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Narrating Time in the Twelfth Century



Robert Hardy, *Engel*, 2023, oil on canvas, 20 x 20 cm – <https://roberthardyartist.com>



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Time in the Twelfth Century

Do we exist in time, or does time exist in us?

Carlo Rovelli, *The Order of Time 2*

Quid est ergo tempus? Si nemo ex me quaerat, scio; si quaerenti explicare uelim, nescio.

(So what is time? If no one is asking me a question about it, I know what it is; but if I want to explain it to the questioner, I do not know how to.)

Augustine, *Confessions* 11.14.17

1. Several of the essays in the collection have developed from a workshop held at the Humboldt-Universität Berlin in December 2018, organised by Sarah Bowden and Lea Braun and supported by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. Plans for a second workshop were derailed by the Covid-19 pandemic and the authors instead met several times online to discuss draft essays. These online meetings were an intellectual and personal delight during a difficult period, and the editors would like to thank all participants for their willingness to engage in intensive, productive and enjoyable discussions.

The essays that make up this special issue of *Interfaces* share a common interest in the narration and representation of time in twelfth-century texts.¹ The volume focuses primarily on works that we would now regard as ‘literary’: writing that prompts an affective response in its audience through the tactical use of rhetoric and form. Our special issue is primarily concerned with writers operating in England, France and Germany, a cultural zone bound together in the central Middle Ages by the relatively fluid circulation of people, books and ideas across territorial boundaries. While our focus is on the literatures and languages of these regions (vernacular and Latin), the contributors have worked up their essays with an awareness that this is an editorial choice with respect to scope and scale, a choice that brings certain patterns into view at the expense of others. England, France and Germany are conceived of here as a cultural zone nested within a series of larger spaces, with graduations including, but not limited to, western Christendom (overlying the world of Roman antiquity), eastern Christendom (overlying the ancient Greek world), and a larger Afro-Eurasian frame. A different set of essays might just as well have chosen a different scale and thereby brought a different set of patterns into view.

The decision to focus on the twelfth century is equally a determination of scope and scale. The periodization itself is not novel. Famously, or perhaps infamously, the twelfth century has been branded by scholars as a moment of ‘renaissance,’ ‘reform’ or ‘renewal,’ epithets that emphasise a break from the immediate past and a return to an earlier golden age (Ladner). In differing ways, these qualifiers

all seek to capture the remarkable foment of the twelfth century, “a period of intense, rapid, and to a high degree self-conscious change in almost all aspects of human thought and activity” (Constable 4). It is not our aim here to dispute the claim that certain phenomena in this remarkable century lend themselves to these more disjunctive, as opposed to accretive, models of change. Nor do we disagree with the ultimate target that advocates of the ‘twelfth century renaissance’ have in their sights: the pejorative scholarly portrayal of the ‘middle ages’ as something merely medial, and the glorification of the ‘Renaissance’ (in its more usual early-modern sense) as a unique moment of rupture and reengagement with classical learning. Nonetheless, the view of the ‘twelfth century’ that emerges from this special issue of *Interfaces* is at once more continuous than the term ‘renaissance’ implies, more complex in its relationship to the past than ‘reform’ suggests, and more excitingly experimental than any kind of ‘renewal’.

The twelfth century also emerges as an unusually rich period for thinking about the conceptualization and representation of time in texts. Primarily, we suggest, this is due to the wealth and diversity of textual material available to us from the period, often in emergent or developing forms (such as vernacular romance and historiography, or works of scholastic theology and dialectic). These innovations may often be radical in their presentation, but are always grounded (frequently self-consciously) in other traditions, resulting in texts that, in different ways, are aware of their own pasts and, in some cases, their potential futures. In this sense, the time of texts becomes at times just as important as the representation and understanding of time within texts. In the broadest terms, though, what brings these essays together is a common interest in the representation of time and temporal structures in twelfth-century narrative. All concern the way in which different kinds of texts, written in different languages yet in the same period, organize and structure their content so as to depict temporal process, order or change. Across these essays, the authors explore how twelfth-century writers employed literary techniques (be they rhetorical, allegorical or narratological) with the aim of organizing time or engaging creatively and intellectually with theories of time and eternity.

Using the past to think in the present

From one perspective, the writers studied here can be straightforwardly regarded as participants in a cultural continuum; their sour-

es (philosophical, theological, scientific) are largely those of their ancestors (Greek, Roman, patristic, Carolingian and insular), and the concepts of time that they invoke are primarily inherited. The earliest stratum of these sources is very old indeed. The Book of Genesis, dating back to the sixth century BCE, provides the starting point for a number of twelfth-century reflections on temporality, ranging from Honorius Augustodunensis' musings on the instantaneous creation of the universe in the *Imago Mundi* to Hugh of St Victor's development of the story of Noah building the ark in his elaborate *pictura* (texts discussed here by Younge and Burgon respectively). The earliest influences from the Greek world, albeit distantly felt, extend back to the pre-Socratics. In his analysis of an ekphrasis from *Le Roman de Thèbes*, Morton, for instance, detects traces of Pythagorean thought in references to the harmony of the spheres. Plato himself, and specifically his reflections on time and the cosmos in the *Timaeus*, passed down to medieval writers via Calcidius' commentary and translation, looms large in several essays of the volume. In addition to working directly with the *Timaeus*, twelfth-century writers also absorbed Platonic ideas from Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*. Through the guiding figure of Lady Philosophy, Boethius teases out the contrast between human time, governed by capricious fate, and eternal time, ordered by providence.

Beyond this lies the contribution of late antique authorities, not least Saint Augustine, whose anguished reflection on time in Book 11 of the *Confessions* attracted considerable attention in the twelfth century. For Augustine, only the present can truly be said to exist; the past having gone and the future being yet to arrive. When we talk about past and future, Augustine states, what we really describe is a process of recollection (*distentio*), which is necessarily achieved through narration:

Quod autem nunc liquet et claret, nec futura sunt nec praeterita, nec proprie dicitur, "tempora sunt tria, praeteritum, praesens, et futurum," sed fortasse proprie diceretur, "tempora sunt tria, praesens de praeteritis, praesens de praesentibus, praesens de futuris." Sunt enim haec in anima tria quaedam et alibi ea non video, praesens de praeteritis memoria, praesens de praesentibus contuitus, praesens de futuris expectatio.

(What is now patently clear is that neither future nor past events exist, and it is incorrect to say, "there are three times, past present and future." Perhaps it would be appropriate to

say, “There are three times: the present respecting things past, the present respecting things present, and the present respecting things future.” These three things do somehow exist in the soul, and I do not perceive them anywhere else: for the present of things past is memory; the present of things present is paying attention; and the present of things future is expectation.) (11.20).

The impact of Augustine’s statements about time in Book 11, and the crucial connection he makes between time and narrative, can be perceived throughout the essays in this volume, whether explicitly or implicitly. In addition to exerting a direct influence on the twelfth century, the *Confessions* continues to be an important source for modern literary theorists, as Bowden points out in her discussion of Paul Ricoeur’s *Time and Narrative*. Taking Ricoeur as her starting point, Bowden loops the modern back to the medieval, showing how visionary narrative exemplifies Ricoeur’s deeply Augustinian notion that “time becomes human to the extent that it is organized after the manner of a narrative.”

The reliance of these twelfth-century writers on a shared pool of sources marks them out as participants in a common cultural arena, namely Western as opposed to Eastern Christendom. Augustine’s *Confessions*, with its highly personalized definition of time, for example, had a negligible impact in the Byzantine world, while Boethius’ *Consolation of Philosophy* was not translated into Greek until Maximus Planudes took up the task around 1300. Within the Christian West, the essays in this volume show, nodal centres, such as the rich monastic landscape of the southern German lands, the cathedral school at Chartres and the Abbey of Saint Victor, mattered more than political territories when it came to the dissemination of ideas. Taking a step back, the authors considered in this collection are also defined by their shared ignorance of conceptions of time that were familiar to scholars elsewhere in the Arabic and Greek-speaking worlds, the most striking example being Book IV of Aristotle’s *Physics*, with its famous definition of time as “the calculable measure of dimension of motion with respect to before-and-afterness” (*Physics* 219b, 1–2). The influence of Aristotle’s definition of time as motion on western intellectuals, felt first in the late twelfth century but gaining traction in the thirteenth, including in the work of Thomas Aquinas, marks the commencement of a phase of learning that lies beyond the scope of this collection.

Narrating time

In their reliance on earlier authorities for theoretical ideas about time, the writers considered in this volume show the side of the twelfth century that emphasised cultural continuity. Where we have identified ‘innovation’ in this collection, this lies primarily in the realm of formal and literary experimentation, with earlier notions of time being reformulated for new audiences and new ends. As the quotation above from the *Confessions* implies, a key role in how time is perceived and understood falls to narration. Narratives – be they historical, religious or literary in a narrower sense of the word – take place within time while also employing complex strategies to order, and organize, and depict time (Lessing; Ricoeur). Narratologists have developed various sets of terminologies for talking about this distinction; Genette, for instance employs a threefold distinction between ‘story time,’ ‘discourse time’ and ‘narrating time.’ While events are narrated within their temporal structure, narrative time may expand, contract, pause or collapse, shaping a unique experience of time while drawing attention to this very act of temporal composition by showcasing different temporal conceptualizations. Every text thus creates its own time as an integral part of its composition but may also resonate with other modes of perceiving and conceptualizing temporality.

Though rooted in certain traditions of narration, many of the texts considered in this special issue show an awareness of other structures and forms of writing that can be employed to reflect on and complicate the experience of time, as a result connecting discourses and genres and creating new types of textualizing temporality. Reeve, for instance, shows how twelfth-century romance draws on historiographical writing and its order of historicity to produce an ordered, synchronous time. To conceptualize the flow of time, narratives employ metaphors of folding or unrolling time to reflect the succession of events as well as the progression of the reader through the text (Younge). Time is depicted as motion in a certain direction, as movement suspended and continued, ascending or descending, and this spatial positioning can be employed to approximate different perspectives and levels of access on time – from the linear progression of humanity through history to the ultimate simultaneity of the divine.

When employing spatial elements and motions to express temporal experience, some narratives employ physical objects that func-

tion as markers of specific moments in time and connect these to the present of the audience. Narrative descriptions of physical objects may also serve as an occasion to pause or divert the flow of reported time and cause reflection on the experience of narrative time, as is the case with ekphrastic descriptions of imagined objects (see the contributions by Morton and Burgon). Pretzer discusses the depiction and function of built structures – Roman columns, both real and imagined – in the Middle High German chronicle *Kaiserchronik*; these columns, he shows, function as chronotopes, a form of textual ‘spoliation’ analogous to the medieval practice of incorporating reclaimed architectural components into newly constructed buildings.

Narrated time and the time of the narrative can be ordered according to different temporal models that may interact or compete within a text. Reeve demonstrates, for instance, how the circularity of ‘everyday life’ and the linear progression of (salvific) history can enrich or contrast each other. Equally, as Bowden shows, narratives can add yet another layer to their complex temporality by thematizing their own mediality and the process of their retelling and textualization. Narration also plays with the relationship between different temporal levels – past, present and future – and the way in which they divide and order time. The twelfth-century author was able to avail themselves of diverse narrative tools that serve to connect and distinguish the temporal layering of past, present and future in a text: prolepses and analepses, stories within stories or extradiegetic commentary complicate the *ordo narrandi* and serve to draw attention to the way time is both an integral part of narrative composition and a way to disrupt the flow of narration. Time can be stretched or condensed; moments of non- or a-synchronicity may harmonise or collapse temporal layers. This is exemplified by Braun in her essay on the Middle High German *König Rother*, in which she explores the ways this text connects and stabilizes past and present by means of a genealogical *longue durée* on the one hand, and complex models and anticipations of future events on the other.

The essays in this volume are less concerned with genre- or discourse-specific models of temporality. Rather, the texts discussed draw on a multitude of literary tropes and motifs to give aesthetic and narrative form to what might otherwise be quite abstract notions of time. These include the use of the *katascopos* or ‘view from above,’ the dream vision, *ekphrasis*, and ‘simultaneous’ styles of history writing, as well as allegory and prophecy. These devices all offer the twelfth-century author an opportunity to position their readers at

some form of remove from ordinary human time—above, outside, or askance. They also underline how twelfth-century writing demonstrates a critical awareness of these traditions, as well as the experimental efforts to connect, contrast or amalgamate narrative strategies and techniques from different sources. While many of these techniques have long traditions and are far from unique to the twelfth century's discourse on time, the diverse examples of narrating time that are collected in this volume showcase an enhanced interest in the reflection of time not only discursively, but through narrative strategies, structuring and forming it at the same time as producing new understandings of temporality and its relevance for the *conditio humana*. As many of the essays show, textual form and conceptual content mirror one another to create a highly effective (and affective) experience.

The work of time

This affective work of twelfth-century texts about time – the way, that is, that they encourage a particular emotional or intellectual response in their readers or listeners – forms another thread that runs through many of the contributions. Of equal importance is the way in which their form contributes to, and shapes, this response, by which we mean either the peculiarities and affordances of a particular genre or text-type (and how this form is shaped to encourage certain responses), or the affordances of the written text in general. The marked increase in the production of written texts in twelfth-century Europe, both in Latin and the vernaculars, accompanied by considerable diversification of the types of texts being written down, was unsurprisingly accompanied by a concurrent interest in conceptualizing textuality and thinking about the peculiar communicative power of textual objects, often resulting in explicit moments of self-reflection within individual works. Such moments of self-reflexivity are discussed in the twelfth-century context most commonly with regard to emergent genres of (fictional) romance (on which see Reeve), but, as essays in this volume show, they extend to other forms as well, both narrative and discursive. The essays here draw attention to how the texts they discuss demonstrate a self-awareness of their status as written or created artefact, and how this self-awareness can lead to explicit consideration of the effect the text should have on its recipients. The result is an intersection between thinking about time and

thinking about the work of the text (be it intellectual, didactic, meditative or otherwise).

Sometimes the work of the text is to encourage or enable thinking through conceptual problems about time. Different forms perform this work in different ways, as is shown by Pretzer in the case of historiography, or Morton, Braun and Reeve in the case of romance. The aesthetic experience of narrative literature functions as a mode of thought different to philosophical or theological discourse, and its descriptive possibilities can force audiences to take themselves out of linear temporalities and contemplate other ways of structuring and conceptualizing time.

The thinking work of the textual form also plays a central role in more discursive writing. Particularly (although not exclusively) in monastic and scholastic contexts, texts were designed to be read and contemplated as part of a structured and carefully-taught meditative practice. Mary Carruthers uses the rhetorical term *ductus* to describe the way in which such texts offer their users a path to follow that guides their experience; it “is the way by which a work leads someone through itself: that quality in a work’s formal patterns which engages an audience and then sets a viewer or auditor or performer in motion within its structures, an experience more like travelling through stages along a route than like perceiving a whole object” (Carruthers 190).

Ductus helps us understand the way in which the medieval text functions as process rather than static object, reminding us that textual reception is always a temporal experience. Yet the meditative process the text encourages also offers a way of thinking conceptually about time. Both Burgon and Younge pay particular attention to the motion of the reader through the text as a spiritual exercise, and how this exercise is constructed to help them engage with difficult temporal concepts, while depending on its (imaginative) interaction with other forms, here visual art. Narrative itself can also serve as a training tool for what Pierre Hadot has called ‘spiritual exercises:’ spatio-temporal drills that help the reader to discover eternity within the limits of time, or provide the basis for temporal performativity in ritual and religious contexts. Morton and Pretzer show how authors embed *ekphrasis* and the description of architectural features in order to compel their readers to think differently about time. That time itself – more specifically models of the future – can serve as a space of reflection and counterinsurance – is demonstrated by Braun’s analysis of the temporal layers and their interconnectedness in *König Rother*. Textual practices are only one component of the

techniques described by Sonntag that were used by monks to achieve a state of detemporalization. The organisation and iterability of the monastic day enabled monks both to perceive time and step outside time in an attempt to effect a simulation of eternity or an escape from time. Sonntag demonstrates perhaps most explicitly a factor that recurs in many essays, namely the way in which texts, other media and practices can be ordered not only to think about time but also to force an affective response – to feel time.

An affective response should ultimately be a transformative one. Meditative practices transform through increased understanding, even if the object (time/eternity) cannot ever be grasped entirely; their practised repetition is also fundamental to their success. Bowden traces a straightforward and explicit process of affective transformation through the example of visionary narrative, which guides the reader or listener through conflating pasts, presents and futures and encourages spiritual transformation in the model of the exemplary protagonist. To a greater or lesser extent, however, all the essays demonstrate how medieval texts perform and stage active work. The twelfth century emerges as a period concerned with what textuality – and different textual forms – can do. This may not in itself be anything radically new (meditative reading practices were common in monastic contexts in earlier centuries) but is given new prominence through the increased diversity and quantity of texts being written down. These texts may concern the subject of time, but they also obtain a time of their own: the time of the (potentially infinitely repeatable) experience of reception, which sets in train a process of personal change.

*

This collection is not designed to be in any way comprehensive, or constitutive of a coherent stance either about the medieval experience of time or its representation in twelfth-century writing. As Gillian Adler and Paul Strohm have recently argued, medieval people were astonishingly flexible and creative in their approach to time and temporality. It has been our intention to open up lines of dialogue and to think in broad terms about the ways in which time is productive of different kinds of meaning: both philosophical or theological concepts of time itself, as well as forms of meaning produced by particular ways of organising and structuring time in texts. We also hope our work will encourage new ways of thinking about the time of the twelfth century and throw new light on the way in which this period is shaped by both change and continuity.

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Jenseits der Zeit? Konzepte zur Ritualisierung von Ewigkeit im monastischen Leben des 12. Jahrhunderts

Abstract

This article analyses monastic concepts of ritualising eternity within the Benedictine tradition of the 12th century. It explores monastic time arrangements and discusses paradigmatically chosen rituals to investigate why and how religious communities strove for a detemporalisation within time. It argues that monks not only created and ritually performed a complex ‘circle time’ where past, present and future were perceptible, but also charged themselves with sacred aura by means of a ritual internalisation of the holiness of different holy role models from the past and the future at the same time. The decisive key to success lay in the phenomenon of hybrid imitation on a horizontal as well as on a vertical level. In this way, time could even be suspended, at least for a moment in time.

Nicht nur in den Augen seiner Bewohner konnte das mittelalterliche Kloster das Paradies, das himmlische Jerusalem, das Friedensreich Jesajas, Schule des Herrn, Truppenübungsplatz oder die Arche Noah auf den gefährlichen Wellen des unheilvollen Weltenmeeres präfigurieren, ja sein. Selbst als Gefängnis und Hölle konnte es interpretiert und erlebt werden. Tatsächlich stand Mönchen und Nonnen (nicht nur) des hohen Mittelalters ein reicher Fundus derartiger, seit langem tradierter Beschreibungs- und nicht zuletzt Nachahmungsmodelle auf dem Weg der Selbsteheiligung zur Verfügung (vgl. dazu ausführlich Sonntag, “Metaphorik” 3–17 und Constable, “Metaphors” 231–42.)

1. Vgl. Honorius Augustodunensis, *De vita claustrali*, 1247–48.

Tabelle 1. Die zehn Bilder des Klosters nach Honorius Augustodunensis¹

1	Meeresküste, an der man sich vor den Gefahren des Meeres in Sicherheit bringen kann	[...] <i>littus maris, quod de periculo maris venientes recipit, et pro securitate soliditatis patriae restituit</i> [...].
2	Laube, in der die Reisenden Schatten finden und sich erfrischen können	[...] <i>umbraculum, quod itinerantes obumbrat, et ab aestu refrigerat</i> [...].

3	Bett, in dem die Arbeitenden ruhen	[...] <i>lectus in quo requiescunt laborantes</i> [...].
4	Asyl und Zufluchtsort, in dem die der Welt Fliehenden vor den Dämonen gerettet werden	[...] <i>asylum vel domus refugii</i> [...], <i>in quo mundum fugientes a daemonibus salvantur</i> [...].
5	Schule für Kinder, in der die Kleinen in Christus durch die Meisterin Regel zu den Tugenden hin erzogen werden	[...] <i>schola infantium, in qua parvuli in Christo a Magistro regula ad virtutes informantur</i> [...].
6	Gymnasium in Jerusalem und Truppenübungsplatz in der Kirche, wo die Rekruten Christi für die Schlachten gegen die Laster trainieren	[...] <i>gymnasium in Jerusalem constructum, vel locus exercitii in Ecclesia constitutus, ubi tirones Christi ad varias pugnas vitiorum se exercent</i> [...].
7	Gefängnis, in dem die Kriminellen eingekerkert werden, damit sie dereinst in die weite Halle des Himmels eingelassen werden können	[...] <i>carcer, in quo criminosi a lata via venientes incarcerationantur, ut latam coeli aulam ingredi mereantur</i> [...].
8	Brennofen, in dem die Gefäße des Ruhms im Feuer erprobt und diejenigen der Schande verworfen werden	[...] <i>caminus tentationis, in quo vasa gloriae probantur, vasa vero contumeliae reprobantur</i> [...].
9	Hölle, in der die Büßenden brennen und die Schlechten und Hartherzigen zur Strafe gekreuzigt werden	[...] <i>infernum, in quo poenitentes purgantur, malevoli et duricordes supplicii cruciantur</i> [...].
10	Paradies, in dem sich die Köstlichkeiten der Schriften und verschiedene Früchte geschmeckt und diverse Übungen der Gerechten getätigt werden	[...] <i>paradisus, in quo sunt deliciae Scripturarum, varia exercitia justorum, diversa ligna pomorum</i> [...].

Dieser Beitrag begibt sich hinein in die benediktinisch geprägten Klöster der cluniazensischen Reformgruppen und der Zisterzienser des 12. Jahrhunderts und in die institutionellen Arrangements ihrer symbolischen Ordnung. Dabei beleuchtet er zunächst die Empirie der monastischen Zeitstruktur und Nachahmungstechniken, um im Anschluss einerseits die Konzepte zu entschlüsseln, mit denen Klosterleute geradezu strategisch eine Entzeitlichung innerhalb der Zeit anstrebten, und andererseits um zu prüfen, inwieweit die Realisierung dieser Konzepte aus der Sicht der mittelalterlichen Akteure und aus der analytischen Perspektive der Beobachtungsebene tatsächlich erfolgreich waren. Hierzu konzentriert sich mein Beitrag auf paradigmatische Rituale, wie sie in den sog. *consuetudines*, den klösterlichen Gewohnheiten, präsentiert wurden. Da diese Quellengattung nur geradezu stereotype Beschreibungen von Ritualabläufen, aber keine Erklärungen bietet, wird dieses Textmaterial um monastische Traktate spiritueller Erbauung arrondiert.

1. Die Bewegung im Kreis: Die klösterliche Zeitstruktur

Monastisches Leben wurde bekanntermaßen zuallererst durch die täglichen Stundengebete und die entsprechende Liturgie strukturiert.

Tabelle 2. Die kanonischen Horen im Tagesablauf²

Tagesablauf	Sommer		Tagesablauf	Winter	
	Erste Hälfte	Zweite Hälfte		Erste Hälfte	Zweite Hälfte
Aufstehen	01:45	02:40		01:20	01:25
Vigilien	02:00 - 03:00	02:50 - 04:00	Vigilien	01:30 - 02:50	01:35 - 02:50
Laudes	03:10 - 03:45	04:10 - 04:50	Laudes	07:15	06:20
Prim	04:00	05:00	Prim	08:00	07:00
Arbeit	04:40 - 07:15	05:40 - 07:45			
Terz	07:45	08:15			
Messe	08:00 - 08:50	08:30	Messe	08:20 - 09:10	07:20 - 08:10
Lectio divina	08:50	09:50			
			Terz	09:20	08:20
			Kapitel	09:35	08:35
			Arbeit	09:55 - 11:10	08:55 - 11:10
Sext	10:40	10:50	Sext	11:20	11:22
			Arbeit	11:35 - 12:50	11:40 - 13:20
Mittagessen	10:50	11:00			
Mittagsschlaf	11:30 - 13:45	11:40 - 13:30			
Non	14:00	13:45	Non	13:20	14:00
			Mahlzeit	13:35 - 14:15	14:15 - 14:55
			Vesper	14:50 - 15:30	16:10 - 16:50
“Biberes”	14:15	14:00	“Biberes”	15:40	16:55
Arbeit	14:30 - 17:30	14:15 - 16:30			
Vesper	18:00	17:00			
Abendessen	18:45 - 19:15	17:45 - 18:15			
Kompletlesung	19:30	18:30	Kompletlesung	Noch bei Licht	Noch bei Licht
Komplet	19:50	18:50	Komplet	15:55	17:20
Nachtruhe	20:00	19:00	Nachtruhe	16:05	17:30

2. Bei den aufgeführten Uhrzeiten handelt es sich selbstredend um jeweils ungefähre Werte. Diese Tabelle folgt der Aufstellung in den *Ecclesiastica Officia*, 34–35.

Dies ist das Muster eines freilich idealisierten zisterziensischen Tagesablaufs aus dem 12. Jahrhundert, wie es die sog. *Ecclesiastica Officia* vorstellen. Die Vigilien in der Nacht traten unterdessen als achttes Stundengebet zu den sieben Horen des Tages hinzu. “Sieben Mal am Tag singe ich Dir Lob”, hieß es in Ps. 118, 164, und um diesen Grundsatz zeitlicher Strukturierung wurde vor allem im 12. Jahrhundert immer wieder in-

3. Idungus Pruvingensis, *Dialogus*, ii, 14–15, 127–128. Zur Siebenzahl, bezogen auf die Stundengebete, siehe u. a. Vogüé 1975, 1–5.

