. Such figures, Ricklin insists, were taken as fact in medieval centuries, although they have never been written into *Philosophiegeschichte*, the history of philosophy, another “history of the victors.” The first half of his essay focusses upon an episode from the *Gesta Regum Anglorum* of William of Malmesbury (c. 1090–c. 1142): a strange excursus that wanders far from William’s ostensible brief as historian of the kings of England. Recognizing that he is wandering by the way, William nonetheless insists that “it will not be out of place” (“non absurdum erit”) to tell a tale that is on everyone’s lips.²⁵ It concerns one John, also known as Gerbert, a native of Gaul and monk of Fleury who, having grown bored with monastic life or prompted by dreams of glory (“seu tedio monachatus seu gloriae cupiditate captus,” 167.1), runs off to Spain to learn astrology and other arts from the Saracens. William then sketches a quick *translatio* history of the region: the Romans are succeeded by the Arian Goths, then the Catholic Goths, and then the Saracens; the territory is currently divided between Christians, based in Toledo, and Saracens, based in Seville. Gerbert lives among Saracens, imbibes all their learning, and hence reestablishes in Gaul subjects long since lost (“obsoletam,” 167.3). In lodging with a Saracen philosopher, however, he comes to covet one supreme book which strives towards forbidden knowledge. Having stolen it, Gerbert makes a devil’s pact to protect himself from his angry Saracen pursuer. His subsequent career takes him first to Ravenna as archbishop, and then to Rome as pope (Silvester II, 999–1003); his necromantic skills allow him to “discover treasures buried by pa-

gans long ago” (169.3). Finally, however, he is damned (174.2). Ricklin then moves us forward several generations, to writers such as Alexander Neckham, Gervase of Tilbury, Johannes von Alta Silva, and Konrad von Querfurt, noting that when they begin presenting Vergil as *magus* and necromancer, he somehow escapes the taint that had attached, damnably, to Gerbert. Perhaps by then the west was confident of having *naturalized*, or at least institutionalized, whatever threat pagan learning had earlier posed. For once excitement over Hispano-Arabic invasion had passed, later generations of scholars and scholiasts were generally content to consult Arabic texts in Latin translations, and to surround such translations with Latin commentary.²⁶ They no longer felt compelled to sail east.

26. Burnett 80.

The Arabic learning to be found in Spain was not something *brought* to Spain, but was rather constitutive of it. The pivotal importance of Arabic in Spain, both in mediating Greek culture and in originating science, has faded from memory, another victim of Renaissance (“back to Greek and Latin originals!”) forgetting. Spanish has traditionally played a marginal role in the Renaissance Society of America, which has plotted its historical way chiefly along an Anglo-Italian axis. But it has fared little better with the Medieval Academy of America, which is Anglo-French. We have no essay in Spanish in this first *Interfaces*, but thankfully we do have an essay on Spain, or rather on the complex cultural manoeuvres of King Alfonso X of Castile (*reg.* 1252–84). Like many of our authors, Ryan Szpiech (Michigan) begins by taking on strong paradigms laid down in the eighteenth/ nineteenth centuries, in this case the notion that Alfonso was essentially a scholarly footnote to his martially-inclined father, Fernando III, content to gaze at the stars while his father conquered Seville. But Szpiech must then also take on the later, counter-reactive scholarship that would make Alfonso the father of everything – from astronomy and Spanish law to Spanish historiography, Spanish prose, and the Castilian tongue. His strategy is to explore Alfonso’s own representations of sonship to a respected father and, more broadly, issues of *translatio* – and these set his essay in lively dialogue with the work of Enrico Fenzi. Alfonso’s very first literary project translates a particular avatar of a routine genre, *Fürstenspiegel*, “which was transmitted from India to Iberia via the eighth-century Arabic version of Ibn al-Muqaffa” (a far from routine European trajectory). Alfonso’s later work, in both text making and tomb building, elaborates powerful narratives of *translatio imperii et studii*, burnishing his father’s memory while augmenting his own case to be approved as Holy Ro-

man Emperor. Newly-conquered Seville now becomes the centre of literary and symbolic operations, although his own practises of translation, Szpiech and Márquez Villanueva argue, are based on those of Toledo from the previous century. Within the cathedral of Seville that had been the Almohad mosque before the conquest of 1248, Alfonso ornamented his father's tomb with Hebrew and Arabic inscriptions (on the back) and Castilian and Latin (on the front). A gold ring worn by Fernando, according to the Galician-Portuguese *Cantigas de Santa Maria* (292) commissioned by Alfonso, is transferred from the conquering hand of Fernando (which had slain Muhammadans), to grace the finger of the Virgin's statue at Seville: a case of bringing gold *into* Egypt.

German, like Spanish, at least when viewed from American perspectives, has similarly failed to capture pride of place in the halls of the Medieval Academy, or of the Renaissance Society. The problem for Hispanists is not primarily territorial, but rather linguistic: who can master or keep track of the many tongues, beginning with Latin, Hebrew, and Arabic, and including so many vernaculars (including Provençal, especially, but even English) at work in the peninsula, in the eastward expanding territories of Aragon, and in the Maghreb? The problem for German, *au contraire*, is not primarily linguistic, but territorial. We have seen many of the contributors to this collection wrestling with intellectual paradigms laid down and refined in German, beginning with Hegel and Herder, but our period offers no such thing as 'Germany' to be assessed, *toute entière*. There are, rather, pockets of literary activity in Germanic tongues in locales that might later, or might not, form part of a state called Germany after 1870 (with subsequent revisions). This point was largely missed, or overstepped, by *Germany. Memories of a Nation. A 600-year History in Objects*, an exhibition staged at the British Museum (16 October 2014–25 January 2015).²⁷ "Six hundred years" gets us back to 1415 and the ongoing Council of Constance, where a newly-crowned King of the Romans called Sigismund, born in Nuremberg, rode herd on four clerical *nationes*, or nations. The German *natio* included Scandinavians, from many regions, and should also (so the French insisted) have included the English. The Council effectively ended on 16 May 1418, when the newly-elected Martin V left town, but the merchant Diet down the Rhine at the Lübeck *Hansesaal* opened for business just over one month later. Members of the Hanse traded all the way to Bergen, Turku, Danzig, Riga, and beyond, and up the Rhine past Cologne; they were met by travellers coming downstream from Ba-

27. MacGregor, *Germany*.

sel and Strasbourg, carrying religious texts or perhaps bent on worshipping the Magi. Meanwhile, highly idiosyncratic literary collections were being produced at locales such as Salzburg and Würzburg, religious controversialists passed between Vienna and Prague, and Nurembergers headed to Cracow for university education. Such a disaggregated concept as this ‘Germany’ could not, then, easily be accommodated by the British Museum exhibition, with its robust understanding of ‘Nation.’ Nor can ‘Germany’ before 1415 be summarized, as in the BM museum space, with a few wimples and heraldic shields. The extent of German language diffusion through Europe ‘before Germany’ has been actively deemphasized, for understandable historical reasons, in places such as Bergen and Riga (but many more) since World War II. Paradigms developed to narrate the rise of European nation states after 1800 continue to hinder us. We must keep on trying to write better literary history, then; many more dragons remain to be slain.

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