4. Vgl. Die Tabelle beinhaltet ein Extrakt aus Honorius Augustodunensis, *Gemma animae*, ii, 55–56, 633 D–634 A. Gleich im nächsten Kapitel präsentierte Honorius weitere Verweismodelle: In der Nacht habe Petrus seine Verleugnungen bereut, um dann bis zum Morgen fischen zu gehen, danach sei Christus bei ihm gewesen. Zur Prim habe Christus mit den Sieben gegessen und ihm, Petrus, seine Schafherde anvertraut. Zur Terz sei der Heilige Geist ausgeschüttet worden. Zur Sext habe sich Christus mit den elf Jüngern ausgeruht. Zur Non sei er in den Himmel aufgefahren. Zur Vesper hätte er ehemals das Abendmahl gefeiert und zur Komplet für seine Brüder zum Vater gebetet: ebd., ii, 57, 634 A–B. Auch Rupert von Deutz bot derartige Beschreibungsmodelle. Vgl. etwa *Rupertus Tuitiensis Liber de divinis officiis*, i, 2–8, 7–10.

tensiv gestritten. Man denke nur an den um 1153 verfassten Dialog des Idung von Prüfening, in dem von zisterziensischer Seite gegen die Cluniazenser argumentiert wurde, sie könnten gerade nicht mehr mit Ps. 118, 164 sagen: “Sieben Mal am Tag singe ich Dir Lob”. Im Winter nämlich sängen sie höchstens fünf, im Sommer sechs Mal. Auf die Entgegnung des Cluniazensers, sie verschliefen gar nicht das gesamte Jahr über die Prim, reagierte der eifrige Zisterzienser, das stimme, nur von Ostern bis Allerheiligen sei dies so, doch ansonsten schliefen sie während der zwölf Lektionen, die sie häufig zelebrierten. Im Winter feierten sie die Prim vor dem Tagesanbruch. Sie zähle deshalb nicht als Prim.³

Schon Cassiodor hatte unterdessen akzentuiert, dass die Siebenzahl die Mönche zum *aeternum tempus* hinführe, nutze man die Symbolik dieser Zahl doch immer dann, wenn von der Ewigkeit die Rede sei (*Cassiodor. Institutiones divinarum et saecularium litterarum, Praefatio*, 2, vol. 2, 290; vgl. auch Meyer und Suntrup 479–565). Auch deshalb blieb die im obigen Muster abgebildete, zu permanenter Wiederholung wohlgeeignete Struktur als zentrales Grundgerüst vergleichsweise übergreifend in Takt.

In unserer Hinsicht noch aussagekräftiger aber ist das Symbolisierungssystem dieses Grundgerüsts. Auch hierüber wurde vor allem seit dem 12. Jahrhundert verstärkt nachgedacht. Im letzten Viertel dieses Jahrhunderts ordnete etwa jener Honorius Augustodunensis, der Europa nicht nur mit der rationalen Methode des Anselm von Canterbury vertraut machte, sondern in wegweisenden Schriften über die Schöpfung und das Gefüge der Welt nachdachte, die kanonischen Horen in seiner *Gemma animae* den Stationen im Leben Jesu Christi, insbesondere der Passion, zu:

Tabelle 3. Passion Jesu und monastische Zeitstruktur. Die Tages- und Nachtstunden nach Honorius Augustodunensis⁴

	Zuordnung zu den Tageshoren	Zuordnung zu den Nachthoren
Nokturnen	Verhaftung Jesu (1)	Aufenthalt Jesu in der Unterwelt (9)
Matutin	Verspottung (2)	Auferstehung Jesu (10)
Prim	Auslieferung an das Volk (3)	Begegnung Jesu mit Maria Magdalena (11)
Terz	Folterung (4)	Verlassen des Grabes mit beiden Engeln (12)
Sext	Kreuzigung (5)	Begegnung Jesu mit Jacobus (13)
Non	Tod (6)	Begegnung Jesu mit Petrus (14)
Vesper	Abnahme vom Kreuz (7)	Begegnung Jesu mit den Emmausjüngern (15)
Komplet	Bestattung (8)	Mahl Jesu mit den Aposteln (16)

Jeden Tag begann man demnach auch den Leidensweg Jesu Christi erneut. Doch selbst dabei blieb es nicht, denn auf analytischer Ebene durchkreisten diese sieben Zeitzirkel einen weiteren – nämlich denjenigen der Woche. Auch hierfür legte die monastische Tradition des 12. Jahrhunderts das Fundament:

Tabelle 4. Passion Jesu und monastische Zeitstruktur. Die Woche nach Honorius Augustodunensis⁵

5. Diese Tabelle beinhaltet ein Extrakt aus Honorius Augustodunensis, *Gemma animae*, ii, 67–68, 640 B–642 C.

Sonntag	Empfängnis (<i>conceptio</i>)
Montag	Taufe (<i>baptismus</i>)
Dienstag	„Geburt“ als Sohn Gottes am Jordan (<i>nativitas</i>)
Mittwoch	Verrat des Judas (<i>traditio / proditus</i>)
Donnerstag	Letztes Abendmahl (<i>corporis eius comestio / novam legem</i>)
Freitag	Tod (<i>passio / crucifixus</i>)
Samstag	Begräbnis (<i>sepultura / jacuit sepultus</i>)
Sonntag	Auferstehung (<i>resurrexit / resurrectio</i>)

Diesmal wurden also jedem kompletten Tag jeweils ein wegweisendes Ereignis im Leben des Heilands zugewiesen. Weil am Herrentag Auferstehung und Empfängnis zusammenfielen, traten die Mönche nahtlos und wiederum erneut in diesen Weg Christi ein. Solche und ähnliche Zeitkreise finden sich nicht nur bei Honorius, sondern auch und gerade im zisterziensischen Milieu: Ein anonym gebliebener Zisterzienser des 12. Jahrhunderts beispielsweise schrieb in einer Meditationsanleitung seine eigene Person gleich selbst ganz konkret in die biblische Geschichte hinein: Eigenhändig nämlich bediente er etwa Maria, als sie Christus (am Dienstag) in der Krippe säugt; er begleite die heilige Familie (am Mittwoch) auf der Flucht nach Ägypten; er halte (am Donnerstag) die Kleider Christi zur Fußwaschung an den Jüngern; auch richte er (am Freitag) dem am Kreuz Hängenden die Beine und küsse er seine Wunden (vgl. Anonymus Cisterciensis 9–19). Derartige wöchentliche Zeitkreise setzten in aller Regel ganz konkret am Sonntag in ritualisierter Weise ein. So wurden in den meisten Klöstern etwa an Sonntagen sämtliche Räume mit Weihwasser besprengt. Auch der Wochendienst in der Küche setzte an einem Sonntag mit einer neuen Gruppe an Mönchen ein. Dies gilt beispielsweise auch für den Wochendienst in der Küche.⁶

Diese Tages- und Wochenkreise wiederum durchkreisten den Kreislauf des Jahres usw. Solche zirkulären und wiederum in sich zirkulär verdichteten Abläufe von Zeit symbolisierten – so sei bis hierher zusammengefasst – stets auf Neue Anfang und Ende, Alpha und Omega, zugleich. Sie implizierten Unendlichkeit⁷, verwiesen mithin auf die

6. Siehe beispielsweise die *Ecclesiastica Officia*, cxiii, 13, 440; ebd., cxvii, 23 458 und ebd., lv, 14, 212 und zum Küchendienst mit zahlreichen Nachweisen Sonntag, *Klosterleben*, 271–72.

7. Ich unterscheide im Folgenden zwischen Unendlichkeit und Ewigkeit im augustinischen Sinne: Gott selbst ist zeitlos und ewig. Die Engel hingegen sind nicht ewig, da sie einen Anfang haben. Sie sind unendlich, aber inspiriert von zeitloser Ewigkeit.

Unendlichkeit der Engel. Der Versuch systematisch anvisierter Unendlichkeit als Vorgeschmack der Ewigkeit aber war weitaus komplexer, denn die entlang der kanonischen Horen ausgerichteten zirkulären Tages-, Wochen- und Jahresabläufe der Zeit bildeten lediglich einen Aspekt einer allgegenwärtigen Imitation Christi. Konkrete Verkörperungsformen traten – nicht minder systematisch – hinzu.

2. Die Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen: Rituale und der Vorgeschmack der Ewigkeit

Mönche und Nonnen erlebten nicht nur in jeder täglichen Stunde die Passion Christi von Neuem. Vielmehr vermengten sich in den institutionell durchdeklinierten Ritualen zusätzlich zahlreiche weitere Rollenmodelle, und auf analytischer Ebene offenbart sich genau hier ein anderer, komplementärer, vielleicht sogar noch wirkmächtigerer Umgang mit Zeit.

Zwei rituelle Szenerien des Klosterlebens sollen dies beispielhaft veranschaulichen: die täglich präsente Fußwaschung und – noch alltäglicher – die gemeinsame Mahlzeit im Refektorium. Beide Situationen wurden in jenen Gebräuchebüchern des 11. und 12. Jahrhunderts, den *consuetudines*, detailliert beschrieben und während des gesamten Mittelalters in paränetischen Texten erläutert.

Die mönchische Fußwaschung folgte Joh. 12–13, Lk. 7 und Gen. 18, 1–5: Nach Joh. stand Jesus am Abend des Gründonnerstags vom letzten Abendmahl auf, wickelte sich ein Leinentuch um die Hüften und wusch allen seinen Jüngern die Füße. Er rechtfertigte diese Handlung mit dem Argument, dass die Jünger keinen Anteil an ihm, Christus, hätten, wenn er ihre Füße jetzt nicht wüsche. Da Christus seinen Jüngern befohlen hatte, sich gegenseitig die Füße zu waschen, erhielt das klösterliche Ritual den Namen *mandatum* (Auftrag). Nach dem Evangelium des Lukas benetzte eine sündige Frau die Füße Jesu mit ihren Tränen und wischte sie mit ihrem Haar ab. Daraufhin wurden ihr alle Sünden von Christus vergeben. Gemäß Joh. 12 wusch Maria von Bethanien die Füße Jesu, trocknete sie mit ihrem Haar, küsste sie und übergoss sie mit wertvoller Narde. Abraham gab den drei Engeln Brot und Wein und ließ ihnen die Füße waschen (Gen. 18).

Hochmittelalterliches Klosterleben kannte nun grundsätzlich zwei Typen von Fußwaschungszeremonien. Dies war zum einen die brüderliche Waschung am Samstagabend – in traditionell benediktinischen Kreisen im Kapitelsaal, bei den Zisterziensern zumeist im Kreuzgang. Zum anderen war dies die tägliche Waschung – an drei

Armen in den traditionellen Kreisen bzw. an allen Besuchern in den Zisterzienserklöstern. Diese Waschungen wiederum fanden allabendlich im Gästehaus des Klosters statt. Diese beiden Typen gipfelten in den großen Ritualen am Gründonnerstag, bei denen der Abt als Hauptakteur gegenüber den Mönchen, den Armen und den Gästen im Allgemeinen auftrat. Die folgenden beiden Tabellen enthalten eine Übersicht der basalen Handlungssequenzen, wie sie die *consuetudines* des 11., 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts ins Licht rücken.

Tabelle 5. Die brüderliche Fußwaschung am Gründonnerstag in Auswahl⁸

Cluny Bernhard spätes 11. Jh.	Lanfranc 11. Jh.	Bec 11. Jh.	Fruttuaria/ St. Blasien 12. Jh.	S. Bénigne in Dijon 13. Jh.	St. Emmeram/ 'Fulda' 10. und 11. Jh.	Zisterzienser 12. Jh.
<i>praelavatio</i>	<i>praelavatio</i>	<i>praelavatio</i> nach dem <i>prandium</i>	<i>praelavatio</i>	?	<i>praelavatio</i>	—
Waschung durch die Wochendiener	Waschung durch die für diesen Tag hierfür Erwählten	—	—	—	Waschung durch die Wochendiener	—
Fußwaschung durch den <u>Abt</u> und mindestens <u>drei weitere</u> <u>Brüder</u> , unterstützt von mindestens 12 Helfern	Fußwa-schung durch den <u>Abt</u> und den <u>Prior</u> mit gebeugten Knien – Abt auf der rechten, Prior auf der linken Seite	Fußwaschung durch <u>Abt</u> und <u>Prior</u> : jeder übernahm seine Reihe des Kapitels (Je 4 Konversen unterstützten sie.)	Fußwaschung (bis zu den Kindern) allein durch den <u>Abt</u> , auch an den Helfern	Fußwaschung durch den <u>Abt</u> am Prior und seiner Seite; der <u>Priester</u> im Wochendienst bediente die <i>juvenes</i> und die übrigen der anderen Seite	Fußwaschung (bis zu den Kindern) allein durch den <u>Abt</u>	Fußwaschung durch den <u>Abt</u> an 12 <u>Brüder</u> im Kreuzgang; Fußwaschung der übrigen durch <u>andere</u> <u>Brüder</u>
Abtrocknung	Abtrocknung?	Abtrocknung?	Abtrocknung?	Abtrocknung?	Abtrocknung	Abtrocknung
Fußkuss durch den Abt und seine drei Helfer.	Fußkuss durch den Abt und den Prior	Fußkuss durch Abt und Prior	Fußkuss durch den Abt	?	2 Fußküsse durch den Abt	Fußkuss durch den Abt und die anderen Wäscher
—	—	—	Haareinsatz	—	—	
Zwei Brüder wuschen dem Abt und allen Helfern außerhalb des Kapitels die Füße	Der Abt wusch, trocknete und küsste dem Prior und den anderen Helfern die Füße außerhalb des Kapitels, schließlich einer von diesen ihm	Der Abt wusch, unterstützt von 2 Konversen, dem Prior an seinem Platz die Füße, anschließend der Prior dem Abt an dessen Platz, wieder unterstützt durch die Konversen	Handwaschung aller durch den Abt	Der Abt wusch im Kapitel die Füße der Helfer. <i>Ad ultimum</i> wusch der Priester die Füße des Abts.	Die Brüder wuschen den Helfern die Füße, am Ende der Dekan dem Abt In 'Fulda' erst die Handwa- schung	
Handwaschung	Handwaschung aller durch den Abt	Handwaschung aller durch den Abt und den Prior	Fußwaschung, Trocknung, Kuss und Handwaschung am Abt durch den Prior im Kapitel	Die Helfer brachten allen Wasser zur Handwaschung	Abt wäscht allen die Hände; in 'Fulda' jetzt das <i>mandatum</i> am Abt	
<i>Ante et retro</i> durch Abt und Helfer	<i>Ante et retro</i> durch Abt und Helfer	<i>Ante et retro</i> aller Aktiven je nach ihrer Handwaschung	<i>Ante et retro</i> durch Abt und Helfer	<i>Ante et retro</i> durch Abt und Helfer		
Lesung von Joh. 13 f. im Kapitel	Lesung von Joh. 13 f. im Kapitel	Lesung von Joh. 13 f. im Kapitel	Lesung von Joh. 13 f. im Kapitel	Stehend vernommene Lesung von Joh. 13 f. im Kapitel	Lesung von Joh. 13 f. im Kapitel	
Der Abt und seine drei Helfer reichten Wein mit einem Handkuss	Der Abt reichte Wein mit einem Handkuss	Abt und Prior reichten Wein mit einem Handkuss, jeder seiner Seite	Abt reichte Wein mit einem Handkuss	Abt und Priester reichten Wein mit einem Handkuss (zuerst der Abt dem Prior)	Abt reichte Wein mit einem Handkuss	Kompletlesung

8. Diese Ergebnisse fußen auf folgenden

Quellen: *Consuetudines Udalrici*, i, 12,
Sp. 660 B–C; *Consuetudines Bernardi*, ii,
16, 313–15; *Decreta Lanfranci*, i, 35, 32;
Consuetudines Beccenses, vi, 87, 46–47;
Consuetudines Fructuarienses ii, iii, 165,
167–69; *Consuetudines Divionenses*, 65,
406–07; *Redactio s. Emmerammi*, xviii,

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54, 227–28; *Redactio Fuldensis-Trevi-*
rensis, viii, 44–45, 297–99 und
Ecclesiastica Officia, xxi, 28–47,
106–110. Siehe zusammenfassend die

Erhebungen und Übersichten in
Sonntag, Klosterleben, 352–69.

Tabelle 6. Die Armenfußwaschung am Gründonnerstag in Auswahl⁹

Cluny Bernhard Ulrich 11./12. Jh.	Lanfranc 11. Jh.	Bec 11./12. Jh.	‘Siegburg’ Anfang 12. Jh.	Fruttuaria / St. Blasien Anfang 12. u. Anfang 13. Jh.	S. Bénigne 13. Jh.	Zisterzienser 12. Jh.
Arme mindestens nach Anzahl der <i>fratres</i>	Arme nach Anzahl der <i>fratres</i>	Arme nach Anzahl der <i>fratres</i>	Arme nach Anzahl der <i>fratres</i>	Arme nach Anzahl der <i>fratres</i>	Arme nach Anzahl der <i>fratres</i>	Arme nach Anzahl der <i>monachi</i>
<i>Venia</i> (Ulrich) <i>Venia super genua</i> (Bernhard)	Genuflexion auf die Erde	Genuflexion	Genuflexion	Genuflexion	<i>Venia super genua</i>	ohne Angabe
Fußwaschung	Fußwaschung	Fußwaschung	Fußwaschung	Fußwaschung	Fußwaschung	Fußwaschung
Trocknung	Trocknung	Trocknung	Trocknung	Trocknung	Trocknung	Trocknung
—	Kuss	Kuss	—	Kuss	Kuss	Kuss
—	—	—	—	Haareinsatz	—	—
Handwaschung	—	Handwaschung	Handwaschung	Handwaschung	Handwaschung	—
Trocknung	—	Trocknung	Trocknung	Trocknung	Trocknung	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Gesegnetes Getränk und 2 Denare	Gesegnetes Getränk und 2 Denare	Gesegnetes Getränk und 3 Denare	Gesegnetes Getränk und Denare	Gesegnetes Getränk und Denare	Gesegnetes Getränk und 2 Denare	Knieende Reichung eines Geldstücks
—	2 Handküsse	2 Handküsse	—	—	—	Handkuss
<i>Inclinatio</i> (Ulrich), <i>Venia super genua</i> (Bernhard) und Gebete	Genuflexion auf die Erde und Gebete	Genuflexion und Gebete	keine Verbeu- gung genannt, Gebete	keine Verbeu- gung genannt, Gebete	<i>Venia super genua</i> und Gebete	
Ante et retro	Ante et retro	<i>Inclinatio</i>	?	?	<i>Ante et retro</i>	
Gebete in der Kirche	Gebete in der Kirche	Gebete in der Kirche	Gebete in der Kirche	Gebete in der Kirche	Gebete in der Kirche	
Prostration	ohne Angabe	ohne Angabe	ohne Angabe	<i>Venia</i> und <i>Ante et retro</i>	Verbeugung <i>super formam</i>	

9. Diese Ergebnisse fußen auf folgenden Quellen: *Consuetudines Udalrici*, i, 12, 658 C–660 A; *Consuetudines Bernardi*, ii, 15, 311–12; *Decreta Lanfranci*, i, 32, 30; *Consuetudines Beccenses*, vi, 84–85, 44–45; *Consuetudines Fructuarienses* ii, iii, 162–65, 161–67; *Consuetudines Divionenses*, 64, 406 und *Ecclesiastica Officia* xxi, 7–22, 104–06. Siehe zusammenfassend die Erhebungen und Übersichten in Sonntag, *Klosterleben*, 600–14.

Die Sequenzen waren also durchaus ähnlich. Diese Fußwaschungen boten nicht nur ‚eine‘ Gelegenheit, Gehorsam gegenüber Christus zu zeigen, der dieses Tun beauftragt hatte, sondern sie wurden als wertvolles Hilfsmittel zur Reinigung der mönchischen Seelen, insbesondere von den täglichen Affekten (*affectus*), begriffen. Synchron zu den ritualisierten Abfolgen vergewisserten zusätzlich Wechselgesänge, vor al-

lem aus Joh. 13–14, wie und warum man in welchem konkreten Moment was tat. Diese Handlungsanweisungen beförderten zugleich das Bewusstsein um die Notwendigkeit, die bausteinartig ausgewählten Handlungen der biblischen Vorbilder – Christus, die waschenden Frauen, Abraham – physisch korrekt nachzuahmen und zu verinnerlichen.

Ein besonders distinguierendes Element war in einigen Observanzen die Verwendung des mönchischen Haares zur Trocknung der Füße, etwa in den fruttuarischen Reformgruppen (und übrigens auch in den Reformkreisen Hirsaus).¹⁰ Dabei wurden die drei verschiedenen Frauen aus den biblischen Geschichten miteinander vermengt. Vor allem die Verschmelzung von Maria von Bethanien, der Schwester von Martha und Lazarus, und Maria Magdalena, der sündigen Frau, zu ‚einem‘ klösterlichen Rollenmodell avancierte zu einem immer stärker verfestigten und verbreiteten Motiv. Nicht wenige mittelalterliche Autoren, wie z. B. der Regularkanoniker Gerald von Salles (†1120), stehen symptomatisch für diese Entwicklung.¹¹ Zur Heiligung der Mönche¹² wurden in den Fußwaschungsritualen also verschiedene Rollenmodelle nicht nur clusterartig kombiniert und verkörpert, sondern auch immer wieder in Erinnerung gerufen und präsent gemacht.

Aus einem weit umfangreicheren Pool an Modellen schöpfte genau in dieser Hinsicht auch die klösterliche Mahlgemeinschaft: Die Tageszeit und die Stille am Tisch wurden (vor allem im Rahmen des Abendessens) als Imitationen der Eucharistie interpretiert; der Ort des Refektoriums adressierte das himmlische Gastmahl und das Paradies mit dem Abt als Personifikation Christi. Im Rahmen der obligatorischen Segnungen von Wein und Brot sprach man konkret die neutestamentlichen Geschichten von der Speisung der Menschenmassen durch Christus und dem Hochzeitsmahl zu Kana an. Die Speisen selbst erinnerten an Adam und Eva, die Kinder Israels im Feuerofen, Elias und – natürlich erneut – Christus. Als etwa bei den Zisterziensern die Brotkrumen vom Tisch gefegt und erneut verzehrt wurden, mochte man sich zusätzlich an das Gleichnis vom armen Lazarus erinnern. Verstärkt durch die Symbolik des Lichts, sowohl durch die Kerzen als auch durch die häufige Ausrichtung des Refektoriums nach Osten, schufen die Religiösen eine tatsächlich heilige Situation, in der unter den Augen Gottes, Christi und der Engel eine echte Einheit zwischen dem irdischen und den himmlischen Konvent generiert und perpetuiert wurde (vgl. Sonntag, „Speisen“ 259–76). Da jeder um die Heiligkeit dieser Situation und die allgegenwärtige Gefahr für den Nachahmungserfolg wusste, war es unerlässlich, dass die Teilnehmer jeden noch so kleinen Fehler sofort wieder gutmachten.¹³

10. Vgl. Sonntag, *Klosterleben* 357–58, 365–66, 588, 593. Zu Hirsau siehe die *Consuetudines Hirsaugienses*, i, 64, vol. 1, 504

11. Vgl. Dubois, „Comment les moines“ 267 (hier im Kontext der sechs Marien in den *joca monachorum*) und Constable, *Three Studies* 74.

12. Tatsächlich ging es bei der brüderlichen Fußwaschung um die spirituelle Reinigung vor allem der Gewaschenen, bei der Armen- bzw. Gastfußwaschung hingegen um diejenige der Waschenden.

13. Mit zahlreichen Nachweisen dazu siehe Sonntag, *Klosterleben* 322. Erinnert sei an die Regelung in Hirsau, nach der als Christus agierende Abt sich nicht zu Boden werfe, sondern stattdessen ein den Abt bedienender Bruder eine s vollzöge. Siehe die *Consuetudines Hirsaugienses*, ii, 7, vol. 2, 44. Vgl. dazu auch die *Consuetudines Rodenses*, xlvi, 309, 516.

Diese Rollenmodelle wurden im täglichen Leben um weitere ergänzt: Mönche taten Buße wie und als Kain und Iob; wie und als Abraham und Christus empfingen sie in den Gästen den damals einkehrenden und zukünftig wiederkehrenden Christus; wie und als Jesus, der arme Lazarus, Lazarus von Bethanien oder Martin von Tours starben sie. In der Tat fanden unzählige Handlungen aus dem biblischen Drehbuch zwar partiell, aber doch konsequent ‚Realisierung‘. Wie schon angedeutet, extrahierten die Religiösen dabei also Module ausgewählter Vorbilder und kombinierten sie zu neuen, hybriden Imitationsclustern, um sowohl sich selbst mit der Aura dieser Heiligen auf dem Weg zur Vollkommenheit innerlich zu durchtränken als auch die Gesamtsituation mit eben dieser Aura zu fluten. Mithilfe dieser Technik wurden darüber hinaus nicht nur jene heiligen Auren der imitierten Figuren (Christus, Lazarus, Maria von Bethanien, Adam und Eva, Martin, die Engel) präsent, sondern in den imitierenden Personen diese Figuren selbst, und dies – und das ist entscheidend – gleichzeitig.

Die monastische Ritualwelt erzeugte demnach nichts Geringeres als einen Zustand der gleichzeitigen Existenz verschiedener Personen und Zeiten und überwand auf diese Weise – im rituellen Moment – das Vergehen und den Wandel der Zeit in der Gegenwart. Diese These stützt sich auf das im Mittelalter weithin rezipierte Zeitverständnis des Augustinus, der in seinen *Confessiones* über die unveränderliche Ewigkeit und den metaphysisch entgegengesetzten Lauf der Zeit geschrieben hatte. Während die Zeitlichkeit, die Entfaltung der Zeit (*distentio*), die *conditio humana* bestimme, stehe die Ewigkeit allumfassend ohne jede zeitliche Abfolge als Gleichzeitigkeit. Das ewige Wort Gottes, das *principium*, drücke sich, so Augustinus, in der Bibel auf zeitliche Weise aus.¹⁴ Indem die Mönche, wie oben dargestellt, verschiedene biblische Vorbilder und deren Handlungen aus Vergangenheit und Zukunft kongruent nachahmten und die damit konnotierten heiligen Auren zeitgleich vergegenwärtigten, drückten sie dieses biblische Wort – verkörpernd – aus und verliehen ihm, und damit dem Ritualsystem samt seiner Bausteine, jene in der Wahrheit beständig ruhende Zeitlosigkeit, mithin Ewigkeit.

Was hier selbstredend griff, waren lang ausgereifte Repräsentationstechniken, denn die gleichzeitige Übernahme verschiedener biblischer Vorbilder (Maria, Martin, Christus, Lazarus) aus Vergangenheit und Zukunft ermöglichte es den Mönchen natürlich nicht, wie Gott alles zugleich zu erleben. Stattdessen aber erfuhren sie eine ‚mehrfache Gleichzeitigkeit‘, die wiederum auf das ‚Alles zugleich‘, d. h. die zeitlose Ewigkeit, verwies, ja diese erahnen und vorkosten ließ. Dabei wur-

14. Vgl. Augustinus vi, 8; viii, 10 u. xiii, 15-16, 198, 199 u. 202 und die Diskussion bei Brachtendorf 238–41 und 249–51

den die nachgeahmten rituellen Handlungen nicht nur von ‘realen’ Heiligen aufgegriffen, sondern (etwa im Falle der ‘einen’ Maria und des ‘einen’ Lazarus) zusätzlich von jenen Kunstfiguren, quasi institutionellen Phantomen. Auf analytischer Ebene besaßen diese nunmehr nicht minder heiligen Phantome mindestens die gleiche Geltung.

In Abgrenzung zur *gesticulatio*, der wilden Herumfuchtelei, hatten solche guten Gesten des Rituals (*gestus*) stets perfekt und authentisch sein, wie Jean-Claude Schmitt eindrücklich gezeigt hat.¹⁵ Aus diesem Grund standen die Geste und ihre Echtheit immer und immer wieder im Zentrum des monastischen Diskurses, gerade im 11. und 12. Jahrhundert. Wer sich über die äußere Imitation Christi und anderer Heiliger innerlich weiterentwickelte und so an seiner Seele arbeitete, gewann durch das Training im Ritual und die Leib-Seele-Relation die im Paradies verlorene, aber im monastischen Leben angestrebte Gottähnlichkeit zurück. Deshalb war das rituell zumeist gleichzeitige Leben jener von zeitloser Ewigkeit inspirierten heiligen Figuren und Phantome aus analytischer Sicht ein fest institutionalisierter und notwendiger Bestandteil der symbolischen Ordnung eines jeden Klosters. All diese Figuren und Phantome gingen theologisch auf Christus selbst zurück, da ihr tugendhaftes Handeln als in die allumfassende Natur Christi integriert und von ihr abgeleitet angesehen wurde. Mönche und Nonnen sollten von diesen Tugenden durchdrungen werden und so die Ewigkeit schmecken. Eine derart hohe Qualität und Dichte einer in konkretem Tun angezeigten und zugleich verwirklichten Entzeitlichung, aus der sich durchaus unterschiedliche Identitäten der Reformkreise entwickelten, war im Vergleich zu anderen Bereichen des mittelalterlichen Lebens einzigartig.

Allein, ein weiteres, nicht minder wesentliches Element für diesen Prozess der Generierung von Zeitlosigkeit innerhalb der Zeit lag im Ritual selbst: Es ist die ihm innewohnende Kraft der Wiederholung und der Wiedererkennung, die bereits im Rahmen der Stundengebete andiskutiert wurde.

15. Vgl. Schmitt, “Gestus” 377–90 und Schmitt, *Logik* bes. 118 u. 128 sowie darauf aufbauend für das monastische Leben Sonntag, *Klosterleben* 207–25.

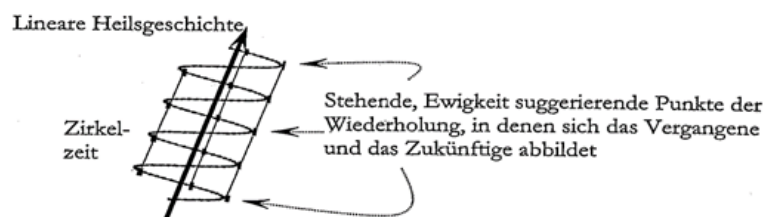


Figure 1.

16. Vgl. zu diesem Schema Sonntag, *Klosterleben* 652 und Sonntag, "Tempus" 242.

Wie eine Spirale bewegte sich die Linie der Wiederholung,¹⁶ die, wie oben ausgeführt, wiederum in sich selbst von dutzenden, wenn nicht hunderten Zeitzirkeln durchzogen war, um den linearen Zeitstrahl der mittelalterlichen Heilsgeschichte. Dabei bestanden besondere Punkte der Erinnerung an die Vergangenheit, des Erlebens der Gegenwart und der Antizipation der Zukunft als (natürlich nur theoretisch) identische Ereignisse: An einem bestimmten Tag, während eines bestimmten Rituals – etwa jener allabendlichen Fußwaschung – wusste man, was gestern, vorgestern, weitere Tage und Jahre zuvor in genau diesem Moment getan worden war und was morgen, übermorgen, weitere Tage und Jahre später getan werden würde. So suggerierte es zumindest die monastische Tradition, in der Veränderung stets problematisch war.

Auch für die Mönche, und dies sei nochmals betont, blieb diese rituelle Nachahmung mehr als nur symbolisch, denn das Nachgeahmte wurde stets wiedererkennbar real. In der Imitation wurde also paradoxerweise das jeder Imitation wesentlich innewohnende Moment des ‚als-ob‘ und damit wiederum die Imitation selbst aufgehoben. In den Augen der Nachahmer gewann eine solche Nachahmung selbst einen heiligen Charakter. Ein weiteres, durchaus komplementäres Paradox bestand indes darin, Vollkommenheit in der Zukunft zu erlangen, indem man in der Gegenwart ostentativ perfekt war. Im klösterlichen Leben, das immer wieder als *vita perfectionis* verstanden und präsentiert wurde, wirkte diese Art von makroritueller Symbolik (symbolisieren, aber zugleich sein) in exponierter Weise. Der Horror der Perfektion, so möchte man meinen, war allgegenwärtig.

3. Zweidimensionale Zeitverschränkungen: Das Beispiel des Regelkommentars von Pontigny

Interessanterweise existieren für das Mittelalter keine theoretischen Abhandlungen über konkrete Zeitverschränkungen und Ewigkeitskonzeptionen in Bezug auf monastische Rituale oder auch nur monastisches Leben. Allein, verstreute Splitter solchen Gedankenguts tauchen im monastischen Schriftgut überall auf. Ein recht eindrückliches Beispiel bietet der einzige zisterziensische Kommentar des Mittelalters zur Benediktsregel. Es handelt sich um den Kommentar aus Pontigny, einem der vier Hauptklöster des Ordens.

Dieser Kommentar ist ebenso umfangreich wie umfassend; er bildet ein vollständiges Corpus von 93 Predigten, das um 1210 von

einem unbekanntem Autor verfasst wurde. Jedem der 73 Kapitel der Regel ist mindestens eine Predigt gewidmet. Man kann diesen Kommentar von Pontigny zudem als eine Art klösterliche Enzyklopädie bezeichnen, denn er bietet einen unverwechselbaren Überblick über Himmel und Erde und eine faszinierende Momentaufnahme der klösterlichen Theologie und der mittelalterlichen Gesellschaft um 1200. Die Predigten von Pontigny atmen merklich den ‘Geist’ der typisch zisterziensischen Spiritualität aus der zweiten Hälfte des 12. Jahrhunderts und entwickeln eine nahezu vollständige, einzigartige Zusammenschau des zeitunterworfenen, klösterlichen Alltagslebens und des unendlichen Konvents der Himmelsbewohner. Deshalb laden sie ihren Leser geradezu natürlich zu einer Diskussion ihres möglicherweise konzeptionellen Umgangs mit Zeit ein.

Für den Autor jedenfalls standen ‚Zeitpunkte‘ und Handlungen im Himmel nicht nur parallel zur Zeitstruktur und zu Ritualen des irdischen Klosters, seien es etwa die Mahlzeiten, die Wahlen der Leiter, die Bestrafungen oder schlicht sämtliche die Zeit strukturierenden Signale. Was hier entstand, war ein gemeinsamer Mischkonvent aus irdischen und himmlischen Bewohnern, in dem Gottvater als Abt fungierte, während die Mönche selbst den zehnten Kreis der Engel bildeten. Der ewige Gott throne in der Mitte des höchsten Tempels, des Tabernakels, des Palastes, des Klosters, während Engel und Mönche ihm unaufhörlich Lob sängen.¹⁷

Im Kapitel über den Rat der Mönche liest man, wie die Engel von Gott, dem Abt, zur Beratung über den Zweck der Menschwerdung Christi gerufen würden. Die Brüder erfuhren hier auch, warum der Mensch existiere. Er täte es, weil er jetzt und nach seinem Tod Gott nicht nur wie die Engel im Geist ehren, sondern auch in seinem eigenen Fleisch loben könne, da sein Körper beim Jüngsten Gericht auferstehe – ein Argument, das bereits Bernhard von Clairvaux und andere prononcierten. Überhaupt sei es im himmlisch-irdischen Mischkonvent wichtig, dass alle wie dereinst zum Jüngsten Gericht zur Beratung zusammenkämen. Jetzt wie dann nämlich berate Gott mit den Engeln, den Heiligen und den Gerechten. Zu diesem Kreis gehörten auch die Älteren des himmlischen Klosters (*seniores*), mithin die Propheten, die Apostel und die Leiter der irdischen Klöster (*nostrorum prelatorum*).¹⁸

Selbst die Benediktsregel wurde in diese himmlische Perspektive gesetzt: Der Autor verschaffte dieser ‘heiligen Regel’ ein Alter, das sogar die Evangelien in den Schatten stellte. So erklärte er, dass die himmlische Kleidung niemals altere und für immer in ihrem ur-

17. *Sermones in Regulam* xxi und lxv, 316 und 689. Zur Bezeichnung des göttlichen Palastes siehe nochmals die *Sermones in Regulam* xxiv, xxix, xlv, lxix, 339, 374, 498, 717.

18. Vgl. die *Sermones in Regulam* iii, 99. Dazu und zu Bernhard vgl. Sonntag, “Striving” 114.

19. *Sermones in Regulam* xxiii, 332. Vgl. dazu Sonntag, "Striving" 114-115.

sprünglichen Zustand bleibe, weil die ersten Mönche selbst – die Engel – solche Kleider trügen und sie den Anforderungen der Regel entsprächen (*Sermones in Regulam* lv, 589 und Sonntag, "Striving" 114). Wenn die Engel aber zusammen mit dem Licht von Gott geschaffen wurden, wie man im Mittelalter glaubte, dann muss die Regel bis zur Erschaffung der Erde und der Engel zurückreichen. An anderer Stelle erfährt man, dass Luzifer der erste *gyrovagus* gewesen wäre, der aus dem Kloster geflohen sei, was ihn zum ältesten Gegner der Regel (*contrarius regule*) mache.¹⁹ Diese Beobachtung ist nicht weniger bemerkenswert, da auch sie die Abfassung der Benediktsregel wieder auf die Erschaffung der Welt und den Engelssturz zurückdatierte. Der Text suggerierte damit, dass Benedikt – ein zweiter und ehrenwerterer Moses – diese Regel "allenfalls" zu seinem Volk gebracht habe und der eigentliche Autor lange vorher Gott selbst gewesen sei.

Der Verfasser des Kommentars von Pontigny hob sich damit tatsächlich von allen anderen Regelinterpreten des Mittelalters ab – und dies nicht nur, weil er indirekt behauptete, die Regel sei so alt wie die Welt selbst, sondern zusätzlich, weil er ihre Wirksamkeit bis in den Himmel ausdehnte. Auch das nämlich war völlig neu.

Indes, trotz aller Vermengung irdischer und himmlischer Bewohner in einem einzigen Konvent waren sie und ihre Strukturen in Raum und Zeit eben doch nicht gleich: Im Gegensatz zu einem irdischen Tempel brauche man für den Bau des himmlischen Palastes beispielsweise weder Hammer noch Axt, sondern es würden kostbare Steine – Sardonyx, Topas, Türkis und Smaragd (Hes. 28,13) sowie andere Steine aus Feuer – kunstvoll glasiert und verlegt. Diese lebendigen Feuersteine des himmlischen Klosters seien die Engel. Ihnen blieben die Menschen unähnlich, da sie im irdischen Kloster noch geschliffen, geformt und poliert werden müssten. Wie die Bauern entwurzelten und entfernten die Mönche Unkraut und Dornen, nicht aber von den Äckern, sondern von den eigenen Seelen. Dies unterscheidet diejenigen, die in der *regio dissimilitudinis* lebten, von den geistigen Wesen, den Engeln, die in der *regio similitudinis* wohnten. Obwohl jene irdische Sphäre der Unähnlichkeit ein furchtbarer Ort der Kälte wäre, könne er für diejenigen, die gesegnet seien (die Mönche), eine warme Region mit einer angenehmen Temperatur sein. Schließlich würde von ihren Leibern ein Licht ausgehen, das die Mönche wärme (*Sermones in Regulam* xxxii und lv, 399 und 585–86).

Zugleich aber vermengte der Autor irdische Vergangenheits- und Zukunftsszenarien mit der eigenen Gegenwart. Er adressierte damit den gleichen Symbolisierungshorizont, der schon im Falle der

oben genannten Rituale zu Tage trat. Der Regelkommentar von Pontigny aber nutzte nicht nur sämtliche bereits aufgeführten Modellfiguren, sondern ließ zahlreiche Geschichten, namentlich des Alten Testaments und der Apokalypse, in seinem Kloster farbenprächtig ablaufen und präsent werden. Der Tanz um das Goldene Kalb, die im Roten Meer versinkenden Streitwagen des Pharaos, der Untergang Sodoms oder das Jüngste Gericht: all dies erwachte über Metaphorik und konkrete Symbolisationen zu neuem Leben – einmal mehr zeitgleich (Vgl. Sonntag, „Autorität“ 87–88).

Analytisch betrachtet, so lässt sich bis hierher festhalten, nutzte der Regelkommentar von Pontigny verheiligende Zeitverschränkungen, ja integrative Zusammenschauen also in zweidimensionaler Weise.

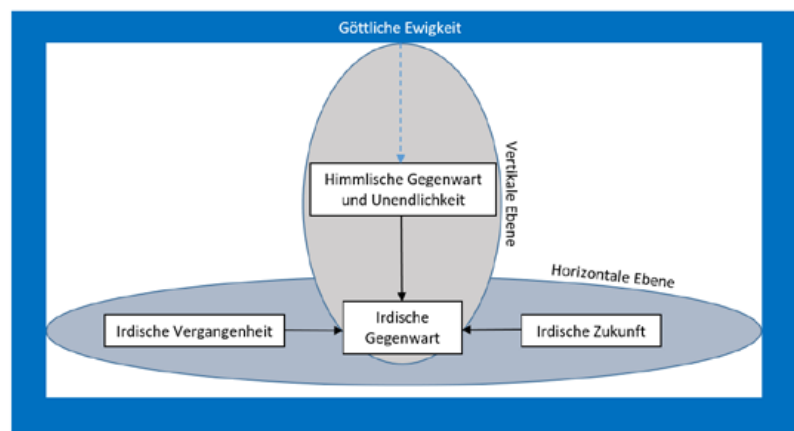


Figure 2.

Die Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen gelang wie im Falle der oben diskutierten Rituale – auf horizontaler Ebene – durch eben diese Vermengung aus Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft, die den Fluss der Zeit ausblendete. Die Gleichzeitigkeit des (postulierten) Gleichzeitigen (im Himmel) jedoch blieb – auf vertikaler Ebene – angestrebt, ließ sich aber nicht vollständig durchhalten. Hier lavierte der Text in kaum auflösbarer Spannung zwischen ‘verschränkt, und doch nicht verschränkt’, zwischen ‘gleich, und doch nicht gleich’. Der Anspruch aber, dass nämlich Himmel und Erde, und damit ihre Zeitstrukturen, eine Einheit bildeten, wurde dennoch aufrechterhalten. Weil damit allerdings Unendlichkeit und sogar Ewiges in die Zeit geholt und zugleich Ewiges mit Zeitlichkeit belegt werden musste, entstand jenes weitere Paradox, das sich – nur allzu verständlich – nicht auflösen ließ.

Der Regelkommentar aus Pontigny ist – soweit ich sehe – nie wieder aufgegriffen worden. Die Gründe hierfür scheinen vielgestaltig. Erwägen könnte man z. B. die Konkurrenz zwischen Pontigny und Clairvaux, das Fehlen eines etablierten Autors für diesen Text oder einfach

die immense Länge des Kommentars, die ihn schwer fassbar macht. Vielleicht war diese kommentierende Predigtsammlung auch schlicht zu einfallsreich und unerhört, um eine weite Rezeption zu erfahren.

4. Zeitlosigkeit in der Zeit? Ein Fazit

Die menschliche und damit auch die klösterliche Existenz waren der Heilsgeschichte unterworfen, also der Zeit, die Gott einst mit der Erschaffung der Welt zur Entfaltung auf der Erde festgelegt hatte. Die Religiösen des 12. Jahrhunderts wussten dahingehend genau, wo sie standen, nämlich im letzten Weltzeitalter und kurz vor dem Jüngsten Gericht. Dem linearen Zeitstrahl hin zu diesem Jüngsten Gericht folgend, bedienten sich Mönche verschiedener Techniken, um eine (zunächst) mindestens symbolische Entzeitlichung zu generieren.

Zum ersten schufen und realisierten sie eine durchkomponierte, komplexe Zirkelzeit mit vielfach verdichtenden Kreisen in den Kreisen, die Endlosigkeit als Vorgeschmack von Heiligkeit vermittelten.²⁰ Das heißt, Zeitlosigkeit konnte – in durchaus hohem Maße – durch die Strukturierung und Instrumentalisierung gerade der Zeit erreicht werden.

Zum zweiten imitierten Mönche in präsenzsymbolischer Weise heilige Rollenmodelle aus Vergangenheit und Zukunft. Das heißt in Konsequenz, der fußwaschende Mönch ahmte nicht nur nach, sondern ‘war’ etwa im Moment des Fußwaschungsrituals Christus, Abraham und jene ‘eine’ Maria.²¹ Über Repräsentationsmechanismen erlaubte die clusterartige Kombination verschiedener Bausteine das Empfinden eines ‘Alles zugleich’ und damit nicht nur von nach wie vor im Fluss befindlicher Endlosigkeit, sondern tatsächlich von stehender Ewigkeit, die keinen Anfang und kein Ende besaß. Der Fluss der Zeit war damit punktuell zur Gänze aufgehoben. Im Idealfall beeinflusste äußerliches Nachtun zugleich die Innerlichkeit nachhaltig. Auf diese Weise Selbsteiligung erfahrende Mönche starben zwar den irdischen Tod, lebten danach aber – so der monastische Perfektionsanspruch – in himmlischen Gefilden wie die nachgehamten Heiligen bis in alle Ewigkeit weiter. Was hier wiederum hinzutrat, war von der Ewigkeit inspirierte Unendlichkeit. Dies erlaubte es, sie schon jetzt in einem gemeinsamen, unendlichen himmlisch-irdischen Konvent zu verorten, wie es der Regelkommentar aus Pontigny und viele anderen Schriften der Zeit unternahmen. Erinnerung sei etwa an Bernhard von Clairvaux, der wie selbstverständlich daran erinnerte, dass wäh-

20. Man denke, parallel dazu, etwa an die Theologie des Kreuzgangs, auch als Ewigkeit suggerierender Wandelgang. Siehe dazu etwa Kehnel and Mencej 67–98.

21. Monastische Autoren betonten mehr oder weniger deutlich, aber immer wieder, dass diese heiligen Gestalten in den rituell handelnden Mönchen real gegenwärtig wären. Wenn Bernhard von Clairvaux etwa an einer Stelle erklärte, dass die brüderliche Fußwaschung (als eines der drei *sacramenta, sacra signa* oder auch *sacra secreta* des Gründonnerstags) die Neigungen der Seele reinwasche, und wenig später pointierte, dass nur Christus derart reinwaschen könne, impliziert dies genau die Präsenz Christi in den waschenden Mönchen. Vgl. Bernardus Claraevallensis, *In Cena Domini*, 4–5, 212 und 214.

22. Vgl. den Bericht in *Exordium Magnum Cisterciense*, ii, 3, 148–50.

rend der Nokturnen neben jedem Mönch ein Engel stünde. Diese Engel freilich schrieben je nach Eifer des Mönchs das Gesungene mit Gold, Silber, Tinte oder mit Wasser nieder.²²

Zum dritten griff die Technik des Wiederholens, hier nicht im Sinne von Kreisbewegungen, sondern im Sinne von diese Kreisbewegungen verbindenden Ketten wiedererkennbarer Ritualbausteine, wie es das vorletzte Schema aufzuzeigen versuchte. Auch hier wurden an spezifischen Punkten Vergangenheit und Zukunft zugleich erfahrbar, wurde mithin Ewigkeit suggeriert.

In der Tat gehören diese drei Strategien zu den Grundlagen der im Hochmittelalter mehr und mehr etablierten monastischen Theologie. Theoretisch perfektioniert wurden sie u. a. im Regelkommentar von Pontigny, der auf eine Verschränkung der linearen Heilsgeschichte, der Unendlichkeit des himmlischen Zustands und einer auf Ewigkeit verweisenden Gleichzeitigkeit des eigentlich Ungleichzeitigen abzielte. Dazu gehörte auch eine uralte und unendliche Benediktsregel, die in einem transzendenten Konvent von Himmel und Erde gelte und von Engeln, Propheten und Mönchen gleichermaßen befolgt würde. Das Endliche auf der einen Seite und das von der Ewigkeit abgeleitete Unendliche auf der anderen Seite standen in ständigem Austausch.

Da Heiligkeit aus der Ewigkeit erwuchs und Klosterleute genau diese Heiligkeit, mithin die Verähnlichung mit Gott, neu anstreben, waren sie geradezu gezwungen, über die Phänomene von Zeit und Ewigkeit nachdenken.²³ Wer als guter Imitator zu Gott kommen wollte, hatte demnach keine andere Wahl, als Techniken der Entzeitlichung zu testen und in die symbolische Ordnung des Klosters einzubetten.

Ein erster entscheidender Schlüssel zu einem bestmöglichen Erfolg lag in der Kombination der genannten drei Strategien. Was daraus nämlich entstand, waren jene vertikalen und horizontalen Zeitverschränkungen, die Unendlichkeit und Ewigkeit in die irdische Zeit hineinbrachten, ja letztere teilweise aufhoben. Ein zweiter entscheidender Schlüssel lag in der Wirkmacht klösterlicher Präsenzsymbolik, mittels derer gerade nicht nur auf etwas 'verwiesen' werden, sondern der, die oder das Verweisende dieses Verweisziel zugleich 'sein' konnte. Die aufgezeigten Paradoxien, die sich hieraus ergaben, konnte wohl allenfalls der Glaube auflösen, zumindest musste er sie ignorieren helfen.

Fest steht, die hier in den Fokus gestellten drei Strategien – und möglicherweise gibt es noch weitere – waren nur einzelne, wenn auch

23. In diesen Kontext gehören sicher auch die vielen Versuche, Zeit exakt zu bestimmen. Man denke an Abbo von Fleury und seinen immerwährenden Kalender oder an Wilhelm von Hirsau, der ein Astrolab und ein *naturale horologium* konstruiert und verschiedene Probleme des *computus* gelöst haben soll. Vgl. u. a. Borst 28; Verbist 63–80 sowie Bernoldus Sanblasiensis, *Chronicon*, a. 1091, 485–86 und Weissenbach 109–56. Allgemein zu solchen Leistungen des Mönchtums siehe McCarthy 31–53.

fundamentale Aspekte eines integrativen monastischen Raum- und Heilskonzepts, in dessen symbolischer Ordnung die Verweismomente von zeitlicher Strukturierung, Landschaftseinbettung, physischem Handeln, Architektur oder schlicht, von Gegenständen aller Art gebündelt wurden und Heiligkeit mehrfach und zugleich gesehen, gehört, geschmeckt oder gerochen werden konnte. Ziel war die Kreierung eines von heiligen Auren durchströmten *locus sanctus* als Präfiguration jener von Honorius am Beginn meiner Studie genannten Bilder, vor allem freilich des Paradieses.

Natürlich gab es eine Zeit, und die Zeit war nirgends so perfekt strukturiert wie in den mittelalterlichen Klöstern, wo selbst Glocken und hölzerne Schlagbretter als Posaunen der Engel interpretiert werden konnten. Doch auf dem Weg der Heilsgeschichte überlagerte die Suche nach der Ewigkeit, die symbolische Präfiguration des ewig Vollkommenen, diese zeitliche Struktur. Die Religiösen des 12. Jahrhunderts lebten zwischen den Welten²⁴ und nutzten sowohl die Zeit als auch Symbolisationen der Zeitlosigkeit und Unendlichkeit professionell und zielorientiert. Es scheint paradox, doch in zeitlich begrenzten Momenten (etwa in der Verkörperung Christi) wurden die Religiösen selbst heilig, endlos und sogar ewig. Fragt man also wie meine kleine Studie danach, ob Mönche jenseits der Zeit lebten, kann es nur eine, aber bestimmte Antwort geben: 'Jein'.

24. Überhaupt war monastisches Leben wie kaum ein anderes Dasein von Liminalität geprägt – Liminalität zwischen Transzendenz und Immanenz, Innen und Außen, Leben und Tod, Armut und Reichtum etc.

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Time and Textuality in Visionary Writing: Narrating the Afterlife in Alber's *Tnugdalus*

Abstract

This essay explores the temporal complexity of medieval visionary narrative through the example of Alber's *Tnugdalus*, a twelfth-century German-language retelling of the *Visio Tnugdali*. It considers first eschatological time – that is, the temporal status of the afterlife depicted – , before turning to the narratological construction of time to show how pasts, presents and futures are collapsed in visionary narrative. Finally, it turns to the temporality of the text itself. The composition of the text is presented as part of a chain of telling and mediated retelling, and narrates a journey to the afterlife that transforms the life of the traveller (Tnugdalus) as well as the lives of those who hear it in the moment of retelling, a moment that is potentially infinitely repeatable.

Introduction

Medieval visions of the afterlife take a variety of forms, but tend to conform to the basic model of a temporary out-of-body experience undergone by a living human in which he or she visits the afterlife (which may or may not be clearly spatially located), often with a companion or guide, before returning to this-worldly existence.¹ As such, they are temporally complex: visions combine a moment of temporal suspension (the suspension of the worldly time of the protagonist) with a glimpse of eternity – or at least a state beyond worldly temporality. They are also often grounded in a specific moment of historical time that provides the vision with a stamp of authenticity and a sense of fixed, testable historicity.

The combination of temporal states and perspectives that make up such visions render them a rich and curiously untapped resource for an exploration of medieval conceptualizations of time and temporality. Visionary writing commonly employs a depiction of the af-

1. On the history and development of visionary literature see in particular the studies by Dinzelbacher, Morgan, Benz, and Pollard.

terlife that functions on both a literal and a symbolic level in order to reflect on the present time, typically to address the nullity of human existence and, correspondingly, the inadequacy or incompleteness of worldly temporality in the face of divine eternity. Bede makes this explicit in the introduction to his account of the vision of Drythelm when he describes the overarching purpose of what happens: “namque ad excitationem viventium de morte animae quidam aliquandiu mortuus ad vitam resurrexit corporis” (“[f]or to stir up living men from the death of the soul, a certain man, stark dead for a time, rose again to bodily life”, Bede V.12). Here, Drythelm’s death-like state during his vision of heaven and hell and his subsequent spiritual conversion become a metaphor for the spiritual ‘death’ of Bede’s audience, who should too be transformed ‘to life’ through the narrative. Others, such as the late ninth-century *Vision of Charles the Fat*, encourage reflection on the present time for a more specific, politically inflected purpose (Dutton 225–51). And visions also offer insight into the contemporary understanding of the afterlife and the extent to which it is conceived of in temporal terms. In the context of the twelfth century particular importance is conventionally placed on the discourse of the emergence of the doctrine of purgatory, which leads to the question of what we might like to term ‘eschatological time’ (Gragnotati 89–137): the extent, that is, to which the afterlife encountered is a time-bound, temporary experience through which souls might progress and be purged.

Visionary writing is not only temporally complex on the level of the subject matter, however, but also on the level of the narrative itself. The combination of the otherworldly experience with a this-worldly frame narrative (that establishes when, where and to whom the vision occurs) poses a particular narratological challenge that can result in embedded narratives, in non-chronological narration or in discrepancies between discourse time and story time, all of which have the potential to result in productive analysis. And, as Paul Ricoeur has shown, it is neither straightforward nor desirable to distinguish between this narratological level and the conceptual one set out above. In his *Time and Narrative*, Ricoeur argues that narrativity and temporality exist in a mutually reinforcing ‘healthy’ circle: “time becomes human time to the extent that it is organized after the manner of a narrative: narrative, in turn, is meaningful to the extent that it portrays the features of temporal existence” (Ricoeur 3). Ricoeur is particularly useful for a discussion of visionary writing due to his reading of Augustine’s *Confessions*; here, he shows how eternity can

only be grasped through a comparison with (human) time (which it paradoxically resembles) made by the intelligence: time has a capacity to approximate eternity (Augustine, *Confessions* XI.vi:8). Attempts to approach eternity therefore result in some kind of narrativizing activity. In the case of the *Confessions*, Ricoeur argues, the soul's striving for eternity results in a kind of peregrination and narration discernible in the form of the text itself. The narration of the first nine books of the text consists in a movement in the direction of eternity, but even after this more obviously chronological, time-bound section comes to an end, the text remains grounded in time – and this characteristic of being time-bound both enables an approximation of eternity but also cannot help but highlight its own difference to it. Eternity is fundamentally timeless – as Augustine tells us (Augustine, *Confessions* XI, xii:16–xiv:17) – yet can only be grasped through time, and, by extension, narrative (Ricoeur 22–28).

In this essay I use Ricoeur's insistence on the interconnection of temporality and narrative as a starting point to think through the temporal complexity of medieval visionary writing. I focus on one of the most important medieval visionary narratives, that of *Tnugdalus* (or *Tundalus* or *Tundale*), which narrates the journey through the afterlife and subsequent conversion of its sinful protagonist and was retold in a range of languages throughout the Middle Ages. I concentrate specifically on Alber's *Tnugdalus*, a late twelfth-century German retelling of the Latin *Visio Tnugdali* of Marcus of Regensburg, a work that has gained relatively little scholarly attention yet resonates powerfully with increasing contemporary interest in secular time and eternity and has much to offer outside the field of German literary study. I explore the interlinked theological/conceptual and narratological aspects of temporality in this key medieval vision, but expand the focus on narrative to draw in a third dimension: the temporality of the text as itself, as object, experience or narrative phenomenon. In this respect I qualify Ricoeur by drawing on what Kiening and Stercken view as the mutually reciprocal relationship between temporality and mediality, where “the representation of time also means to form and cultivate the means of representation” (Kiening and Stercken 4). Textual media not only contain temporal structures, but are themselves temporally complex phenomena, and may reflect on their status as such. In fact, as I hope to show, the subject matter of visionary writing lends itself peculiarly well to this sort of reflection: the time of eschatology and the time of textuality are mutually illuminating.

In what follows, I first explore the temporal status of the afterlife

depicted in Alber's text and the question of eschatological time. I show how Alber, more so than his Latin source, seems deliberately to obscure the theological and ontological status of the afterlife and turns it instead into something much more experiential. In this way, as I explore in the second section, the journey to the afterlife becomes a moment of temporal suspension in Tnugdalus' life that enables critical reflection on human temporality and, in doing so, collapses the distinctions between past, present and future. Finally, I show how this is further complicated by narratorial reflection on the composition of the text itself, which is presented as part of a chain of telling and mediated retelling. The text stages itself as narration of past events that are nonetheless infinitely repeatable and 'present', and in so doing presents itself as a past act of textual, written composition that has the potential to be reactualized at any moment through performance. I suggest that this kind of textual self-awareness connects not only to the subject matter of afterlife vision (which it lends itself to peculiarly well), but also – more tentatively – to the emerging German-language literary culture of the period, a literary culture that is increasingly self-aware and reflects on its own textual and temporal status.

I. Eschatological time

Alber's *Tnugdalus* is one of the very earliest of many adaptations of Marcus of Regensburg's *Visio Tnugdali*. Marcus was an Irish monk, almost certainly a member of one of the two Irish religious houses in Regensburg, and it seems likely that he wrote his text – set in Ireland and full of Irish references – for the Irish community of the so-called Irish Benedictine 'Schottenklöster' (Boyle 120–22; Flache-necker 31–32) in 1149. It went on to become one of the most popular and successful medieval visionary narratives, widely transmitted and translated or adapted into a range of vernacular languages.² The *Visio Tnugdali* tells the story of Tnugdäl (or Tnugdälu), a worldly, sinful knight from Cashel in Ireland who collapses suddenly during a meal and is taken for dead. After three days he is to be buried, but wakes suddenly and retells what has happened to him: his soul left his body and, guided by an angel, went on a journey through the afterlife, observing and partly participating in the punishments of hell and the joys of heaven. The result of this journey is one of personal conversion, with Tnugdäl setting aside his previous worldly ways and leading a devout religious life.

2. An excellent and detailed overview of the tradition is given by Palmer.

3. For a detailed description of the manuscript and its contents see Fechter; Bauer 9, 249–60.

4. All translations from Alber's *Tnugdalus* are my own.

Alber's work, a German verse rendering of the Latin prose, was made in the second half of the twelfth century, perhaps only a couple of decades after the composition of the original text. It is today extant in only one manuscript (ÖNB, Cod. 2696), a multi-text manuscript of around 1300 containing primarily religious works of the twelfth century.³ Alber himself was almost certainly a canon at the Premonstratensian abbey of Windberg, some 50km east of Regensburg, which in the mid twelfth century was an intellectually ambitious house with an active scriptorium. Windberg manuscripts from this period are rich in glosses and interlinear writing, displaying a marked interest in the relationship between Latin and the vernacular, and the abbey has been identified as the home not only of *Tnugdalus* but also of a further German poem *daz himelrîche* (Pfeil 78–81; Müller 234–40). It can therefore be thought of as a significant node in the emergent and dynamic culture of German-language religious poetic writing in the mid twelfth century, which appears to have flourished primarily in and between religious houses in the south of the German lands (Bowden, "Vorauer Sammlung"). Alber claims to have written his specific text at the behest of three women, Ôtegebe, Heilke and Gisel (70), and a 'brother' Kuonrat (2151), all of whom have been plausibly identified in the Windberg necrologium: the three women were likely Windberg nuns (it was a double house) and Kuonrat perhaps Abbot Konrad I (Palmer 36–37). He states that he has made this German version of the narrative to make it accessible to a wider audience of "ungelêrten liute" ("uneducated/unliterate people", 64):⁴ perhaps local laity (Windberg maintained close links to its founders, the Counts of Bogen [Pfeil 81–86]) or indeed those without Latin in the community of Windberg itself.

The principle of the narrative, in both Latin and German, is one in which the soul is removed from worldly temporality and transposed to a state – or place (significantly, it is not entirely clear which) – that does not exist within this temporal framework. Yet whether what *Tnugdalus*' soul visits is *eternity* is a moot point. The soul visits a purgatorial afterlife, but referring to it as 'eternal' may be inaccurate. These afterlife spaces may seem eternal and to be without temporal structure, but they might better be conceived of as spaces of waiting: a kind of proto-hell and proto-heaven where souls exist before the Last Judgement. If this is the case, then they would correlate in some way with the passage of human time in the world.

It is impossible to consider exactly how to conceptualize this space, particularly in the context of the twelfth century, without

5. It was common scholastic practice to use nouns for abstract concepts, so the emergence of this noun may in itself not be particularly significant; see Morgan 149. For a thorough summary of critical responses to Le Goff, see Newman 109.

touching on arguments about the doctrine of purgatory. The classic argument espoused by Jacques le Goff in *The Birth of Purgatory* – that the twelfth century witnessed a gradual recognition of a separate space of purgation for those not entirely unblemished by sin – is now generally considered to be overstated; in particular, the emphasis Le Goff places on the emergence of the noun *purgatorium* in the late twelfth century as a moment of culmination is disputed.⁵ Although there was increased discussion of afterlife purgation in the twelfth century, the acknowledgement of the doctrine of purgatory by the papacy in 1254 and 1274 appears to be a result of centuries of general acceptance of the existence of afterlife suffering both punitive and purgative: a notion present in a “more or less rationalized” form since the time of Augustine (Newman 109). Indeed, as Peter Brown has argued, perhaps the clearest moment of change is in the seventh century, when an afterlife system that integrates penitential purgation begins to be evident, connected to the increasing wealth of the Christian church. Recent scholarship on visionary writing, as exemplified by the contributions by Helen Foxhall Forbes and Carl Watkins in the new *Imagining the Medieval Afterlife*, rightly stresses the importance of continuity from the earlier periods and downplays twelfth-century innovation. Although the number of visionary texts increases in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, developments do not typically concern the theology of the afterlife, but are concentrated on “subtle” contextual shifts (Watkins, “Otherworld” 112), and cannot be separated from literary trends and developments.

At first glance, though, the Latin *Visio Tnugdali* does seem to offer an unusually systematized depiction of the afterlife, and has been argued to mark something of a watershed in this respect (Düwel 532–33). Here, the loci of punishment or reward described can be grouped loosely into five zones: Upper Hell; Lower Hell; the rainy enclosure of the *mali non valde* (“the bad-but-not-very-bad”); the beautiful meadow of the *boni non valde* (“good-but-not-very-good”); and a series of glorious places for various categories of the blessed. Souls in Upper Hell undergo various punishments that correspond to specific sins committed, but still await final judgement – it is not always clear whether the punishments are purgative in an explicitly progressive, cleansing sense, or if they fulfil a kind of temporary, waiting-room function before judgement occurs. Lower Hell, however, is quite clearly a place of no return; souls here have already been through Upper Hell but are now punished for all eternity in a great pit of horror and torture.⁶ The condition of the bad-but-not-very-bad

6. “Paciuntur quidem ea primitus, que anti videbas, minora et tunc ducuntur ad ista, de quibus nullus, qui semel intraverit, amplius exire poterit” (Marcus 14.24). (“Indeed, they suffer first that lesser punishment that you saw before, and now they are led to this punishment from which no one who enters it once is able to exit again” Gardiner 179).

7. “Isti sunt mali, sed non valde, honeste quidem se observare studuerunt, sed bona temporalia pauperibus non sunt largiti, sicut debuerunt, et ideo per aliquod annos merentur pluviam et tunc ducuntur ad requiem bonam” (Marcus 15.9). (“These souls are evil, but not very evil. Indeed they tried to follow honestly, but in good times they were not generous to the poor, as they should have been, and therefore for many years they deserve to suffer this rain; then they will be led to a good place” Gardiner 181).

8. They are “de cruciatibus inferni erepti” (Marcus 16.7) (“freed from the sufferings of hell” Gardiner 182).

is temporary,⁷ and that of the good-but-not-very-good unclear, although it is suggested they have already gone through the punishments of Upper Hell.⁸ It is here that Tnugdalu meets King Cormac, his former lord, who has already suffered punishments and continues to be punished for three hours a day.

Yet although Marcus’ text undoubtedly has a sense of eschatological temporality, the spaces described certainly do not amount to a total or coherent otherworld. Importantly, despite the fact that it is unusually distinctly systematized, the shape of the afterlife depicted is not a twelfth-century invention but rather draws (as do other details of the text) on the older Irish tradition of visionary writing (Boyle 123–29; Watkins, “Doctrine” 227–32). And indeed the overall effect is not to present the audience with a clearly-defined system of the afterlife but instead to focus on the spiritually transformative experience undertaken by Tnugdalu’s soul: in fact Marcus’ *Visio* is perhaps most novel in its depiction of the soul of the visionary participating in the punishments of the afterlife rather than simply observing them (Düwel 532–33). It is for this reason that Julia Weitbrecht, in her discussion of both Marcus and Alber, prefers to refer to the purgative zones simply as “Reinigungsorte” (“places of purification”) (Weitbrecht 151–52).

This aspect is even more prominent in Alber’s reworking. Much of Marcus’ systematization, however imprecise, is dissolved and the relationship between different loci and zones is more fluid. Specific terminology for places visited is avoided; there are occasional references to *helle*, but this term is used to describe individual sites of punishment rather than an overarching location, and refers primarily to a condition of unpleasantness rather than a physical place. The guiding descriptors of what Tnugdalu’s soul witnesses or experiences are based on sensation, such as pain, torment, punishment or joy and the overall effect is an experiential one. Take, for example, the passage in which souls who have committed the sin of greed are punished inside the belly of a great beast. In the Latin text, where this episode is clearly marked out with the title *De avaris et pena eorum* (“On the Greedy and their punishment”), the beast has a name, Acheron, a mouth that seems wide enough to contain nine thousand armed men and is divided into three sections by two column-like parasites, one with his head facing upwards, the other down, who are later identified as the Irish giants Fergus and Conallus (Marcus 7.6–9). When Tnugdalu is dragged by devils into the belly of the beast, he experiences a clearly defined list of horrors, including bears, lions, fire, cold, sulphur and so on (Marcus 7.32). In the German work, the beast – now nameless – is described in less

specific detail, and the experience of the soul is narrated primarily in terms of extreme emotion so terrible as to be inexpressible:

dâ wart ir aller êrste kunt
 waz nôt und angest wære.
 die manicvalten swære,
 die sî dâ muose liden,
 sî möhte niemen vol schriben.
 dâ was michel unlust
 und maneger slahte âkust,
 manic unkunder;
 wunder unde wunder,
 des was dâ vil unde vil. (712–21)

(Then the soul knew for the first time what pain and fear were. The manifold torments, which it had to suffer there, could never be described in writing fully by anyone. There was great unhappiness and many forms of suffering, and many monsters; wonder upon wonder, of this there was very much indeed.)

As Christina Lechtermann has shown, such statements of inexpressibility, both in terms of what is witnessed and the sensations provoked, are a particular characteristic of Alber's writing. She argues that they offer a powerful means of communication in a text that – more so than its Latin source – is particularly concerned with direct address to the audience. In the passage described above, the horrifying sensations experienced by *Tnugdalus*' soul culminate in such an address, which encourages a heightened imaginative response centred around fear: the audience should strive ("dar nâch ringen" 726) to avoid entering the belly of the beast like *Tnugdalus*' soul. Here, as elsewhere, the focal point of the journey is the experience of *Tnugdalus*' soul and the effect of this on the audience rather than the facts of what the soul sees and participates in. As a result, the theological specifics of eschatological time are almost entirely unimportant; the experience of afterlife instead throws focus onto worldly temporality, and how behaviour in the world might be changed in such a way as to alter the afterlife experience that awaits you.

Tnugdalus' journey through the afterlife is temporally vague and might best be thought of as taking place in a state of suspended time. We are told how long the journey takes in terms of worldly time – *Tnugdalus*' body is as if dead from Wednesday to Saturday (272) –

but this time period is not mapped onto the experiences of his soul. Any temporal details in the afterlife instead fit in with the overall experiential focus: it is mentioned more than once that the punishments the soul endures seem to last a 'long time' (e.g. "diu wîle dûhte dâ vil lanc" [557]), when the soul is in a valley of fire. The time spent in the belly of the beast described above seems to the soul to last a thousand years (735–36). Yet this is time described in terms of sensation: time is used here in order to make the punishments more scarily effective. The result is the creation of a kind of experiential temporality that directs itself at emotional response from audience, rather than any attempt at rationality or explanation. Time in the afterlife is not clearly plotted – there is an explicit sense of temporal dislocation between this world and next – but the afterlife experience is nonetheless made manifest and effective through reference to worldly temporality.

The afterlife is also given a sense of temporality through narrative. The afterlife experience may not specifically be 'eternity', as we have seen, but it is nonetheless temporally dislocated and so needs, just as Ricoeur shows us for eternity, an injection of human time in order to be experienced: it needs to be narrated. The paucity of reference in Alber's work to any kind of purgative work or progress, as well as the lack of specificity of the status of other souls, means that the afterlife *seems* eternal, or at least to exist in a state of static permanence. This state is interrupted and given temporality through the narrative of Tnugdalus' soul as it moves progressively through the series of punishments and joys. Each one of these spaces is described only in terms his encountering it; it is implied that the punishments exist in a cycle of constant repetition, but this is never made explicit. The fact that the fate of other souls being punished is largely irrelevant – they are simply a background decoration to the primary emphasis on Tnugdalus' soul – means that individual punishments come across as existing in a static state of temporal suspension, and are given a sense of temporality only through the movement of Tnugdalus' soul. The fate of other souls does come more into focus in the paradisaical spaces, but even then these souls function primarily as exemplary figures, with emphasis deflected onto ways of behaving that Tnugdalus (and by implication the audience) should engage in the future. The warring kings Conkober and Danâtus, for instance, now existing peaceably side by side, are framed as an example of the importance of penitence (1570–96).

The process that Tnugdalus' soul undergoes – the narrative of the afterlife – is importantly one of purification itself, a progression from

punishment to reward. And although it is a process that is described through Tnugdalus' journey through the afterlife, it is really about ways of behaving in this world: the experience of the afterlife throws focus onto this-worldly pasts, presents and futures, and how these might be changed and complicated in such a way as to alter the afterlife experience that awaits you. I am not the first to note this specifically didactic aspect of Alber's work; in fact, it is a mainstay of the (relatively small) body of scholarship on his text. Alber's shaping of the journey through the otherworld in order to draw attention specifically to behaviour in this world – his interest in *Diesseits* rather than *Jenseits* – is stressed by Brigitte Pfeil and, more recently, Maximilian Benz and Julia Weitbrecht. Equally, there is no reason to doubt that such a didactic dimension is connected to the specific needs of a non-Latinate audience (Palmer 35–41). Yet (as I hope to have shown already) didactic vernacularity does not mean a lack of complexity. As I go on to explore in the next section, the construction of this-worldly time in *Tnugdalus* is interestingly unstraightforward for both the audience of the text and Tnugdalus himself. The narrative of Tnugdalus' life resists a simple chronology; past, present and future overlap and displace one another in a complex and inconclusive manner both conceptually and narratologically.

II. Salvation and repetition

In their recent volume on medieval temporalities, Almut Suerbaum and Annie Sutherland suggest that although medieval texts tend to subscribe to a kind of Boethian 'eternalism', where "the past and future exist and are just as real as the present", they nonetheless engage with a kind of 'presentism' (according to which the present alone exists). This leads, they argue, to a particularly productive aspect of medieval writing: an interest in challenging states other than the present, in "play[ing] with our temporal certainties, problematising any notion of past, present and future as fixed and immutable categories" (Suerbaum and Sutherland 7). Their argument resonates with the situation in *Tnugdalus*. Here, Tnugdalus' journey to the otherworld involves an enforced reflection on his own past, as he is driven to consider the sins he has committed and the ways he has behaved; it also forces explicit consideration of the future, both in terms of what will happen after death (and the prospect of death itself) and how his this-worldly future might be shaped through different forms of be-

haviour. Yet the journey disrupts the separation of the three temporal states of past, present and future, and any clear notion of beginnings and ends or pasts and futures is disturbed.

The journey taken by Tnugdalus' soul is first of all an actualization of his future: in the series of punishments that make up the first part of the journey he both sees and – importantly – participates in the future which awaits him. Unlike many other literary visionaries, Tnugdalus is not simply a bystander but undergoes various punishments for sins he has committed; punishments, that is, that he would have undergone had he genuinely died at that moment. In this sense, he experiences his future, but a future transposed prematurely into the present moment. Participation in punishment also involves recalling acts of the past. A striking example of this is found in the punishment accorded to thieves (737–846), where souls must cross a bridge covered with iron spikes over a burning lake with dragons, carrying with them what they stole. Falling off the bridge – which is narrow, with souls coming from both directions – is inevitable. Tnugdalus' soul is instructed to cross while carrying a cow, which represents (or is?) the one that he stole from his godfather:

Dô sprach der engel sân
 'dû muost âne mich dar über gân.
 dû muost ouch dar zuo
 mit dir trîben eine kuo,
 die stæle dû dîme gevateren.' (787–91)

(Then the angel said, 'you must go over it [the bridge] without me. You must also carry a cow with you, which you stole from your godfather.')

This symbolic memorialization of a past deed brings past and future together into Tnugdalus' present: what he experiences in this moment is a both a remembrance of the past (stealing the cow) and a premonition of the future (the afterlife punishment he will suffer for stealing this cow). Past and future are collapsed into a moment of 'now' that looks in both directions. Yet by bringing his future into the present moment – by experiencing it 'early' through his journey – Tnugdalus has the opportunity to change this future. A different hypothetical future is presented to Tnugdalus' soul when he visits the various states of glory and learns of the importance of changing the way he lives and repenting of sins committed. The result of this experience is that his previous 'future' – various fiery punishments – is

displaced and is transposed into a past. This original future, seen and partly participated in, becomes a past experience: a memory that transforms both his present and his new future.

This passage with the cow and the bridge clarifies peculiarly well the temporal complexity of salvation in medieval Christianity. As Benjamin Thompson has shown, salvation can be understood as a kind of “static present-centredness”, a “unity of having-been, being and expectation” in which, at all (present) moments, future salvation depends on past acts (Thompson 53). Such past acts, good or bad, determine one’s afterlife future, but this future can in turn be transformed through confession and penance, for example, or (increasingly in the later Middle Ages) acts of suffrage. Thompson relates this temporal situation to the threefold present developed by Augustine in his *Confessions* – itself the basis for the ‘presentism’ that Suerbaum and Sutherland contrast with Boethian ‘eternalism’. Here is not the place to go into detail about Augustine on time (and not least because I agree with Ricoeur [6] that there is no pure, coherent Augustinian phenomenology of time, but rather a questioning system that necessarily remains full of aporias). But at the heart of his thinking on time in the *Confessions* is the notion of the ‘distension’ of the soul (*distentio animi*) through which past and future can be grasped. Neither past nor future have being, but can be perceived through the distension of the mind (or soul) through memory and expectation.

The kind of ‘presentism’ we find in *Tnugdalus* is not a theorized one by any means (there is none of Augustine’s theological complexity). It is also not that there is no sense of past and future; *Tnugdalus*’ journey itself is clearly framed as a past act that occurred in 1149 (29–33), as I discuss in more detail below. Rather, their certainties can be problematized and recast through the way in which they can be collapsed into the present moment. Past and future are also continuously brought back into the present through repetition: a repetition that reactualizes *Tnugdalus*’ experience and keeps it in the present as well as grounding it in the past. One good example of this can be found if we return to the cow. The punishment of carrying the cow over the bridge suggests a striking materiality of sin, with *Tnugdalus*’ soul literally struggling under the physical burden of his wrongdoing (the cow). But this burden pushes at the boundaries of symbolism; it is not just a weighty object, but actually a cow that – much as one would expect – does not want to cross the spiky bridge (816). The punishment is not just a memorialization of the sin committed but also a kind of repetition, a moment of cow wrangling that revisits the

original theft and reenacts it, this time recast as an act of punishment.

Such a principle of repetition extends more broadly, and goes beyond the purgative repetition of past sins or the implied constant circular repetition of other punishments encountered (as I discussed above). Perhaps most significantly, repetition is the guiding principle of the journey as an act of narration: a journey that is constantly to be told and retold. When Tnugdalu's soul is separated from his body at the start of his journey he is told explicitly that transforming the lives of others through narrating his own experience is one of the main purposes of what is happening to him. The angel who guides him says that when the journey is over:

niht dû belibe,
 dûne sagest besunder
 diu manicvalten wunder
 sol *künden* dîn zungen
 der werlt ze bezzerunge (506–10)

(you must not pause without having spoken to everyone
 about the manifold wonders; your tongue should reveal
 these things for the improvement of the world)

Tnugdalu must narrate the memory of what he has experienced (which is now in the past) to an audience, an act of narration that has the explicit function of changing (ideally) the present existence and future of his listeners.

This act of narration is explicitly retold in Alber's text, in which Tnugdalu's experience is narrated strictly chronologically from a this-worldly perspective. We are told how Tnugdalu collapses suddenly and appears to be dead, but then after three days suddenly revives. He takes the eucharist, changes his lifestyle and then tells his story: "dô tete sâ sîn munt / den liuten über al kunt, / wie im wære geschehen / und allez daz er hete gesehen" (339–42) ("then with his mouth he told all the people what had happened to him and everything that he had seen"). It is only at this point that the focus shifts to the otherworldly experience. What this means is that we, the audience, do not follow the chronology of Tnugdalu's experience but rather that of his own immediate audience, sharing in their eyewitness experience and only finding out what 'happened' to him when he returns to his body and revives. As a result, what we are told is cast as Tnugdalu's own narration of events. Such an eyewitness perspective is vital for ensuring the authenticity and validity of the experi-

ence, an issue that is clearly at stake for writers of visions, and we see here the kind of techniques used in medieval history-writing to stress the 'truth' of events. Yet the journey of Tnugdalus' soul is not told in the first-person as if it were in Tnugdalus' voice, but rather in the third-person by a detached narrator who nonetheless comments on what occurs and addresses his audience directly, in the manner of an omniscient narrator. The narration of the journey ends with Tnugdalus' soul returning to his body and beginning his narration again. This is, of course, a narration that we are explicitly told we have already heard, and which is introduced in language that echoes the original instructions given to Tnugdalus' soul by the angel:

si begunde ir swigen brechen
 und den liuten zuo sprechen,
 und künden besunder
 diu manivalten wunder
 diu ir hie vor habt vernomen (2125–29)

(the soul began to break its silence and speak to the people, and to reveal to everyone the manifold wonders, which you have already heard about).

As an audience of listeners or readers we have followed the linear chronology of Tnugdalus' original eyewitness audience, with the linear chronology of Tnugdalus' experience embedded within this, but the displacement of the embedded narrative from Tnugdalus' voice to that of a narrator introduces a sense of circularity. Vitally, this is a story that always ends with its protagonist returning to his body and starting the story again.

A focus on temporality uncovers a connection between the narrative of Tnugdalus' journey and the conceptualization of the after-life space through which he makes this journey, as described in section one. Much like the spaces of the afterlife, the narration of Tnugdalus' experience has a straightforward chronological linearity, which renders it comprehensible. But such linearity is confused both by the collapsing and transformation of pasts and futures as well as by the introduction of a principle of circular repeatability. Repetition is, as the example of the cow has shown, a way of understanding the possibility of reactualizing the past in order to change the future. It is also, however, a principle of narration, rendering the story of what happens to Tnugdalus an infinitely repeatable experience without beginning or end. This structure of repetition stresses the didactic

impact of the story and the possibility of constant retelling in order to enable yet more audiences to ‘witness’ what happened and engage in their own kinds of salvific transformation.

III. The perpetual ‘now’

We have seen how the narrative of Tnugdalus’ journey is constructed in order to explain and teach the afterlife and process of salvation as effectively as possible and, as a result, to encourage a transformative response on the part of its audience. Much as Ricoeur shows in the case of Augustine’s exploration of eternity, which can only be grasped through narrative, here the way in which Tnugdalus’ experience is narrated leads to a clear and more effective approximation of the afterlife. Yet the way in which this is done places a particular emphasis on textuality. For this text is not just about the journey of Tnugdalus, but is also about the power of retelling what happens; it is a text that is as much about narrating the afterlife as it is about the afterlife. The narration of the otherworldly experience may have originated in the mouth of Tnugdalus, but it is presented explicitly as a mediated narrative in the mouth of Alber – and this adds a further layer of temporal complication. Tnugdalus has narrated what happened to him to a contemporary audience in order to transform their lives, and this act of narration is then retold by others (including Alber) in order to continue the effect. The result of this chain of telling and mediated retelling is that all these acts of narration are explicitly situated in the past yet have the potential to be retold (and reactualized) constantly; they thus exist both in the past moment and in a state of what we might think of as a perpetual ‘now’. I would like to clarify this observation further by turning to the prologue and epilogue, both of which are unique to Alber and do not appear in Marcus’ Latin work.

In the prologue, the journey of Tnugdalus’ soul and the personal transformation this results in are presented explicitly as events of the historical past. At the start of the text the audience is informed, in the past tense, that the vision narrated was had by an Irish knight (22) and that the events reported are exactly as he saw them: “daz tuon wir iu kunt als er sîn jach” (28) (“we tell it to you as he saw it”). They are, moreover, precisely dateable to the year 1149:

dô der wâren tûsent jâr
ergangen unde zehenzic

und eines min dan fümfcic
von diu daz Krist geborn wart (30–33)

(when one thousand years had past – and one hundred and
one less than fifty – from the time Christ was born)

Further contextualisation is offered by the fact that the events happened after the crusade of Emperor Conrad III (1146–47) during the time of pope Eugenius II (34–43). The narrative was then brought to Regensburg by a “ein münich guot” (“a good monk”, 44), who took it to the convent of St Paul and wrote it down as he had heard it (“als erz vernam von enes munde”, 52); this we can assume is Marcus, although he is not named explicitly. Now the current narrator is writing the text again for uneducated or unlatinate people (“die ungelêrten liute”, 63), in the hope that all sinners may be forgiven their sins. Following this, after a short excursus about St Patrick ridding Ireland of dragons, the main narrative begins with the introduction of its protagonist, “Tnugdalus” (183), a noble knight from Cashel.

The prologue establishes and situates temporally two interlocking layers: on the one hand Tnugdalus’ own otherworldly journey, which happened in 1149 and which includes his own oral report of his experience; and on the other, the history of the narrativization of this journey, from Tnugdalus’ oral report to the Latin transcription to the present German text. Both of these layers are grounded in specific historical moments and introduced through multiple strategies of authentication (dates, places, contextual information, patronage, and even a reference to Gregory the Great and the importance of eyewitness corroboration [56–62]). Yet the prologue also introduces a third layer: that of the immediate reception of the text, a moment timeless in its immediacy. The text opens in the present tense with a statement that draws attention to its immediacy:

Die vernemen wellen
wunder diu wir zellen,
die tuon uns ein stille. (1–3)

(Those who want to hear the wonders we tell, make a moment of silence for us)

The text – its reception, its performance, its reading – exists in this noun of silence, “ein stille”, which is not bound to a specific moment in time or to a specific duration, but is rather a repeatable, personalized present-tense *now* of active textual reception.

A helpful vocabulary to describe this kind of specifically textual temporality is provided by Jonathan Culler in his *Theory of the Lyric*. In his influential attempt to theorize lyric across time, Culler identifies what he terms the 'lyric present', a present now-ness at the heart of much lyric. The lyric present is not simply the use of the present tense, and nor does it strive for a kind of timelessness, but is rather characterized by iterability. The lyric present is therefore perhaps best understood as the "iterable now of lyric enunciation" (Culler 289); it is "accomplished in the act of utterance" (Culler 290), an iterable moment of enunciation that belongs to the poet, the lyric voice and the reader. Culler's iterable lyric now, constantly reactualized in the moment of enunciation (whether audible or not), is precisely what we see in Alber's poem. Here, the staging of the text as a repeatable now that I have described above of course resonates with conditions of reception – the text recited orally to an audience –, an element of performativity that Culler identifies as a characteristic of the lyric now. But what is particularly interesting in Alber's work is the fact that the status of the text as an iterable moment of enunciation is staged so explicitly.

In the epilogue, attention is drawn to the act of composition by describing it as something that occurred in the past (2163) and through a change from a first-person to third-person narrative voice to discuss the efforts of the author, named as Alber ("er ist geheizen Alber", 2185). There is then a request that those affected by the text or pleased by it should pray for the soul of its author, "der aller schuldigste man / der briesters namen ie gewan" (2183–84) ("the most sinful man who ever held the name of priest"):

Der dise rede hât getihtet
 und ze rîmen gerihtet,
 der gert an iu allen,
 ob ez iu wol gevalle,
 daz sîn ze guote werde gedâht
 und von iuwer bete brâht
 ze gotes hulden werde
 [...]
 ir solt im wûnschen alle
 daz sîner sünden galle
 hie alsô zebreste
 daz etelîche reste
 sîn sêle dort gewinne. (2163–69; 2177–81)

(He who composed this text and put it into verse asks of you all – if you liked it – that he may be thought of well by you and that he may be brought through your prayers to God's love [...] You should all wish that the bitterness of his sins be broken down to such an extent here in this world that his soul obtains eternal rest in the other world.)

The change to a third-person voice for this sort of prayer is not unusual for German-language poetic works of this period and is conventionally understood to draw a distinction between the narrator (or reciter) and the author, reflecting conditions of reception through oral recital (Hellgardt 71–72). But it also reflects the temporal tension I am trying to describe. On the one hand, there is a tension between the historically grounded single event of *Tnugdalus'* journey and its mediation and remediation in various forms and languages by different authors. Yet this tension is further complicated by the fact that individual authoritative accounts are themselves also grounded in specific points in time. *Tnugdalus* is a written object by one specific named author (Alber), and is further temporally grounded by the naming of the three nuns and the brother Kuonrat who encouraged its production (a fact that also, implicitly, ties it to the specific space of Windberg). So the temporal point of *Tnugdalus'* journey is repeated and reactualized through further defined points and objects with their own authorship and authority.

On the other hand, there is also a tension between the written object – the text Alber wrote in Windberg – and what we can assume to be the primarily oral-performative nature of its reception. Attention is drawn not only to Alber's authorship but also to his salvation, which extends beyond the moment in time when he wrote the text. We return here to the temporal complexity of salvation, which I explored above: Alber may have written the text in a specific time and place, but its ongoing influence on his salvation shows how he continues to be 'present' and how his future has the constant potential to be changed and affected by his work, which is attached to him but transcends him. He may be the author, but Alber is also part of the community of those who are transformed by the text – in his case not through listening to it (or even experiencing it in the case of *Tnugdalus* himself) but by retelling it. As such, we return again to the circularity and repeatability of the text. Alber's poem is a work that was composed at a specific time, but that transcends this time; much like the structure of *Tnugdalus'* own narrative, which begins

and ends with him telling it in a kind of endless circularity and is retold by other witnesses, this text is potentially infinitely repeatable.

IV. Conclusion

Alber's *Tnugdalus* can certainly be viewed in the context of an increasingly self-conscious German-language literary culture. As I have explored elsewhere, twelfth-century German religious texts have a tendency to address and thematize their own performativity (Bowden, "Performing Didacticism"). Yet here this feature is made peculiarly apparent by the subject matter. The performative repeatability of the text has a particular affinity with the material narrated: a journey to the afterlife that transforms the life of the traveller and also the lives of those who hear it in the moment of its retelling. This is an afterlife experience that is strongly grounded in this-worldly notions of past, present and future. Different pasts, presents and futures are, however, presented simultaneously, in overlapping layers, and are directed towards (and perceived through) the now of the recipients. Temporal differentiation is transposed into an active present through the self-presentation of the text as an object composed at a specific moment but not bound to that moment, which can be received repeatedly and which makes demands of its recipients (whoever they may be at any specific time). As a result, both this-worldly and other-worldly temporality are subordinate to a kind of perpetual, repeatable now of active textual reception and personal transformation.

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Folding Time: Honorius Augustodunensis' *Imago Mundi*

Abstract

The *Imago Mundi* or “Image of the World” was composed around 1110 by Honorius Augustodunensis, one of the most prolific authors of his age. Presented in the form of a *mappa mundi*, the *Imago* offers its reader a verbal ‘image’ of the cosmos, covering topics ranging from the atom to the heavenly spheres. Despite being one of the most popular works of the central Middle Ages, scholars rarely regard the *Imago* as a text possessing serious literary merit, dismissing it instead as a derivative exercise in compilation. This essay argues that the *Imago* is in fact an ambitious literary undertaking with a coherent spiritual agenda. While Honorius recycles (like many of his peers) earlier medieval and especially Neoplatonic cosmological ideas, his text shapes that material in new ways – into a spiritually transformative journey through and above the cosmos, and into the self. At the same time, throughout the work Honorius deploys a range of strikingly material metaphors to describe the world from the perspective of eternity – most notably, the rope of time. In this further literary sense, the ascent to eternity entails a recognition that we dwell in images.

In a work usually placed in the middle of his career, Honorius Augustodunensis (d. 1140) invites his reader to take a journey through a series of cities in search of their “homeland” (*patria*). Each of the cities in *De animae exsilio et patria* corresponds to one of the liberal arts, which for Honorius include the familiar *artes* of the *quadrivium* and *trivium*, plus three additional destinations: the city of Physics, Mechanics, and Economics (*PL* 172.807–1108; Miller 108–206). In each city, the pilgrim is assisted by a guide, who offers a brief tour of the local landmarks and customs. Having passed through Grammar, Rhetoric and Dialectic, for example, the traveller arrives at Arithmetic, where they encounter Boethius. Here their patient guide instructs them in the mysteries of even and odd numbers, and the use of the fingers and the abacus for calculation. From this, our *viator* learns that “God orders (*disposuit*) all things according to measure

and number and weight”, a statement that Honorius derives from the Book of Wisdom 11.21 (*De animae exsilio* v; Miller 202). On then, via Music, to the sixth city, Geometry, where the local expert is the ancient Greek poet Aratus, who “draws a map of the world, on which he shows the location of Asia, Africa, and Europe” and “identifies all the mountains, cities and rivers of the world, through which the traveller must pass” (Miller 203). After brief stops at Physics, Mechanics and Economics the weary traveller finally reaches their homeland, Sacred Scripture, where they come face to face with God – that is unless they continue to delight in transitory, time-bound pleasures (*transitoriis oblectati*), in which case their destiny is permanent exile accompanied by visions of the Vices “running about like savage beasts” (*De animae exsilio* xiv; Miller 206). In order to escape this testing fate, Honorius advises his reader to “train yourself in these matters, and teach others what they must do” (Miller 206).

This essay is concerned with one of Honorius’ most popular and enduring works, the *Imago Mundi*, an ambitious synthesis of medieval ideas about the nature of time and the cosmos.¹ On the surface, the *Imago* is a very different type of text to *De animae exsilio*. While *De animae exsilio* is a brief work of spiritual instruction in the allegorical mode, the *Imago* is an example of medieval encyclopaedism, characterised by the blending of knowledge obtained from various sources into a single, accessible text. Despite these clear differences, *De animae exsilio* offers a useful point of contrast and comparison with the *Imago*, shedding light on some of the features of this text that make it a distinctive example of its genre. Like *De animae exsilio*, Honorius threads themes of pilgrimage and spiritual ascent across the *Imago*, creating a sense of movement and personal transformation that is unusual in a work of encyclopaedism. As in *De animae exsilio*, the reader passes through different destinations, in this case space in book i and time in book ii. Boethius, this essay will argue, is again an important guide in the *Imago*, albeit here in the form of a source rather than a personified figure, providing a conduit through which Honorius absorbed Platonic ideas. And as in *De animae exsilio*, Honorius’ broader aim in the *Imago* is didactic and pastoral, encouraging the reader to undertake an act of metanoia, shifting their perspective away from this transitory world to the stability of eternity. In this respect, the *Imago Mundi* is a product of, and sheds light on, the wider spiritual revival of the twelfth century, a period that saw a renewed emphasis on the attainment of personal salvation through self-examination.² While the ingredients are familiar, the

1. Quotations are taken from Flint, “Imago” with translations adapted from the useful, but unreliable, English version in Forster 100–305. Flint’s edition reproduces the 1139 text of the *Imago*, with variant readings from earlier recensions offered in her notes. These include readings from the earliest text of 1110, which she labels C. Since the following study is concerned with the 1110 text, quotations follow the C variants.

2. For overviews of the role of interiority and self-examination in twelfth-century spirituality, see the classic studies by Constable and Bynum, and the more recent discussion by Kramer 1–17. The impact of this shift on English literary culture is outlined in Ashe 127–80 and Georgianna. Honorius’ own attitudes to salvation and interiority are influenced by the work of Augustine and Anselm (Hannam 81–3; Southern 376–81). Self-examination as a path to salvation, particularly as pertains to priests, is a controlling theme of the *Speculum Ecclesiae*.

3. Honorius tells us as much in a well-known statement from the prologue of the *Elucidarius*: “Nomen autem meum ideo volui silentio contegi, ne invidia tabescens suis juberet utile opus contemnendo negligi” (“I have desired my own name to be wrapped in silence so that Envy, pinning away for its own, might not by its condemnation command that a useful work be neglected”). [359]

4. It should be noted that Flint's outline of Honorius' life is not universally accepted. Endres, for instance, linked Honorius with Regensburg and downplayed his time in England, viewing this as a brief stopover during a trip to Ireland (1–15, esp. 14–15). Garrigues directly challenged Flint's “hypothèse fragile” regarding Honorius' English visit, suggesting instead that he was connected to Laon (“Qui était Honorius” 32). Crouse (“A Twelfth-Century Augustinian” 169) questions Honorius' association with Anselm and casts doubt on the whole endeavour of biographical speculation: “Hypotheses continue to proliferate, but the evidence is profoundly unsatisfactory; the field abounds in hasty and ill-founded conjectures”.

5. It is possible that the twelfth-century English interest in Eriugena was sparked by the mistaken belief, expressed by William of Malmesbury, that John Scotus Eriugena was the same person as John the Scot, one of King Alfred's scholars. In their enthusiasm for dismissing this case of mistaken identities, modern historians have overlooked the significance of the misidentification insofar as it acted as a stimulus for a regional Eriugenian revival in northern England after the Norman Conquest, to which Honorius contributed. See Kijewska 352–57; Yingt 92–93; Brennan 438–39.

particular challenge of the *Imago Mundi*, and its particular originality, lies in the way Honorius constructs an encyclopaedic vision of the world that is also a personal salvific labour – an endeavour that involves coming to terms with space and time as images of divine eternity.

1. Placing the *Imago Mundi*

Despite being one of the most prolific and popular authors of the twelfth century, Honorius' life is notoriously difficult to reconstruct, not least because he actively concealed his identity; his real name, family, education, and the places in which he lived are all shrouded in mystery.³ The most convincing reconstruction of Honorius' career to date is that proposed by Valerie Flint, whom I follow here.⁴ Born in Savoy, where he may have been “a member of the same minor nobility” as saints Anselm and William of Fruttuaria (Flint, *Honorius* 125), Honorius spent the early part of his adulthood in England (1096–1110), most likely in the monastic cathedrals at Canterbury and Worcester (Flint, *Honorius* 6–13; Hannam 2–41). The best evidence for Honorius' stay in England comes from Worcester, where he seems to have made use of the library when composing some of his earliest works (Flint, *Honorius* 8–9; *eadem*, *Career* 75–80; Heslop 792). These include the *Elucidarius* (a theological primer), the *Sigillum Beatae Mariae* (an allegorical reading of the Song of Songs), the *Gemma animae* (a commentary on the mass), and the *Speculum ecclesiae* (a collection of sermons covering the entire church year). Together, these works testify to Honorius' evolving interest in providing priests, and most likely monastic priests, with materials for pastoral instruction (“Chronology” 219–27; Muessig 257–65; Younge 51–52).

Around this time, Honorius seems to have rubbed shoulders with some of the leading monastic intellectuals of the day, including Anselm of Canterbury and William of Malmesbury. In the *Miracles of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, William describes Honorius as an “informant whose trustworthiness is beyond question” (Winterbottom and Thomson 59). The two men shared an interest in the Carolingian scholar John Scotus Eriugena, an important, if controversial, figure who played a key role in the transmission of Neoplatonic ideas to twelfth century writers (Winterbottom and Thomson 97).⁵ Around 1110, Honorius returned to southern Germany, possibly in the retinue of Henry I's daughter Mathilda, future bride of the Holy Roman Emperor Henry V, and probably because the death of Anselm

removed his primary reason for staying in England (Fulton 286–88). After that, the manuscript tradition points firmly to Honorius' association with Benedictine communities in the vicinity of Regensburg, and finally at the Austrian abbey of Lambach near Linz, where he spent the last years of his life (Flint, *Honorius* 107–35).

Flint situates the initial composition of the *Imago Mundi* either side of Honorius translocation from England to Germany. The evidence for this includes the distribution of the earliest surviving recensions and manuscripts, and especially the dedication in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 66, where a copy of the *Imago* is prefaced on fol. 1v by the Sawley Map.⁶ On the basis of a dedication found on fol. 2v offering the work to a certain “Henricus” (perhaps Henry of Blois or Henry of Huntingdon), and an allusion to the marriage of Mathilda in the final book, Flint dates the first recension of the *Imago* to 1110 and hedges her bets that, while it was completed in Germany, at least “some of the preparatory work was done in England” (“Imago” 10). In later recensions, the dedication is changed to “Christianus”, almost certainly abbot of the so-called Schottenkloster, or Irish house, in Regensburg, and Honorius revised the main body of the text sporadically until just before his death in 1140 (Flint, *Honorius* 14–15; “Imago” 8).⁷

In its final form, the *Imago Mundi* consists of three books. Following a prologue outlining the broad aims, Book i is structured hierarchically around the four elements. The first of these is earth, consisting of climactic zones, inhabited areas, islands and Hell, located deep in earth's core. As Honorius moves through the inhabited world he passes from eastern to western regions, traversing the northern and southern hemisphere, and describes their inhabitants, both human and monstrous. The second element, water, encompasses oceans, fresh and salt waters, and aquatic creatures. The third element, air, consists of the wind, clouds and the atmosphere. Book i closes with a description of fire, the lightest of the elements, the heavenly bodies, the signs of the Zodiac, the heaven of the angels, and finally the heaven inhabited by God. While much of the material in Book i is conventional, the fundamental motion of the text, ascending from earth to heaven, and from the centre of the cosmos outwards to the celestial realms, is unusual (de Toro 120).

Book ii moves from geography to time and is rooted in the discipline of computus. Time is initially a theoretical proposition, divided into three parts, *aevum*, *tempora aeterna*, and *tempus*, the precise definitions of which are discussed below. The bulk of Book ii, how-

6. The Sawley map is a much celebrated but later work, inspired by the *Imago*, but with no direct connection to Honorius. See Flint, “Imago” 7–13; Harvey 32–35.

7. The Schottenkloster is discussed elsewhere in this volume by Bowden, 41.

ever, is practical and mathematical, focusing on the “unfolding” (*plicare*) and refolding of “worldly time” (*tempus*). Honorius examines the divisibility of *tempus*, moving from the smallest measurable units (atoms, seconds) to larger ones (weeks, months and years); surveys the natural processes that energise transformation (seasons, equinoxes, solstices, eclipses); and concludes with a discussion of how to reckon time, including in relation to the liturgy. Again, much of the material is drawn from esteemed sources, although its arrangement reflects Honorius’ Platonic, and more distantly Pythagorean, interest in number as the ordering principle of the universe.

The closing statements of Book ii, considered in more detail below, have the feel of an ending, and on this basis Marie-Odile Garrigues perceptively suggests that Book iii is a later addition: “le troisième livre semble donc le fruit d’une réflexion postérieure” (“Inventaire critique” 29).⁸ This is further implied by the sources and form of the third book, which stands apart from the rest of the *Imago*. Book iii is essentially a universal chronicle subdivided into the ages of the world, moving from the patriarchs and kings of the Jews through to Mathilda’s betrothal (in the English manuscript tradition) and up to the reign of Conrad III (in the German). What is left of the sixth age, Honorius remarks sagely, is known only to God: “Reliquium sextae etatis soli Deo patet” (“the remainder of the sixth age lies open to God alone”) [iii.38]. This essay follows Garrigues’ proposal that the third book is an afterthought, and moreover a departure from Honorius original plan, which I will argue presents the journey through space (Book i) and time (Book ii) as a type of spiritual exercise, shifting the reader’s perspective from outer to inner vision, and from worldly time, to eternal timelessness.

Two issues have prevented modern critics from discerning the fundamentally salvific structure of the *Imago*. The first concerns Honorius’ heavy reliance on classical, patristic and other late antique authorities, a point that he openly acknowledges in the initial prologue: “Nihil autem in eo pono, nisi quod majorum commendat traditio” (“I include nothing in this book except that which is passed on in the report of the ancients”). As Flint’s densely annotated edition of the text shows, Honorius is not feigning here; almost every statement concerning geography and time can be traced back to an authoritative source, including Pliny, Orosius, Macrobius, Isidore, Bede, and Rabanus Maurus. Lurking in the background is a less expected strand of influence, namely Plato’s *Timaeus* and its later reflexes: Plotinus’ *Enneads*, Eriugena’s *Periphyseon*, and Boethius’s *Conso-*

8. Flint made two important studies of Book iii, focusing principally on the German manuscripts (“Anti-Jewish” and “World History”). In contrast to Garrigues, she regarded Book iii to be “an integral part of the treatise from the beginning” and suggested that its inclusion reflects Honorius’ exposure to universal history writing in the west of England at the turn of the twelfth century, such as John of Worcester’s continuations of Marianus Scotus’ *Universal Chronicle* (“World History” 213–14).

lation of *Philosophy* (523). The *Consolation of Philosophy*, I will argue, is especially important for Honorius' conception of time in the *Imago*, not least because this work facilitated the transmission of Platonic ideas into the central Middle Ages.

Due to its heavy reliance on earlier sources, many scholars glibly characterise the *Imago* as an 'unoriginal' work. Even Flint, one of Honorius' chief apologists, states that there is "nothing particularly new" in the *Imago*, "no tremendous surprises": "Neither in the contents of the three books nor in the materials from which he constructed them does Honorius seem to have been breaking fresh ground" ("Imago" 13). Similar remarks are often made about his output as a whole.⁹ Yet the cliché of Honorius as a slavish and derivative writer obscures the underlying creativity of the *Imago*, which is evinced primarily at the level of form and structure. According to Elizabeth Keen, one of the most sensitive modern readers of the *Imago*, Honorius' encyclopaedia should be regarded as a sophisticated attempt to reshape material through *compilatio* in a manner that engages with the "debates of the day" (287).¹⁰ To use one of Honorius' favourite categories of metaphor (architecture), while the building blocks of the *Imago* are reclaimed, the finished structure is purposeful, original and elegant, with a clear literary and didactic aim. By imposing form and structure on his many sources, Honorius seeks, as James Simpson puts it, to "enforme" his reader: to shape them "according to an ideal pattern", as opposed to simply "informing", in the sense of conveying information (5).

One of the most striking ornamental features of Honorius' edifice is his pervasive use of rhyme, primarily in the form of *homeoteleuton* (the repetition of word endings, usually through reproduction of case or inflection).¹¹ In the following analysis I will attempt to bring out this underappreciated aspect of Honorius' work – a clear sign that he possessed literary, as well as pedagogical aspirations – by presenting quotations in lineated form, although this is not how the *Imago* is usually printed.

The second issue that has obscured the formal inventiveness and salvific structure of Honorius' encyclopaedia is the disproportionate interest that medieval and modern readers have taken in the first book of the *Imago*, at the expense of both the material on time in Book ii, and the unity of the work as a whole. In England, this trend, which is partly a function of the success of Honorius' colourful description of the mappable world, sets in early with Benoît de Sainte-Maure's heavy use of Book i, and relative neglect of Book ii, in the ge-

9. E.g. "Honorius' treatment of these subjects is rarely original" (Hill 332); "Scholars of Honorius justifiably speak about the lack of originality" (Gurevich, *Popular Culture* 157).

10. Honorius' originality is also acknowledged by Crouse, e.g. "in doctrine and method, as well as in biography, [Honorius] stands thus as a *solitarius*, a theological pioneer, living in personal obscurity perhaps necessitated by the very boldness of his intellectual stance" ("Intentio Moysi" 157).

11. Honorius' prose rhyme may be a further indication of his immersion in English literary culture. As Yingst observes, prose rhyme has a 'long pedigree' in Latin literature before the twelfth century, yet the device appears in Honorius' works with a "sheer ubiquity" that is unusual (171). Perhaps Honorius was influenced by the similarly obsessive use of prose rhyme in the Latin sermons of Archbishop Wulfstan of York (d. 1023), which he might easily have encountered at Worcester. Compare the quotation from the prologue in the next section of this essay, for instance, to the following passage from Wulfstan's sermon *On Conversion*: "Ecce iam lapsi sumus. / Stare nullo modo possumus / In peccatis grauati iacemus, / sed qui nos rectos condidit adhuc expectat ut surgamus / sin uero suae pietatis aperit / et nos ad se recipere per penitentiam querit..." (Hall 129) ("You see, we are now fallen and are completely incapable of standing. We lie prostrate, weighed down by sins. But the one who created us upright still longs for us to rise up. In fact he opens up his compassion to us and seeks to receive us through repentance.").

ographical prologue to his *Chronique des ducs de Normandie* (c. 1175) (Damian-Grint 25–43; Fahlin I, xx). The same is true of Perot de Garbelei's more literal translation of the *Imago* in the Old French poem known as the *Divisiones Mundi* (34–36), the later Welsh translation *Delw y Byd* (3–6), and the *Historia Norwegie*, all of which focus on Book i. The medieval tilt towards Book i is echoed by modern scholars, who primarily discuss the *Imago* in relation to the *mappa mundi* tradition. In what follows, I suggest that reuniting Books i and ii restores the original formal logic of the work – the *ductus* by which Honorius conveys his readers from space, to time, and on to an apprehension of the world as an image of eternity.

2. Prologue: The World in *speculum*

This intention is signalled from the outset of the *Imago* in a simple passage from the opening prologue, the rich associations of which are easily overlooked:

Ad instructionem itaque multorum
quibus deest copia librorum,
hic libellus edatur.
Nomenque ei Imago Mundi indatur,
eo quod dispositio totius orbis in eo quasi in speculo inspiciatur..

(This little book has been produced for the instruction of the many who lack an abundance of books. And it is given the name *Imago Mundi*, because the disposition of the whole world can be inspected in it as in a mirror.)

Honorius' assumption that his readers lack access to books signals the *Imago's* place alongside his other early works of instruction, perhaps especially the *Elucidarius*. Written at the request of his followers in Canterbury, the *Elucidarius* untangles simple theological problems for an audience whose knowledge is limited, exploiting the form of the dialogue as a means of entertaining the reader whilst simultaneously closing-down debate. Both works, if Flint is correct in her framework for Honorius' English period, respond to a pressing need for educational materials in this region in the first decades of the twelfth century.¹²

The prologue's second sentence elegantly compresses a series of ideas that guide and illuminate Honorius' whole project. As Marcia

12. This passage also recalls the prologue of one of Honorius' later cosmological works, the *Clavis Physicae*, where he promises to address both the learned and unlearned: "non solum indoctos sed etiam nitore summe sapiente claros" ("not only the untaught but also those illustrious with wisdom's highest polish") (Lucentini 3).

Kupfer observes, Honorius' use of the word *disposito* recalls a passage from the Book of Wisdom that he cites at the end of his description of the city of Arithmetic in *De animae exsilio*: “sed omnia mensura et numero et pondere disposuisti... quoniam... sic est ante te totus orbis terrarum et tamquam gutta roris antelucani quae descendit in terram” (“thou has ordered [*disposuisti*] all things in measure, and number, and weight... For the whole world before you is... as a drop of the morning dew, that falls down upon the earth” (Wisdom 11.21–3; Kupfer 77). The biblical image creates a dramatic shift in perspective, making us first imagine the vastness of a world ordered and measured by God, before abruptly reducing this to the size of a dewdrop in His perspective. Honorius' allusion to this passage is significant, since it provided medieval writers with a point of intersection between the cosmology of Plato's *Timaeus*, where the universe is geometrically shaped by an artificer God, and the less mathematical world of the Hebraic Bible.¹³ In this way, Honorius implies that his little book (*libellus*) has the title *Imago Mundi* because it will show us the cosmos as we are encouraged to see it in Wisdom: *disposed* by God. The world, Honorius continues, can be “inspected in it as in a mirror” – just as, incidentally, a dewdrop reflects the world in miniature in its convex surface.

Cosmological associations aside, Honorius' decision to refer to his work as a mirror makes additional use of a common image for suggesting the power of a text to elicit self-examination and transformation. Gregory the Great called Scripture a mirror before the mind's eye in which we learn how far we have come, and how far we lie from our goal.¹⁴ Thus, on closer inspection, the *Imago's* opening statements, which are easily overlooked, contain a subtle criss-cross of images, amounting to the suggestion that the book sets out to bound the world as an image of eternity. The kind of image, or reflection, the book offers is ultimately intended as a spiritual exercise; by picturing time and space, Honorius allows his reader to rise above the *mundus* and detach themselves from transience through an internal motion.

Moving back to an earlier section of the general prologue, we find the following statement:

... poscis a me, amicissime, ut...
 totius orbis depingi formulam in qua sic oculum corporis
 valeas reficere
 sicut visum cordis soles in machina universitatis depascere.

(... you request from me, dear friend, that I paint the shape

13. Cf. Augustine, *City of God* xii.19: “for Plato... with his great authority represents God as fashioning the world on numerical principles. And in our own Scripture we read the words addressed to God: ‘Thou has ordered all things by measure and number and weight’”. The Platonic feel to the Book of Wisdom reflects the intellectual climate of Alexandria in the first century BCE, where the author would have encountered a heady blend of Middle Platonism and Jewish philosophy.

14. “Scriptura sacra mentis oculis quasi quoddam speculum opponitur, ut interna nostra facies in ipsa videatur. Ibi etenim foeda ibi pulchra nostra cognoscimus. Ibi sentimus quantum proficimus, ibi a propectu quam longe distamus” (“Sacred scripture is offered like a kind of mirror to the eyes of our mind, that we may see our interior face in it. For there we recognize our ugliness and our beauty. There we measure our progress; there we see how far we are from our goal”) (*Moralia in Iob*, 2.1:1–4; Kerns I.117).

of the entire world which might then strengthen the corporal eye just as you are accustomed to let range the inner eye upon the machine of the world.)

Once again, Honorius refers to his God-like power to contain the world's image in his text. At the same time, he also introduces the fundamental pattern of the work: first the reader will contemplate the cosmos through the eyes of the body (*oculum corporis*), before moving to a consideration of the deeper principles of the "world machine" (*machina universitatis*) via the vision of the heart (*visum cordis*). The analogy between bodily sight (*aspectus*) and the sight of the mind (*affectus*), and the notion that the former led naturally to the latter, was familiar to western Christians from the influential formulation in Augustine's *Soliloquies* (e.g. i.6), yet this concept also contains an unavoidable echo of the Neoplatonic worldview, with its division of the universe into the external world of the senses, and the more truthful inner nature of things.

In the context of the *Imago*, the shift from *aspectus* to *affectus* becomes a fundamental structuring principle (assuming the third book is a later addition). Book i asks the reader to grasp the shape of the physical world with their corporeal eye, and in so doing prepares them to contemplate the world as *machina*, temporally unfolding from eternity in Book ii. In important respects, this motion – from the material to the immaterial, and from external appearance to internal significance – also parallels contemporary exegetical practices. As Karl Kinsella has shown, just such an approach informs Honorius' commentary on the mass, the *Gemma animae*, where the reader moves from the literal impression of a familiar object (a chalice, column, window etc.), to the allegorical, and on to the tropological. In so doing, the material world functions as a prompt, or point of departure, for a reflection on deeper spiritual themes ("Typological Exegesis").

3. Mapping the world with the eyes of the body

Throughout book i, we see Honorius abiding by the structural logic of the initial prologue, aligning his mappable cosmos with the work of our bodily eye through the pervasive use of visual imagery. Here there is only space to point out a few of the different literary techniques he employs, namely: dramatic shifts in perspective, analogies from the world of twelfth-century material culture, and transitional statements that figure the reading experience as an embodied journey.

A good example of Honorius' concern with optics and viewpoints in Book i occurs in Chapter 5: "On the Shape of the Earth". This highly condensed section defines the earth as a sphere, gives an exact measurement of its circumference (12,052 miles), and describes the oceans that encircle its border. In order to convey an impression of the size and immensity of the globe, and to explain how the roughness of the earth's surface accords with its spherical nature, Honorius asks the reader to look at the world as if they were suspended in the air:

Si enim quis in aere positus eam desuper inspiceret, tota enormitas montium et concavitas vallium minus in ea appareret quam digitus alicuius si pilam praegrandem in manu teneret. (Imago i.5)

(For if anyone were situated high in the air, looking down upon it, the hugeness of its mountains and deepness of its valleys would appear to be smaller than the finger of someone who held a very large ball in his hand.)

The inspiration for this *kataskopos* occurs in Calcidius' commentary on Plato's *Timeaus*, which Flint identifies as Honorius' main source for this passage ("Imago" 51).¹⁵ Here Calcidius imagines looking at a set of jagged mountains from a distance and perceiving them to be as smooth as an orb turned on a lathe:

Quod si quis ad cacumina montium prolixitatemque et saxosam asperitatem aspiciens similem dicet esse ad tornum levigatae pilae deformitatem asperiorum montium, non recte sentit; non enim nos terram globum esse dicimus sed globosam, nec pilam sed similem pilae (Calcidius 222–23).¹⁶

(If, however, in gazing upon the craggy, rocky height of mountain peaks someone claims that the deformity of the jagged mountains resembles a ball that has been made smooth on the lathe, his perception is wrong; for we do not claim that the Earth is a sphere, but that it is spherical, not that it is a ball, but that it resembles one.)

Despite the similarities between these two passages, many of the elements that lend Honorius' *kataskopos* its force are his own, including the abrupt ascent into the air and the dizzying shift in scale from the immense mountains to the fingers holding the ball.

The familiar image of a hand grasping a ball relates to a second

15. For an overview of twelfth-century interest in the *Timeaus* see Hicks 17–20, 41–42. On Honorius' acquaintance with Calcidius, see Crouse, "Hic sensilis mundus" 284–85; d'Alverny 74–75.

16. Honorius may also be drawing on Isidore, *Etymologies* 285.

type of visual technique that Honorius uses to emphasise the link between bodily sight and the cosmological subject matter of Book i. Karl Kinsella has called this aspect of Honorius' pedagogy his "didactic materialism": the deployment of specific and often highly visual comparisons with objects from the everyday world of twelfth-century material culture as a means of explaining abstract concepts (*Edifice* I.130–31). Hence Honorius (i.73) compares the revolution of the earth around its poles to a wheel (*rota*) turning around an axle (*axis*). In a more striking example, pursued along similarly mechanical lines, the rapid tracking of the stars across the heavens is compared to a fly (*musca*) being carried around in the sails (*rota*) of a windmill (*molendinum*): "sicut musca si in rota molendini circumferretur" ("like a fly carried around on the wheel of a mill"). In this instance, Honorius is elaborating upon his sources, which include Macrobius' *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* and Bede's *On the Nature of Things*. From these authorities, Honorius derives the idea that stars follow their fixed courses with great speed, but not the analogy with the mill (Macrobius xxi.8; Bede xii). The precise scenario that Honorius has in mind is intriguing, since it is not clear whether the *molendinum* is a watermill or a windmill. If the device in question is wind powered – and it is hard to conceive of a fly being carried back and forth through water – then this constitutes one of the earliest references to the post mill (a twelfth-century invention) in medieval literature (Kealey 1–29).

The emphasis on sight in these examples corresponds to the broader imaginative frame that Honorius constructs for Book i, in which he repeatedly portrays the reader as an embodied traveller, much like the *viator* who tours the cities of learning in *De animae exsilio*. This conceit, which is pervasive throughout the first book, is most clearly displayed in the transitional passages that link the different thematic units of Honorius' cosmogram:

Insulas circuiamus,
tunc inferna etiam petamus (i.35)

(Having encircled the islands,
now we reach to towards the underworld).

Ignea inferni loca perspeximus,
ad refrigerium aquarum confugiamus (i.37)

(Having observed the fiery places of Hell,
towards the cooling waters we flee).

Aerem transvolavimus,
iam etheris ignem contendamus (i.71)

(Having flown through the air,
now we may hasten to the fire of the ether.)

These connecting couplets are rich with verbs of motion and change. Taking his reader by the hand, Honorius circles, flies, flees, and plunges through the different zones of the physical world. In the case of the movement from Hell to the oceans, the transition is a palpable relief from extreme heat. In the case of the movement from air to ether, a sudden ascent. Pulled, bodily, from one location to the next, each transition presents the reader with a new perspective on the workings of the earth, which they are invited to take in visually (*inspicere*) with the eyes of the body.

4. Measuring the world with the eyes of the heart

Book ii opens with yet another prologue, in which the central plan of the text is restated. Honorius' mode of address is particularly direct here, reminding his readers of the spiritual work that is still to come in the following chapters:

Priori libello globum totius mundi oculis corporis representavimus,
sequenti iam tempus in quo volvitur oculis cordis anteponamus.

(In the first book we have represented the globe of the world
to the eyes of the body; now, in the following [book] we set
Time before the eyes of the heart, in which [the world]
unfolds [*volvere*].)

In moving from space to time, and from physical sight to the eyes of the heart, Honorius pivots away from a world that, however exotic, can be known through observation, to the more abstract dimension of time. As in the city of Arithmetic in *De animae exsilio*, Honorius draws us into a universe arranged by number, measure, and weight. The use of the verb *volvere* to describe time's extension presents some initial difficulties of interpretation, implying either a circular motion – the 'revolution' of time – or a species of unfolding; subsequent pas-

sages in Book ii suggest that Honorius has the second meaning in mind (Lewis and Short, *volvere* sv. i.a and i.b3).

After the prologue, Honorius begins book ii proper with an extended and important definition of time, outlining a schema upon which the rest of the *Imago* subsequently relies. Time, for Honorius is tripartite, divided into *aevum* (“eternity”), *tempora aeterna* (“eternal times”), and *tempus mundi* (“time of the world”):

1. Aevum est ante mundum, cum mundo, post mundum. Hoc ad solum Deum pertinet, qui non fuit, nec erit, sed semper est.

2. Tempora aeterna sub aevo sunt, et haec ad archetipum mundum et angelos pertinent, qui ante mundum esse caeperunt, et cum mundo sunt, et post mundo erunt.

3. Tempus autem mundi est umbra aevi. Hoc cum mundo incipit et cum mundo desinet. Veluti si funis ab oriente in occidentem extenderetur, qui quotidie plicando collectus, tandem totus absumeretur. Per hunc extenduntur saecula, sub hoc currunt universa in hoc mundo posita. Hoc uniusquisque vita mensuratur. Hoc series dierum, et annorum terminatur. Tempus autem a temperamento dicitur, et nichil aliud quam vicissitudo rerum intelligitur.

(1. *Aevum* [eternity] is before the world, with the world and after the world. This relates to God alone who was not, neither will be, but who always is.

2. *Tempora aeterna* [eternal times] are beneath *aevum*, and these relate to the archetypal world and the angels, which existed before the world, and are with the world, and will be after the world.

3. *Tempus mundi* [the time of the world] is a shadow of eternity. It began with the world and will end with the world. Just as if a rope was extended from east to west, which every day is folded up a little, so that finally all of it is used up. Through this the ages are stretched out, and under this all things run having been placed in this world. With this, each life is measured, and with this the sequence of days and years is ended. Time is so called from *moderation* and nothing else is understood by it than the changefulness of things.)

17. For discussion of *aevum* and *aeternitas*, both of which are synonyms of the Greek *αἰών*, see Porro 132.

While these statements overlap significantly with other medieval temporal schemes, they are in many respects Honorius' own distillation of centuries of thought (Gurevich, *Categories* 118–19). Compared to his description of worldly time (*tempus mundi*), the statements concerning *aevum* and *tempora aeterna* have an air of hasty disengagement. In defining God's eternity, Honorius chooses the word *aevum* over *aeternitas*, and emphasises its status as a type of timeless present, a concept that Richard Sorabji traces back to Plotinus' *Enneads* (113).¹⁷ Eternity, Plotinus tells us, has no extension: it cannot be separated, unfolded, or stretched out:

Τὸ γὰρ ἀληθῶς εἶναι ἐστὶ τὸ οὐδέποτε μὴ εἶναι οὐδ' ἄλλως εἶναι· τοῦτο δὲ ὡσαύτως εἶναι· τοῦτο δὲ ἀδιαφόρως εἶναι. Οὐκ ἔχει οὖν ὀτιοῦν [τὸ] ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο, οὐδ' ἄρα διαστήσεις, οὐδ' ἐξελίξεις, οὐδὲ προάξεις, οὐδὲ παρατενεῖς, οὐδ' ἄρα οὐδὲ πρότερον αὐτοῦ οὐδέ τι ὕστερον λαβεῖν ἔχεις. Εἰ οὖν μήτε πρότερον μήτε ὕστερον περὶ αὐτό, τὸ δ' «ἔστιν» ἀληθέστατον τῶν περὶ αὐτὸ καὶ αὐτό, καὶ οὕτω δέ, ὅτι ἐστὶν ὡς οὐσία ἢ τῷ ζῆν, πάλιν αὐ ἦκει ἡμῖν τοῦτο, ὃ δὴ λέγομεν, ὁ αἰών. (III.vii.6, ll. 10–2).

(For true being is never not being, or being otherwise; and this is being always the same; and this is being without any difference. So if [eternity] does not have any 'this and that'; nor, therefore, will you be able to separate it out or unroll [ἐξελίσσω] it or prolong it or stretch it; nor, then, can you apprehend anything of it as before or after. If, then, there is no before or after about it, but its 'is' is the truest thing about it, and itself, and this in the sense that it is by its essence or its life, then again there has come to us what we are talking about, eternity.)

As Sorabji shows, Plotinus' view of eternity as a timeless present, characterised by a lack of extension or capacity for unfolding (*ἐξελίσσω*), had a profound influence on later medieval writers, not least Boethius, who “transmitted the traditional concept to the Latin middle ages” (121). Thus in the *Consolation of Philosophy* we encounter the statement:

Quod igitur interminabilis vitae plenitudinem totam pariter comprehendit ac possidet, cui neque futuri quidquam absit nec praeteriti fluxerit, id aeternum esse iure perhibetur, idque necesse est et sui compos praesens sibi semper adsistere et

infinitatem mobilis temporis habere praesentem. (v pr.6, 25–31)

(Whatever therefore comprehends and possesses at once the whole fullness of boundless life, and is such that neither is anything future lacking from it, nor has anything past flowed away, that is rightly held to be eternal, and that must necessarily both always be present to itself, possessing itself in the present, and hold as present the infinity of moving time.)

In Boethius' claim that eternity is "always present to itself" (*prasens sibi semper*) we catch an unmistakable echo of Honorius' reference to God's realm as a place that "always is" (*semper est*).

Tempora aeterna, the realm of the angels, is Honorius' contribution to the wider medieval inventory of intermediate temporalities. As Pasquale Porro observes, while the concept of eternity was relatively stable, the same cannot be said of "the framework of created durations": the different manifestations of time, which "became progressively enriched by new terms and concepts", particularly during the twelfth century (131). Among these new terms and concepts are a subgroup that bridge, or blur, human and divine time, including *sempereternitas*, "endless duration of that which begins *with* time", and *perpetuitas*, "endless duration of that which begins *in* time" (Porro 131). Since Honorius' *tempora aeterna* clearly begins 'in time', scholars have been tempted to translate this as "perpetuity" (e.g. Kinsella, *Edifice* I.221). However, Honorius' decision not to use the word *perpetuitas* (and I think we should regard this as a conscious decision) is significant, insofar as it signals his desire to contribute to precisely that "progressive enrichment" of terms and concepts that Porro refers to – fusing, extending and imaginatively recombining sources to produce his own characteristically pithy and faintly Platonic formulation of angelic time.

In general, Honorius cursory treatment of these contested temporal categories conveys the impression that these were not his priority. Instead, what does seem to catch his attention is worldly time (*tempus mundi*), and specifically its relationship to eternity; enabling his readers to grasp and visualize the relationship between these two temporalities, it would seem, was his ultimate goal. Tellingly, it is *tempus mundi* that inspires some of the richest, and most puzzling, imagery in the *Imago*. For Honorius, human time is a "shadow" (*umbra*) of eternity: it is finite, beginning and ending with the world, and, like a rope stretching from east to west, it is in the process of being gathered up, little by little. Along time's rope run the ages of the world

and under it are measured out the lives of individuals and the sequence of days and years. *Tempus*, Honorius concludes, is derived etymologically from *temperamentum* (“moderation”) and is reducible to nothing other than the changefulness of things (*vicissitudo rerum*).

Honorius’ first statement – the typically memorable formulation “*Tempus autem mundi est umbra aevi*” (“the time of the world is the shadow of eternity”) – draws us back to Plato’s model of forms and sensible realities. As Plato put it, “the archetype is forever existent in all eternity, and this sensible world, [is] its image (*imago*)” (*Timaeus* 38c). Aside from being generally Platonic, the specific use of the word shadow (*umbra*) to characterise time’s relationship to eternity is harder to pin down, since this is not among the terms that Calcidius uses to refer to forms and their worldly reflexes, either in his translation or commentary. One possibility is that Honorius was thinking of the shadow cast by a ‘gnomon’, the point of a sundial or stick used to tell the time. The gnomon, which literally casts a shadow of the heavens onto the ground in order to indicate the time, is described by Calcidius in his commentary on the *Timaeus* (64) and referred to elsewhere by Honorius in the *Imago* (e.g. ii.24).

More striking still is Honorius’ extended metaphor of time as a rope, folded up little by little until it finally runs out. The reference to time “folding” (*plicare*) echoes, and helps us to interpret, the earlier allusion to time unrolling (*volvare*) in the prologue to Book ii of the *Imago*. *Plicare* is cognate with the verbs *explicare* (to unfold, or explain) and *implicare* (to complicate, make difficult, intertwine), and Honorius’ use of this medieval key word suggests he is engaging in an innovative way with a wider discourse of pleating and folding that extends back to Plotinus, and ultimately Pythagoras.

Biblical precedent for the idea of the world unfolding in time is found in the Book of Isaiah (40.22), where God “stretches out the heavens like a canopy and spreads them out like a tent to live in” (*extendit velut nihilum caelos et expandit eos sicut tabernaculum ad inhabitandum*). Another important parallel occurs in the *Enneads*. As Plotinus reaches the culmination of his discussion of eternity and time in book iii – one of the best-known passages in the text – he engages in a conversation with a personification of Time, asking this figure to explain how it came into being. The answer he receives from Time is that it regards itself as an expression of the soul which, having existed peacefully in eternity, is stimulated by its “restless active nature” to engage in a process of “unfolding” (ἐξέλισσω):

Λέγοι δ' ἂν περι αὐτοῦ ὡδέ πως· ὡς πρότερον, πρὶν τὸ πρότερον δὴ τοῦτο γεννηῖσαι καὶ τοῦ ὑστέρου δεηθῆναι, σὺν αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ ὄντι ἀνεπαύετο χρόνος οὐκ ὢν, ἀλλ' ἐν ἐκείνῳ καὶ αὐτὸς ἡσυχίαν ἤγε. Φύσεως δὲ πολυπράγμονος καὶ ἄρχειν αὐτῆς βουλομένης καὶ εἶναι αὐτῆς καὶ τὸ πλεόν τοῦ παρόντος ζητεῖν ἐλομένης ἐκινήθη μὲν αὐτή, ἐκινήθη δὲ καὶ αὐτός, καὶ εἰς τὸ ἔπειτα αἰεὶ καὶ τὸ ὑστερον καὶ οὐ ταυτόν, ἀλλ' ἕτερον εἶθ' ἕτερον κινούμενοι, μῆκος τι τῆς πορείας ποιησάμενοι αἰῶνος εἰκόνα τὸν χρόνον εἰργάσμεθα. Ἐπεὶ γὰρ ψυχῆς ἦν τις δύναμις οὐχ ἡσυχος, τὸ δ' ἐκεῖ ὀρώμενον αἰεὶ μεταφέρειν εἰς ἄλλο βουλομένης, τὸ μὲν ἀθρόον αὐτῇ πᾶν παρεῖναι οὐκ ἤθελεν· ὡσπερ δ' ἐκ σπέρματος ἡσύχου ἐξελίττων αὐτὸν ὁ λόγος διέξοδον εἰς πολὺ, ὡς οἶεται, ποιεῖ, ἀφανίζων τὸ πολὺ τῷ μερισμῷ, καὶ ἀνθ' ἑνὸς ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ ἐν δαπανῶν εἰς μῆκος ἀσθενέστερον πρόεισιν... (III.vii.7 ll. 14–27).

(It [*i.e.* time] might say something like this about itself; that before, when it had not yet, in fact, produced this 'before' or felt the need of the 'after', it was at rest with eternity in real being; it was not yet time, but itself, too, kept quiet in that. But since there was a restlessly active nature which wanted to control itself and be on its own, and chose to seek for more than its present state, this moved, and time moved with it; and so, always moving on to the 'next' and the 'after', and what is not the same, but one thing after another, we made a long stretch of our journey and constructed time as an image of eternity. For because soul had an unquiet power, which wanted to keep on transferring what it saw there to something else, it did not want the whole to be present to it all together; and, as from a quiet seed the formative principle, unfolding itself [*ἐξελίττων αὐτὸν*], advances, as it thinks, to largeness, but does away with the largeness by division and, instead of keeping its unity in itself, squanders it outside itself and so goes forward to a weaker extension.)

If we could ask Time to relate its origin, Plotinus suggests, it would tell us that it rested initially in Being with eternity, until its nature (which is essentially restless) compelled it to seek more than the present. In this way time, time, like the soul (in which we all mysteriously participate), sought to extend itself by unfolding and extending, and thereby produced an image of eternity.

Plotinus' portrayal of time restlessly unfolding finds an echo in the

Consolation of Philosophy, and it is probably from Boethius that Honorius derives his own understanding of the foldable nature of time:

Providentia namque cuncta pariter quamvis diversa quamvis infinita *complectitur*, fatum vero singula digerit in motum locis, formis ac temporibus distributa, ut haec temporalis ordinis explicatio, in divinae mentis adunata prospectum providentia sit, eadem vero adunatio digesta atque *explicata* temporibus fatum vocetur... (iv pr. 6)

(For providence embraces all things together, though they are different, though they are infinite; but fate arranges as to their motion separate things, distributed in place, form and time; so that this unfolding of temporal order being united in the foresight of the divine mind is providence, and the same unity when distributed and unfolded in time is called fate.)¹⁸

18. This passage is also examined by Morton, 126–27.

As David Albertson observes, Boethius draws a distinction in this passage between the capaciousness of providence and the limited time of fate: “Providence... ‘Embraces’ (*complicare*) the infinitely diverse form of things in the simplicity of the divine Mind, while fate in a contrary but isomorphic movement is the ‘unfolding’ (*explicare*) of time” (125). The Boethian formulation of fate as a temporal entity nested within providence perhaps comes closest to Honorius’ own conception of *tempus mundi* as unfolded time, simultaneously enfolded within *aevum*.

These sources help to establish the intellectual backdrop against which Honorius arrived at his definition of *tempus mundi*, providing the key notion of a temporality that, in contrast to eternity, is finite and has the capacity to be folded. With the image of the rope, however, we once again witness both Honorius’ instinctive attraction to accessible metaphor and freedom with his sources, particularly in his decision to present time as an entity that folds up as history progresses, as opposed to unfolding. This conceptual shift, which inverts his sources, appears to be Honorius’ own contribution to the history of ‘folded time’.

As Kinsella notes, Honorius’ description of time’s rope strongly resembles other examples of his “didactic materialism”, and in this respect we might suspect that the image is also his own invention (*Edifice*, I.228). Kinsella compares the rope’s east / west orientation, to a passage from Hugh of St Victor’s *De archa Noe mystica*, in which Hugh imagines drawing an oval around Noah’s ark in order to create

19. The passage is discussed by Burgon at 97.

a “mappa mundi” (14.28; *PL* 176.700).¹⁹ The bow of the ark that points to the east represents Paradise, while the stern, directed towards the west, is the resurrection and the Last Judgement. But Honorius’ image is more dynamic, and represents a fascinating and well-executed fusion of Neoplatonic ideas with imagery drawn from the everyday world of construction. Ironically, while time is ostensibly to be apprehended by the eyes of the heart, Honorius at moments like this must take recourse to the world of images, just as he did more systematically in Book i. The vivid (if mind bending) use of the rope metaphor can be seen as a kind of literary example or redoubling of the philosophical lesson of the text: that we dwell in the realm of the *imago*.

Given Honorius’ abiding interest in architectural allegory, it seems possible that the spark of inspiration for the rope of time may have come from the builder’s line (*funiculus*), a length of cord used to lay out and measure edifices. Just such a line features in a vision experienced by Abbot Gunzo of Beaume preserved in a collection of late twelfth-century Cluniac miracles (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS Lat. 17716, f. 42v–44r). Paralysed after a stroke and confined to the infirmary at Beaume, Gunzo has a vision of the apostles Peter, Paul and the martyr Stephen, who ask him to convey a message to Abbot Hugh of Cluny, commanding him to build a larger church without fear for the expense. Having said this, Peter proceeds to take out a set of builders’ lines (*funiculus*) and use these to “measure off the length and breadth [of the church]” (*longitudinis atque latitudinis metiri quantitatem*) [Braunfels 240–41]. As Carruthers notes, this scene is shot through with allusions to Ezekiel 40.2–3, in which the prophet receives a similarly technical vision regarding the construction of a temple (221–28). In both Ezekiel and Gunzo’s case, following the builder’s line becomes a “penitential and salvific act”: “one mode of the *ductus* of salvation itself” (Carruthers 227). As a deep enthusiast of both the Old Testament and architectural allegory, the appearance of the builder’s line in Ezekiel’s vision, and its penitential associations, are factors that may well have attracted Honorius to this image.

Helpfully, the moment of Gunzo’s enlightenment is depicted in an accompanying illustration in MS Lat. 17716 (fig. 1).



Fig 1. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS Lat. 17716, f. 43r

As Gunzo lies in his bed, Stephen holds the line of rope, while Peter and Paul, in the role of master builders, direct it across the building. From the static image, it is impossible to tell whether they are unfolding the rope in an act of measuring, or folding it away again having mapped the building. Other elements of the language that Honorius uses in his account of time's rope seem to confirm that he had the builder's line in mind. Like the foundations stones of a building, Honorius imagines the events of this world being located (*positus*) beneath the taught line, which also serves as a way of "measuring" (*mensurare*) out the life spans of each individual.

What follows in the rest of Book ii is an attempt to describe time's folds by breaking them down into different units. Beginning with the atom, "the smallest space of time" (*minimum temporis spacium*), Honorius moves steadily through ever larger units of time and related topics: minutes, hours, days and their names, the night and its separate parts, months and their etymologies, seasons and their "unevenness", lunar years, leap years, the generations of man, the ages of the world, the calculation of moveable feasts, and so on. With this we move squarely into the realm of *computus* – the medieval science of calculating times and dates using a blend of mathematics and as-

tronomy – and, with the exception of a fascinating passage on man as microcosm taken from Eriugena's *Periphyseon*, back to more predictable sources. Yet instead of a dry categorisation of time to be passively surveyed by the reader, this computus material, we are informed, is presented within a framework of learning and ascent. The divisions of time are to be conceptualised and internalised in an active way by the reader as part of their cosmological journey through and above the image of time. Indeed, the final lines of Book ii end with another theoretical comment on the nature of worldly time (*tempus*):

Per descriptum volubile tempus,
 sic volvitur volubilis mundus.
 Sed nos temporis volubilitatem iam postponamus,
 et ad stabilitatem aevi mente tendamus. (ii.120)

(Through the winding [*volubile*] record of time,
 Thus the twisting world is rolled.
 But now we may set aside the turning of time
 And stretch with the mind towards the stability of *aevum*.)

This playful, musical statement, which Garrigues regards as the original ending of the *Imago*, neatly completes Honorius' journey. Having assayed the mappable world with the eyes of the mind and contemplated the measurable units of time with the eyes of the heart, the reader now sets aside *tempus*, which twists and turns unpredictably, and reaches instead towards the timeless stability of *aevum*. There is no known source for this statement, which has the feel of a memorable jingle, similar in style perhaps to the poems of the *Carmina burana*, and expressing sentiments that are broadly Boethian (Flint, "Imago" 123). The final couplet, if that is what we wish to call it, pushes the reader to make the leap from *tempus mundi* to *aevum*, a motion achieved by extending the mind, like the tent stretched (*tendere*) across the sky in Isaiah. With the reference to *stabilitas*, Honorius may again be reaching for the *Consolation of Philosophy* (3 m.9), this time to the famous formulation of God as the Unmoved Mover: "stabilisque manens de cuncta moveri" ("and resting still, grant motion to all else"). In making this gesture, Honorius' reader is ultimately asked to complete a kind of spiritual exercise, grasping the world as a moving machine and *imago*, in contrast to the stability of eternity.

Conclusion

20. The online database compiled by the project [Defining Europe in Medieval European Geographical Discourse](#) lists 350 surviving copies of the *Imago*.

The *Imago Mundi* was one of the most impactful works of the high Middle Ages, exceeding even Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies* in terms of its surviving manuscripts.²⁰ Despite its popularity, the text has been valued, both by medieval and modern readers, more as a cosmological primer than an integrated theorization of space and time with a serious pastoral and literary agenda. Honorius, I have argued, conceived of the *Imago* as a coherent work, designed to stimulate an experience of spiritual ascent, in which the reader moves from a visual appreciation of space to an intellectual understanding of time, and on to a vision of eternity. Superficially, Honorius conveys the impression of a conservative writer, drawing most of his information from well-known sources. Yet the *Imago* has a highly creative overarching formal structure and is innovative in its use of literary devices, ranging from rhyme and perspectival shifts (such as the *kataskopos*) to everyday metaphors, like the windmill and the rope. While the ultimate origin of the notion that time is foldable can be traced back to Plotinus' *Enneads*, Honorius' immediate source was probably Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*.

As Albertson shows, the concept of the fold has a remarkably important place in European culture. Originating ultimately in Pythagorean claims about geometrical flow (the line unfolds from a point), the notion of the fold was elaborated in the later Middle Ages by Nicholas of Cusa, and thereafter feeds into the humanist tradition of Leibniz, Heidegger and onto their postmodern disciples such as Gilles Deleuze and Michel Serres. Honorius' metaphor of time as a rope in the process of being coiled up seems to be unique in the history of this idea. Not only does this inversion epitomise Honorius' creative treatment of his sources and instinctive feel for affective metaphor (both of which have been undervalued), it also represents the conceptual centre and spiritual goal of this carefully structured work by summarising for the mind's eye how our world unfolds and re-folds, image-like, from God's eternity.

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The Limits of the Present: Hugh of Saint-Victor's *Pictura* of Noah's Ark and Augustine's *Distentio Animi*

Abstract

1. I would like to thank all participants of the *Narrating Time in the Twelfth-Century* project: especially the organisers Sarah Bowden, Lea Braun, and George Younge, and others who gave feedback on an earlier version of this paper – particularly Jonny Morton who acted as respondent. I am also grateful to the History of Art Research Committee at the University of Cambridge, to whom I presented a version of this paper in Spring 2021 and received invaluable suggestions and comments.

2. These two treatises have (confusingly) accrued a number of different titles over time, due to different usages in the manuscripts: what I refer to as *De Pictura Arche* was traditionally referred to as *De Archa Noe Mystica*; or *Libellus de formatione arche*. *De Archa Noe Morali* has been referred to simply as *De Archa Noe*. Here, I often abbreviate the titles: *De Pictura Arche* may be referred to simply as *De Pictura*; and *De Archa Noe Morali* as *De Archa Noe*.

Imagining the universe from the perspective of providence, the size and complexity of Hugh of Saint-Victor's *pictura* of Noah's Ark, described in *De Pictura Arche* (c. 1125–31), has long confused scholars. Many have suggested the text describes a now-lost, real, physical painting; for others it reads as an exclusively verbal picture, an *ekphrasis*, in the tradition of monastic memory practice. Proponents of the former interpretation argue the density of description defies memory and imagination. But, this paper argues, the pressure the *pictura* exerts on memory and imagination, as an *ekphrasis*, might also be seen as central to its rhetorical-spiritual efficacy. In his longer works on the Ark, *De Archa Noe Morali* and *De Vanitate Mundi*, Hugh envisages ascent in Augustinian terms, as a stretching of the soul's (or memory's) attention to hold passing times 'as present,' that simulates God's 'eternal present.' Hugh intends, I propose, in keeping with Augustine's *distentio animi*, that we achieve the *pictura*'s eternal view in the distension of our awareness, our struggle to hold as pictorially 'present' what is described in the time of narrative. As a reworking of the classical, simultaneous 'view from above' along Augustinian lines – as an inner labour, and time-bound exercise – the *pictura* may also be situated in a new historical-intellectual context: not just as an astonishing example of monastic map-making or mnemotechnical practice, but as part of a later-medieval shift towards thinking about ascent as a coming to terms with time, and eternity as discoverable in the here and now, in the 'limits of the present.'¹

Hugh of Saint-Victor's 'picture' of Noah's Ark, *De Pictura Arche*, has long been a subject of debate among medievalists. In two related treatises written sometime between 1125 and 1131, *De Archa Noe Morali*, and the shorter, more technical companion-work, *De Pictura Arche* (the more debated of the two), Hugh described the construction of the Ark given to Noah in *Genesis* (6.14–16).² This act of description is itself a feat of construction, entailing – according to the cumulative levels of exegesis – a vast encyclopaedic map for the complete

history of the terrestrial, cosmic, and human worlds from the beginning of time stretching towards the eschatological future. As Hugh summarises the Ark in *De Archa Noe Morali*:

Ibi universa opera restaurationis nostrae a principio mundi usque ad finem plenissime continentur, et status universalis Ecclesiae figuratur. Ibi historia rerum gestarum textitur, ibi mysteria sacramentorum inveniuntur, ibi dispositi sunt gradus affectuum, cogitationum, meditationum, contemplationum, bonorum operum, virtutum et praemiorum [...] Ibi quoddam universitatis corpus effingitur, et concordia singulorum explicatur. (*De Archa Noe Morali* 4.21; *PL* 176.680; *Spiritual Writings* 152)

(There all the works of restoration are contained in all their fullness, from the world's beginning to its end; therein is represented the condition of the universal Church. Into it is woven the story of events, in it are found the mysteries of the sacraments, and there are set out the stages of affections, thoughts, meditations, contemplations, good works, virtues, and rewards [...]. There the sum of things is depicted, and the harmony of its elements explained.)³

3. Hugh's *De Archa Noe Morali* and books one and two of *De Vanitate Mundi* (along with extracts from his commentary on *Ecclesiastes*, and a short text, *De Substantia Dilectionis*) have been translated by a Religious of C. S. M. V. in the volume *Hugh of Saint-Victor: Selected Spiritual Writings*, which I use throughout the essay. All references to book and chapter numbers in works included in this volume are those used in the translated text (and not those of the Latin *PL* edition which often differ).

4. Rudolph's illustrations are included in his book, *The Mystic Ark*, and on a dedicated [website](#) (accessed 5 Nov. 2022).

Many readers, amongst them Danielle Lecoq and Patrice Sicard, took Hugh's artistic terminology and the sheer complexity of the figure outlined to mean that a real drawing of the Ark must have existed, and offered their own drawings in an effort to reconstruct putative lost originals (see Lecoq and Sicard). More recently, Conrad Rudolph has argued that *De Pictura* was not even written by Hugh himself, but constitutes a *reportatio* of his comments on a monumental painting of the Ark in the cloister at the Abbey of Saint Victor – “the most complex individual work of figural art of the entire Middle Ages” – which Rudolph has reconstructed in over a hundred digital illustrations (figures 1 and 2) (Rudolph xix).⁴

Others have attempted to recontextualise the Ark as an extraordinary example of crafted verbal, fictive *picturae* or *ekphrases*, a common practice in the schools designed to concentrate and order materials in the mind. Michael Evans suggested Hugh's composition was a deliberately playful “mixture of the plausible and impossible:” its “present-tense narration” and “highly personal mode of address” imply not the description of a pre-existent image or set of images, but

the conjuring of an image for the mind alone (Evans 74). Mary Carruthers developed this line of reasoning:

The emphasis on continuing process is certainly that of Hugh of Saint-Victor's picture of Noah's ark, which comes into being as it is described and is clearly not a pre-existing object, even though some modern scholars, misled perhaps by their own assumptions, have attempted to draw parts of it [...]. (Carruthers, "Moving Images" 293)

"[Taking] shape in the present time of narrative and meditation which is 'memory time,'" the Ark is rather to be 'walked' through as a "summary and orientation, a 'way' to the treatise it accompanies, *De Archa Noe*" (Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought* 246 and 249).⁵ Carruthers reads the Ark as an instance of the medieval monastic absorption of the tradition of *ekphrasis* ("loosely understood to mean a description of just about any sort, including imaginary things, often buildings") into the *via* of inventive meditation, known to the monks as *memoria spiritalis* or *sancta memoria* – which derived its techniques in part from the Ciceronian tradition of locational memory (Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought* 12).⁶ For Carruthers, then, the Ark is essentially a striking – unprecedented (in size) – monument to monastic mnemotechnical method, an imagined building project for mentally arranging and recalling the soteriological 'content' of *De Archa Noe Morali*. "He used it as he advised others to, as a universal cognitive machine" (Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought* 244).

Yet Carruthers' interest in the Ark remains within the bounds of the formal and rhetorical; she does not dwell on the lessons of *De Archa Noe* – even if she sees the *pictura* as a guide to its contents. This article proposes to fill that gap. Paying closer attention to the teachings of *De Archa Noe* – and a third treatise that discusses the Ark, *De Vanitate Mundi* – it suggests that we can better understand the ekphrastic (exclusively verbal) nature of Hugh's *De Pictura* if we acknowledge the extent to which its mnemotechnical character is bound up with Hugh's thinking on the problem of time.

The Ark is introduced in both *De Archa Noe* and *De Vanitate* as a means of overcoming what Hugh repeatedly laments as the 'great mutability' arising in the heart of man: the fallen heart (or soul) is continually dragged by its attachment to temporal things away from the Creator, in whom alone it can find rest.⁷ Offering a remedy from the *mutabilitas rerum*, these works resemble earlier medieval works, most familiarly Macrobius' Commentary on Cicero's *Somnium*

5. The first quotation here is appropriated from Carruthers' reading of a work by Adam of Dryburgh (c. 1140–1212), apparently an imitation of Hugh's *pictura: De tripartito tabernaculo*, or "The Triple Tabernacle" of c. 1180. Adam, like Hugh, includes as part of this work what he calls a *pictura* for readers to "enlarge" on the text in memory and imagination. However, Adam's *pictura* does not seem to be informed by the same temporal concerns which (I argue) inform Hugh's composition.

6. Carruthers' definition of *ekphrasis* is taken from "Moving Images" 290.

7. *De Archa Noe Morali* opens: "cumque magno quidem desiderio exposcerent, demonstrari sibi quae causa in corde hominis tantas cogitationum fluctuationes ageret [...]." ("And the brethren earnestly entreated that they might be shown the cause of these unstable movements in man's heart [...].") (1.2; *PL* 176.617; *Spiritual Writings* 45).

Scipionis and Boethius' *De consolatione Philosophiae*, organised around the idea of *kataskopos*, the endeavour to transcend the bounds of the temporal. Only in the treatises on the Ark, attaining a view of the world from the perspective of eternity, or providence, is not simply reported, as it is in these earlier texts, but formulated as an active *exercise* or discipline: "If then, we have begun to live persistently in our own heart through the practice of meditation, we have already in a manner ceased to belong to time; and, having become dead to the world, we are living inwardly with God" (*De Archa Noe* 2.1).⁸ The Ark, in all three works, is intended as an interior refuge where we are not subject to transience: "those who dwell there, dwell there always, and always rejoice, grieving for nothing that is past, fearing nothing future, possessing what they love" (*De Archa Noe* 4.21).⁹

This article argues that the Ark drawing described in *De Pictura* is not just an 'illustration' or memory palace for information given in these longer works. It is precisely *the exercise* Hugh describes in these other works: it facilitates our escape from time – and it does so in and through its demand for concentrated inner picturing. Or, to put it the other way around, the *pictura's* demand for concentrated picturing, its ekphrastic method, is (I suggest) central to the Ark's soteriological and 'transcendental' function, set out by Hugh in the longer works, as a remedy from time. In support of this reading, I consider the influence of Augustine's discussion of time in the *Confessions*, particularly in relation to the *distentio* or *extentio animi*, ('distension of the soul'). In book eleven of this work, read throughout the Middle Ages, and certainly by Hugh, Augustine comes to the conclusion that man is only able to comprehend time as a continuous entity because of the way he can hold past, present, and future as present in the mind's eye.¹⁰ Without this power for continuous attention, man is continuously carried away on the fleeting present. The stretched-out present of imagination and memory – a distension that requires meditation and practice – is a simulacrum of God's eternity, that perceives all time as perfectly present. Augustine's suggestion that God's eternity might be discoverable analogously in this way, through our inward, memorial extension helps to make sense, I propose, of the form and logic of Hugh's image: a "long" (*spatiosa*) picture of the created order, that comes into being (that receives its historical, eternal shape) inwardly, in an ongoing 'present' of imagination and memorisation.¹¹ In *De Pictura*, Hugh transforms the notion of a view from an 'eternal present,' I want to suggest, into an exercise in 'making present,' on the model of Augustine: so that the reader achieves this

8. "Si ergo per studium meditationis assidue cor nostrum inhabitare coeperimus, iam quodammodo temporales esse desistimus, et quasi mortui mundo facti intus cum Deo vivimus" (PL 176.635; *Spiritual Writings* 73).

9. "[...] propter quod et ibi manent, et semper permanent, et semper gaudent, nihil dolentes praeteritum, nihil timentes futurum, habentes quod diligunt" (PL 176.680; *Spiritual Writings* 152).

10. For the influence of the *Confessions* in the Middle Ages, see Saak.

11. *Spatiosa* is used, for example, at *De Vanitate Mundi* 2.5; PL 176.720; *Spiritual Writings* 182 when Hugh warns of traversing (that is, mentally constructing) the Ark: "Spatiosa quidem, sed non fastidiosa erit ista deambulatio" ("this will be a long walk but not a tedious one").

12. Hugh describes the content of the Ark as the *opera restorationis* at *De Archa Noe Morali* 4.21, quoted above page 1. The works of restoration are our salvation history, the interventions of God in creation which reveal to us the possibility of our redemption. In *De Sacramentis*, for example, Hugh defines the *opera restorationis* as “the Incarnation of the Word and all the Word’s sacraments, accomplished over the six ages of salvation history” (as distinguished from the *opera conditionis*, “works of creation,” which “pertain to the creation of the world and all its elements, accomplished in six days”). *De Sacramentis* 1, Prol. 2; *PL* 176.183; Deferrari 3. At other times, however, Hugh talks about the *work* of restoration which we undertake as individuals, healing and transforming fallen creation from the inside out, as it were (implicit, for example, in the prologue to *Sententiae de Divinitate* (lines 234–35) where “opus restorationis est restituere quod perierat” (“the work of restoration is to restore what was lost”); Piazzoni 920, cited by Coolman 14). This dual meaning is reflected in the Ark as an image of the historical works of restoration, but one that is crafted by the soul and which remakes and perfects the soul in turn.

13. Boyd Taylor Coolman has more recently described the Ark as “not simply an elaborate memory-storage and retrieval device [...] rather, its very structure makes constructive, theological claims about reality” (*The Theology* 184). Coolman’s more subtle, theological reading of the Ark as a “reforming practice” (4), through which we actually participate in the divine mind, is more in line with the kinds of claims I make for the Ark here, and offers a helpful precedent for my argument (while Coolman is less interested in how we ‘read’ the *pictura*, or any potential links with Augustine’s meditations on memory, time, and eternity). Meanwhile Patricia Dailey has talked about “the Augustinian model [of time] inherited by many Christian mystics [...] one that aspires to the promise of eternal salvation of union by means of memory,” though Dailey focusses more on references to man’s ‘prememory’ of God in mysticism, than with the memorial exercise of *distentio*; and she does not discuss Hugh (Dailey 341).

14. For new forms of religious life in the twelfth century, see Constable. For the flourishing of literature about and for ascetic ‘formation’ in this period see, for

providential or eternal view of the world (creation as the ‘works of restoration’) in the course of the readerly struggle to unify as present – as a simultaneous mental picture – what comes into being across the lived time of narrative.¹²

Thus, this article maintains that Hugh’s composition is a verbal rather than physical composition, in the tradition of monastic mnemotechnical practice, *sancta memoria*. But it also offers a new angle on the image of the Ark, arguing Hugh’s composition makes this other (Augustinian) appeal to memory, as mediator between temporality and eternity – deploying Augustine to reanimate, for his brethren at St Victor, the simultaneous ‘Boethian’ eternal view as a more grounded, experiential exercise in feeling out the limits of our present.¹³ This is not to suggest that Boethius is somehow eclipsed by Augustine in Hugh’s formulation; the two authors were not in competition in his mind, but complementary. Rather, I suggest we find the reassertion of an Augustinian perspective and strategy – characteristically personal, and interested in comprehension from within – to exist alongside and to tackle an old problem. This reassertion can be seen as part of a more pervasive impetus in the twelfth century (particularly evident at the elite new school of St Victor) to provide a growing range of religious communities, often combining the *vita contemplativa* with scholarship and teaching (elements of the *vita activa*), with sophisticated, rhetorically engaging exercises for the *reformatio* of the soul.¹⁴ As Caroline Walker Bynum has put it, the twelfth century, if it did not “discover the individual,” put new store by the “stance of the individual worshipper before God” (Bynum 4). It is in this (well-studied) context of renewed spiritual inventiveness to meet the demands of – and give shape to – the inner life and aspirations of a new set of religious trainees that I think we can understand Hugh’s turn to Augustine’s take on memory and time, and his ‘modernisation’ of the Boethian vision via Augustine’s *distentio*. In the final part of this paper I show, in brief, how this move does not seem to have been an isolated one. Whether or not influenced by Hugh (or simply part of the same intellectual slipstream), later twelfth-century authors – and then mystics of the later Middle Ages – seem likewise to have seized on Augustine’s understanding of time for audiences both within and (increasingly) beyond the cloister, making God’s eternity felt from an ever-more worldly, finite perspective, or within the diminutive ‘now.’

1. The eternal present and the reintegration of the self in *De Vanitate Mundi* and *De Archa Noe Morali*

“The ruthlessness of time is [...] a thought that returns too often in Hugh to be a mere convention. It recurs like an obsession” (Squire 29). But it is the “positive terror of time and the time-bound,” as Aelred Squire describes it, that historians of art and literature interested in Hugh’s Ark have left out of their analyses (Squire 28). Hugh’s longer treatises on the Ark, *De Archa Noe Morali* and *De Vanitate Mundi*, tackle a problem lamented by numerous authors before him, ancient, biblical, and medieval: the mutability of things, and how to live a life turned away from changeableness and towards the unchanging One, or God. The Cynics were nicknamed *kataskopoi* (‘spies,’ or ‘scouts,’ but meaning literally ‘view downward’) for their aspiration to rise beyond time and space, to get a vantage on the divine administration of the world. Thus, the term *kataskopos* has been adopted by scholars such as Pierre Hadot to identify the contemplative-literary tradition of the ‘view from above’ with which Hugh’s works on the Ark are profoundly engaged (Hadot 246–47).¹⁵ The exercise became a commonplace in classical and medieval philosophical literature, the most famous medieval instances known to Hugh being Cicero’s *Somnium Scipionis*, via its commentary by Macrobius of c. 400, and Boethius’ *De consolazione Philosophiae*, written in c. 524.¹⁶ Cicero’s *Somnium* told the story of a Roman general, Scipio, visited in a dream by his dead grandfather-by-adoption, who lifts him to a perch in the Milky Way. Against the magnitude of the heavens, Scipio discovers the minuteness of the world and the fleetingness of worldly fame.¹⁷ Boethius’ text, borrowing heavily from Cicero, reflects more concertedly on the relationship between time and eternity. The ascent of its narrator (the prisoner Boethius), guided by Lady Philosophy, involves a shift in perspective from a view of the temporal, governed by a wily and inconstant Fate, to an understanding of how Fate is patterned from on high by God’s providence, which perceives and rationalises events from a perfectly unified perspective, embracing past and future as if in an ‘eternal present’:¹⁸

Aeternitas igitur est interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio, quod ex collatione temporalium clarius liquet. Nam quidquid vivit in tempore id praesens a praeteritis in futura procedit nihilque est in tempore constitutum quod totum vitae suae spatium pariter possit amplecti [...]. Quod igitur intermi-

15. The use of *kataskopos* for moral scouting (particularly in the works of Epictetus) was identified in an article published in 1893 (and cited by Hadot) by Norden. A more recent discussion of the development of this metaphor can be found in Schofield 75–80.

16. This paper owes much to Brian FitzGerald’s recent work on time in Hugh’s thought. Though his interventions have not been concerned with the Ark *pictura*, FitzGerald does highlight (as I do here) Hugh’s engagement with (and reinterpretation of) the relation between time and eternity in Boethius and Macrobius. See FitzGerald, “Time, History, and Mutability” 216; and *Inspiration and Authority* 29–30.

17. Scipio is shown by his dead forefather (in his sleep) how reputation, or gossip, is “confined to the narrow bounds of the small area at which you are gazing, and is never enduring; it is overwhelmed with the passing of men and is lost in the oblivion of posterity.” (Cicero *Somnium* 7; Stahl 76).

18. “God by providence disposes what is to be done in a single and unchanging way, but by fate accomplishes those same things he has disposed in a manifold and temporal way” (Boethius *De consolazione* 4, pr. 6; Tester 358–61).

nabilis vitae plenitudinem totam pariter comprehendit ac possidet, cui neque futuri quidquam absit nec praeteritio fluxerit, id aeternum esse iure perhibetur, idque necesse est et sui compos praesens sibi semper adsistere et infinitatem mobilis temporis habere praesentem. (*De consolatione Philosophiae* 4, pr. 6; Tester 422–23)

(Eternity, then, is the whole, simultaneous and perfect possession [*perfecta possessio*] of boundless life, which becomes clearer by comparison with temporal things. For whatever lives in time proceeds in the present from the past to the future, and there is nothing established in time which can embrace the whole space of its life equally [...]. Whatever therefore comprehends and possesses at once the whole fullness of boundless life, and is such that neither is anything future lacking from it, nor has anything past flowed away, that is rightly held to be eternal, and that must necessarily both always be present to itself, possessing itself in the present, and hold as present the infinity of moving time.)

God's knowledge, surpassing all movement of time, considers past, present, and future gathered together "as though they were now going on" (4, pr. 6).¹⁹ In *De consolatione*, our ascent involves this imaginative experiment: envisaging how just as we see things pass in our "temporal present," so God "perceives all things in his eternal one" (4, pr. 6).²⁰

In both *De Archa Noe Morali* and *De Vanitate Mundi*, Hugh of Saint-Victor introduces his composition in terms that clearly place it in the tradition of *kataskopos* and strongly echo, in particular, Boethius' narrative. Borrowing, perhaps, from the Socratic, dialogic structure of *De consolatione*, his *De Vanitate Mundi* (which has been particularly ignored by readers of *De Pictura*, and only narrowly post-dates it) takes the form of a conversation between personifications of Soul and Reason.²¹ Reason, like Lady Philosophy, is the director of the action, who sets out to reveal to her student the mutability of worldly pleasures. The treatise opens with both personifications hovering above the world, Reason instructing Soul: "take your stand in spirit, then, as it were on a watch-tower, and turn your attention on the dwelling-place of the world in all directions, so that everything lies spread before your gaze" (*De Vanitate* 1.1).²² In the first book, Reason presents Soul with a series of zoomed-in vignettes of seemingly happy, prosperous people: a boating party, travelling merchants, a family household, a wedding ceremony, and a schoolroom of pupils

19. "[...] scientia quoque eius omnem temporis supergressa motionem in suae manet simplicitate praesentiae infinitaque praeteriti ac futuri spatia complectens omnia quasi iam gerantur in sua simplici cognitione considerat" (Tester 426–27).

20. "uti vos vestro hoc temporario praesenti quaedam videtis, ita ille omnia suo cernit aeterno" (Tester 426–27).

21. Aelred Squire has pointed out that since each of the major works on the Ark refers to the others, it is possible to put them in a chronological order (in the years between 1125 and 1131): *De Archa Noe Morali*, *De Pictura Arche*, and *De Vanitate Mundi* (Squire 25).

22. "Constituere igitur te quasi in quadam mentis specula, et eius aciem in arcam huius mundi circumquaque lustrandam dirige, ut totus contemplanti coram positus sit mundus" (*PL* 176.704; *Spiritual Writings* 158).

23. Hugh uses *dilato* at *De Vanitate* 4.1; *PL* 176.717. He uses the same term more extensively in *De Archa Noe*: see below, page 17.

24. This phrase becomes a refrain in the dialogue from *De Vanitate* 1.1 onwards (e.g. *PL* 176.706; *Spiritual Writings* 161). The phrase comes from the Vulgate translation of *Ecclesiastes* 1.2. *Ecclesiastes* was thought in the Middle Ages to be the work of Solomon, and its reflections on the cyclical nature of reality and the inexorability of death have long earned it status (along with Job and Proverbs) as the closest “the Near East came to Greek philosophy” (Atler xvi). Solomon's reflections ‘from above’ were apparently combined in Hugh's mind with the more pagan visionary ascents of Cicero and Boethius. Hugh's final work was a commentary on *Ecclesiastes* that returns to the same themes of time and eternity running through the Ark treatises. Discussion of the commentary is beyond the scope of this paper: for an eloquent discussion of Hugh's *Homiliae in Ecclesiasten* alongside *De Vanitate*, see FitzGerald, *Inspiration and Authority* 18–49.

hard at work. In each case, Soul, from her would-be providential perspective, initially takes pleasure in the scene. But Reason chastises her for her naivety, telling her to take a broader view, to dilate (*dilata*) her ‘present’ gaze, from on high, to include past and future.²³ Doing so, Soul sees how each group, absorbed in present delights, fails to see some approaching calamity, and comes to a grisly end: the boating party is swept away by oncoming storms, the travellers are killed by hiding ambushers, and so forth. Soul – with Reason's promptings – arrives at the repeated conclusion, in the words of *Ecclesiastes*, “Vanitas est, et vanitas vanitatum” (from which the treatise gets its name).²⁴

Reason then explains the point of her demonstration:

Longum est per singula vanitatem huius mundi demonstrare. Scias tamen quod ex istis omnibus quae vides nihil permanens est [...]. Semper praesentia transeunt, semper futura succedunt, et quia continuus est successus, perpetuus status esse putatur. Sunt enim oculi mortalium depressi, et cursum universorum non respiciunt, atque in exiguis rerum particulis defixi, quid agatur in toto non attendunt. [...] Mens vero tenebris suis obvoluta non multum valet aut futura prospicere, aut praeterita meminisse. Cumque solum iis, quae coram posita sint, occupata tenetur, innovatio praesentium aufert ei praeteritorum memoriam. (2.1; *PL* 176.711; *Spiritual Writings* 171–72)

(It is a lengthy business to show the vanity of this world by going through particular cases. You, do however, realise, that none of all the things you are looking at abides. [...] The present is always passing on, the future always following; and since the continuity is unbroken there is a belief that this is the permanent condition of things. For the eyes of mortal men are cast down, and do not look to the course of things in general. [...] His mind, enwrapped in darkness, is not capable of foreseeing much of the future, or of remembering much of what has gone before; and, when its attention is entirely held by what is before it, the continual renewal of the present robs it of the memory of the past.)

The various pleasure seekers who come to harm exemplify this hopeless enthrallment to the ever-renewing present, man's failure to see the present in the context of time's passing and “course of things in general” (*cursum universorum*).

25. "Nolo igitur ut cogites visionem huius oculi, quando audis te ad videndum invitari. Habes alium oculum intus multo clariorem isto, qui praeterita, praesentia et futura simul respicit" (PL 176.704; *Spiritual Writings* 158).

26. "In spiritualibus ergo, et invisibilibus cum aliquid supremum dicitur, non quasi localiter supra culmen aut verticem coeli constitutum, sed intimum omnium significatur. Ascendere ergo ad Deum hoc est intrare ad semetipsum, et non solum ad se intrare, sed ineffabili quodammodo in intimis etiam seipsum transire" (PL 176.714–15; *Spiritual Writings* 176).

27. "[...] ut dictum est, in unum colligitur, quanto magis sursum elevatur" (PL 176.714; *Spiritual Writings* 175).

Hugh then clarifies that the kataskopic vision enjoyed by Soul (and by Reason) illustrates not the work of the outer eye (which is thus constrained), but the inner eye (*oculus mentis* or *oculus cordis*), which can be trained to overcome outer deficiencies. When you hear yourself invited to 'see,' Reason says, it is the inner eye we are talking about: "much clearer than that [outer] one, an eye that looks to the past, present, and future all at once" (1.1).²⁵ This distinction between inner and outer sight signals Hugh's new practical, meditative take on the Boethian *kataskopos*: he wants to be clear about the meaning of his ascent 'narrative' for monks and students engaged in daily contemplative exercise (where Boethius addressed himself to a more diverse learned audience). Indeed, elsewhere Hugh clarifies the psychological connotations of other dramatic terms and images he has adopted from Boethius. He explains that when we speak about the 'highest,' this means the deepest within oneself: "to ascend [*ascendere*] to God means, therefore, to enter [*intrare*] into oneself, and not only to enter into oneself, but in some ineffable manner to penetrate even to one's depths" (2.3).²⁶ Or as he also puts it, "the more a man gathers himself together [*colligitur*] in spirit the more he is raised [*elevatur*] in thought and desire" (2.2).²⁷ Thus ascent to a more inclusive, 'eternal' present – a view of the world and time in the context of a universal, providential continuum – is to be understood by the monks, in their contemplative practice, as a retreat inwards. This lofty view is really a mental readjustment. It involves reintegrating the self from its tendency to become attached to things and moments outside of it, which is at the same time to expand or 'dilate' the attention, viewing particulars in their temporal context.

The same sort of distinctions are drawn in *De Archa Noe Morali* (probably written before *De Vanitate*). While it lacks the dramatic kataskopic opening of *De Vanitate*, its first book likewise describes the distance between man and divine eternity, recalling again Macrobius and Boethius. Here Hugh introduces a stronger postlapsarian emphasis. He explains how man has become scattered by the Fall, and needs to be lifted back up to God. 'Ascent' is (again) really an inner adjustment, a unification and dilation of awareness:

Cor ergo hominis, quod prius divino amori affixum stabile praestitit, et unum amando unum permansit, postquam per desideria terrena difluere coepit; quasi in tot divisum est, quod ea sunt quae concupiscit [...]. Hinc igitur nascitur motus sine stabilitate, labor sine requie, cursus sine perven-

tionem, ita ut semper sit inquietum cor nostrum, donec illi adhaerere coeperit; ubi et desiderio suo nihil deesse gaudeat, et ea quae diligit semper mansura confidat. (*De Archa Noe* 1.2; *PL* 176.619; *Spiritual Writings* 47)

(The human heart, which had hitherto kept its stability in cleaving to divine love and remained one in the love of the One, was as it were divided into as many channels as there were objects it craved, once it had begun to flow in different directions through earthly longings [...]. Therefore, from movement without stability is born toil without rest, travel without arrival; so that our heart is always restless till such time as it begins to cleave to Him, in whom it may both rejoice that its desire lacks nothing, and be assured that what it loves will last eternally.)

“Let us then see,” Hugh says, “what we can do to attain the love of God, for he will integrate [*colliget*] and stabilize [*stabilitet*] our hearts” (1.3).²⁸ In both *De Archa Noe Morali* and *De Vanitate*, the structure of the Ark is now introduced as the means of our earthly reintegration:

Ingredere ergo nunc si secretum cordis tui, et fac habitaculum Deo, fac templum, fac domum, fac tabernaculum, [...] fac arcam diluvia [...]. In diluvio imploret naufragus gubernatorem. (*De Archa Noe* 1.5; *PL* 176.621–22; *Spiritual Writings* 51)

Now, therefore, enter your inmost heart, and make a dwelling-place for God. Make Him a temple, make Him a house, make Him a pavilion, [...] make Him an Ark of the flood [...]. In the flood, let him that is shipwrecked beseech Him who guides the helm.²⁹

The Ark is then presented as Hugh's practical, contemplative – laborious – answer to Boethius' kataskopic view from the ‘eternal present.’ It is our means of drawing together our scattered attentions, of detaching ourselves from the renewing present to see the present in the context of the remembered past and ‘foreseen’ future (“those who dwell there [...] always rejoice, grieving for nothing that is past, fearing nothing future”).³⁰

In both *De Archa Noe Morali* and *De Vanitate* Hugh describes the actual structure to be built in different levels of detail, and in different modes. In *De Archa Noe Morali*, the earlier of the two, dimen-

28. “Quaeramus ergo quo ad amorem Dei pertingere possimus, quia ipse colliget, et stabilitet corda nostra ...” (*PL* 176.620; *Spiritual Writings* 48).

29. As Coolman says, Hugh chooses the first ‘salvific structure’ recorded in Scripture, but “in one breath Hugh includes it with various other biblical edifices suggests that, while he has chosen to symbolize this ‘skill or practice’ with Noah’s vessel, the soul-constructing activity itself is far more significant than its symbolization” (Coolman 181).

30. *De Archa Noe* 4.21 (Latin and full reference above, note 9).

sions and structural elements of the Ark are given lengthy, often tangential allegorizations; this treatise is too discursive and exegetical to be considered a practical 'exercise.' And in the later *De Vanitate*, the Ark is more of a prop in our fictional journey inwards (and away from the flood), dramatised through the dialogue between Soul and Reason, than something we can build from start to finish. It is in *De Pictura* that Hugh seems to realise his ambition for the Ark – outlined in both the longer works – as a self-contained practical exercise capable (by virtue of its *ekphrasis*) of providing the mind with a refuge from temporal distraction. Indeed, *De Pictura* is most often positioned as a kind of 'appendix' to *De Archa Noe Morali* in the manuscripts – as though it represents the place where we 'put into action' the teachings of the longer work – with the following paragraph joining the two texts:

And now, then, as we promised, we must put before you the pattern of our ark. Thus you may learn from an external form, which we have visibly depicted, what you ought to do interiorly, and when you have impressed the form of this pattern on your heart, you may rejoice that the house of God has been built in you. (*Spiritual Writings* 153)³¹

31. This paragraph, which often joins *De Archa Noe* and *De Pictura* in the manuscripts, is positioned differently in different translations: it is given at the end of *De Archa Noe Morali* in *Spiritual Writings* (153), while Jessica Weiss includes it at the beginning of *De Pictura* in her translation (45). The translation cited here is that used in *Spiritual Writings*. The passage does not appear in Migne's *Patrologia Latina*. The passage essentially repeats a paragraph in *De Archa Noe* 1.7; PL 176.622: "Huius vero spiritualis aedificii exemplar tibi dabo arcam Noe, quam foris videbit oculus tuus, ut ad eius similitudinem intus fabricetur animus tuus." Thus it may be that Hugh himself repeated the same passage between the two works in the earliest 'drafts;' or the passage may have been extracted and isolated later by scribes, who saw it as the proper introduction to *De Pictura*.

2. *Ekphrasis* and being through becoming in *De Pictura Arche*

As we have already seen, although the two works are so closely related in manuscripts, scholarship on the figure of the Ark in *De Pictura* has tended to take the figure in isolation from the significance and function of the Ark in *De Archa Noe Morali* (and *De Vanitate*) as a remedy from time, in the tradition of the Boethian *kataskopos*. On the other hand, those historians of theology, such as Aelred Squire and Brian FitzGerald, who have explored Hugh's concepts of time and eternity in the longer treatises have not reflected so much on the 'appendixed' *pictura* and how we should read it (whether as the description of a pre-existing painting or artefact; or an *ekphrasis*, demanding mental picturing). In this next section, I want to triangulate two strands of scholarship to show how Hugh's meditations on time and the *mutabilitas rerum* – explored in the first section of the paper – help clarify the visual-verbal status of *De Pictura*. Hugh's *ekphrastic* mode, which Carruthers contextualises in medieval mne-

motechnical practice, can also be seen, I suggest, as the efficacious part of the Ark's remedy from time. As a verbal picture of the world under God's providential sway (the works of creation reordered as the *opera restorationis*), Hugh's composition in *De Pictura* demands (as prerequisite for a view 'out of time') a regathering of the soul's naturally scattered attentions, an expansion of the temporal 'present' in the picturing mind – the kind of reintegrative take on kataskopic 'ascent' Hugh establishes in *De Vanitate* and *De Archa Noe*.

To return to the question of the *pictura*'s aesthetic status, then: the most strikingly ekphrastic feature, for Carruthers and Evans, and one of the most persuasive arguments against the idea of *De Pictura* as the record of a pre-existing physical depiction, is Hugh's present-tense narration: the emphasis – as Carruthers put it (and as cited above) – on 'continuing process.' For example, the opening to *De Pictura* reads:

Primum ad mysticam arcae Noe descriptionem, in planitie ubi arcam depingere volo, medium centrum quaero, et ibi fixo puncto parvam quadraturam aequilateram ad similitudinem illius cubiti, in quo consummata est arca, ei circumduco. Itemque illi quadraturae aliam paulo maiorem circumscribo. Ita ut id spatium, quod est inter exteriorem et interiorem quadraturam, quasi limbus cubiti esse videatur. Hoc facto in interiori quadratura crucem pingo, ita ut cornua eius singula latera quadraturae attingant, eamque auro superduco. Deinde spatia illa, quae in superficie quadraturae inter quatuor angulos crucis et quadraturae remanent, colore vestio, duo superiora flammeo, et duo inferiora sapphirino. (*De Pictura* 1.2; *PL* 176.681; Weiss 45)

(First I find [*quaero*] the center of the plane on which I intend to draw [*volo depingere*] the Ark, and there I fix [*fixo*] a point. Around this point I make [*circumduco*] a small square, which is like one cubit, [the measure] with which the Ark was constructed. And around this square I also make another [*circumscribo*], a bit bigger than the first, so that the space between the two squares looks like a band around the [central] cubit. Next, I draw [*pingo*] a cross in the innermost square in such a way that the four limbs of the cross meet each of its sides, and I go over [*superducuro*] the cross with gold. Then, I colour [*vestio*] in the spaces between the four angles of the cross and those of the square: the two above with red, the two lower ones with blue.)

I have highlighted the verbs in this first paragraph to give a sense of the personal, present-tense style narration Carruthers and Evans identify, and which Hugh sustains throughout the text. To give a brief (or comparatively brief) overview of what ensues from this point on (and a sense of the sheer imaginative difficulty): this central square or cubit with which we begin represents Christ; and it becomes – as Hugh says in the passage above – the basic unit on which the rest of the Ark is constructed. Around the square which surrounds that cubit, Hugh proceeds to measure out two further rectangular-shaped boxes. The three resulting quadrilaterals are then viewed side on, in three dimensions, rising up as three storeys (with the central cubit also becoming a vertical pillar that holds the floors together, “as the Church leans on Christ,” 2.6). This basic structure constitutes the Ark according to the literal sense: the Ark of Noah. Next, Hugh elaborates the Ark's dimensions according to the ‘allegorical’ sense, as the Ark of the Church (supported by Christ). According to this sense, the structure becomes an historical timeline, its length charting the history of our restoration from the beginning to the end of time, and its width the Church's membership:

Si enim arca Ecclesiam significat, restat ut longitudo arcae longitudinem figuret Ecclesiae. Longitudo autem Ecclesiae consideratur in diuturnitate temporum, sicut latitudo in multitudine populorum [...]. Longitudo autem eius in prolixitate temporum consistit, qua de praeteritis per praesentia ad futura se extendit. Tempus autem longitudinis eius est ab initio mundi usque ad finem, quia sancta Ecclesia in fidelibus suis ab initio coepit, et usque in finem saeculi durabit. (*De Pictura* 3.7; *PL* 176.685; Weiss 49)

(Now, if the Ark means the Church, then the length of the Ark means the length of the Church. The length of the Church is its temporal duration, just as the width of the Church is its number of affiliated peoples [...]. The length of the Church is its extension in time: going from the past, through the present into the future. Its extent in time is from the beginning of the world until the end, because the Holy Church began from the beginning of the world in its faithful and will remain until the end of time.)

The Ark's length, marking the Church's elongation (*prolixitate*) through time, extending (*extendit*) from past to present to future, is

then further divided into three sections representing the periods of natural law, written law, and grace. More details follow: we can also see the Ark's length as divided into two parts – the periods before and after the incarnation. Hugh also inscribes along the Ark's length the names of the Church patriarchs and popes, stretching from Adam to the present day. According to a complex colour-coding system, we are to picture how men of all sorts (men of natural law, written law, and grace) have been alive in the different periods (for example, there were some men of grace even before the Incarnation). Lastly, the width of the Ark is made to correspond to the membership of the Church: Jews and gentiles, men and women.

In the final place, the Ark becomes one great ladder for spiritual ascent (exegetically, its 'moral' significance). The three storeys are now steps away from the world: the first representing those who use the world, the second, those who flee it; and the third and highest, "those who have forgotten the world" and have become maximally reintegrated in God (7.15). This is elaborated "for those ascending from the individual corners," with more specific ladders of the virtues placed in each.³² More specifics follow (the allegorisation of the window of contemplation; the identification of the Ark's 'rooms' as the stations of the Israelites in exile).

At this point Hugh pauses, for the first time, to acknowledge the enormous imaginative effort being demanded, saying, "that is enough, for those who cannot or do not want to do any more."³³ But then this reads almost as a tease – as we are forced to do more, Hugh encircling the whole with a cosmic map:

Hoc modo arca perfecta, circumducitur et circulus oblongus, qui ad singula cornua eam contingat, et spatium quod circumferentia eius includit, est orbis terrae. In hoc spatio mappa mundi depingitur ita ut caput arcae ad orientem convertatur, et finis eius occidentem contingat [...]. Post haec supradicto circulo alter paulo laxior circumducitur, ut quasi zonam videatur efficere, et hoc spatium aer est. (14.28; *PL* 176.700; Weiss 67)

(When the Ark is complete, an oval is drawn around it [*circumducitur*], which touches it at its corners, and the space enclosed by the circle is the orb of the earth. In this space is drawn [*depingitur*] the map of the world in such a way that the bow of the Ark is turned towards the east, and the stern

32. *De Pictura* 7.15; Weiss 57. Each corner of the Ark is labelled with a specific vice (ignorance, pride, lust, fervor of the spirit), with three ladders supplied for each, denoting the relevant recuperative virtues. Biblical books are then arranged in detail on each ladder, along with specific quotations and allegorical icons – so that ascent is also the work of scriptural contemplation, *sacra pagina*.

33. "Haec ad constructionem arcae, his qui plura facere aut non valent, aut nolunt sufficere possunt." 14.27; (*PL* 176.700; Weiss 67).

34. I have altered Weiss' translation to be true to the passive form of the verbs.

35. "... et omnis ordo creaturarum subsequatur, et ipsius arcae protensio pertingat a principio mundi usque ad finem saeculi" (15.30; *PL* 167.702; Weiss 69).

36. Murray Kreiger emphasises how "the poem takes on the still elements of plastic form," in his *Ekphrasis* 266. For the 'stilling' power of *ekphrasis* in a medieval context see Akbari's article on Christine de Pizan's *Livre de la Mutacion de Fortune*, which argues that the historical murals adorning the walls of the Castle of Fortune offer a relief from temporality: "the overview of history [...] serves to suspend the sequence of chronology, providing the reader with a synoptic glance that represents historical change in non-linear form" (Akbari 202); "*Ekphrasis* provides a way to give order to time, precisely by providing a way to stand outside of it, if only for a moment" (Akbari 205). See also Morton in this issue.

37. Hugh would also have known more recent medieval *ekphrases*, inspired by Virgil and Ovid's examples. Michael Evans cites several 'fictive paintings' roughly contemporaneous to Hugh's in his argument for the ekphrastic nature of *De Pictura*: for example Pseudo-Turpin's account of fictive murals of Charlemagne's campaigns in the palace at Aachen (c. 1140), and Baudri of Bourgueil's most ambitious poem of c. 1100 that records the imagined cosmic-historical decorative programme of Countess Adela of Normandy's bedchamber (Evans 73–78).

of the Ark is turned to the west [...]. Next, another oval, a little bit wider is drawn [*circumducitur*] around the first one, so that it seems like a belt, and this space is the heavens.)³⁴

Finally, Christ in Majesty is depicted surrounding the cosmos – so that the whole "series of creation follows [*subsequatur*], and the whole expanse of the Ark reaches from the beginning of the world up to the end of time."³⁵ In this way the Ark evolves from the salvific structure given in Genesis – at the literal level of reading – into a kind of *kataskopos*, at once zoomed-in and zoomed-out, an impossibly intricate historical timeline and map of the world and heavens under God's providential sway. My concern here is not with the finer details of the composition and their exegetical origins – which have been impressively catalogued and traced to earlier sources, most recently by Conrad Rudolph. Rather, I have given this summary of Hugh's *pictura* to suggest how it 'stretches' our pictorial imagination: even at this final point in the text Hugh is addressing us in the present (active or passive forms): we are (supposedly) still building on and holding 'as present,' the structure begun nine-thousand words previously with the central cubit (Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought* 246).

Scholars interested in *ekphrasis*, in diverse literary and cultural contexts, have often drawn attention to the way in which this rhetorical mode emplaces the reader in just such an extended or suspended present.³⁶ Describing an image or artefact, something that in real life we view 'simultaneously,' that appears all at once and in the present, the method of 'word painting' has been taken to offer a departure from time in traditional narratives, supplying the reader with a temporarily synoptic perspective. Hugh is likely to have known, for example, Virgil's famous *ekphrases* in the *Aeneid*: the vivid portrayals of Troy's fall on the walls of Dido's temple in book one, which allow Aeneas and the reader to take stock of the events preceding the poem itself (beginning *in media res*); or the description of Aeneas' shield in book eight, engraved with the past and glorious future of Rome, which gives the reader a prophetic, god-like perspective on the poem's narrative as a whole.³⁷

Hugh's use of the present tense is arguably designed to achieve just this kind of abstraction from or suspension of time. Indeed, in *De Archa Noe Morali*, in terms which heavily echo Reason's instructions to Soul to dilate her gaze in *De Vanitate Mundi*, Hugh explains how the Ark realises the capacity of human thought and reflection to overcome 'temporal differentiation' and imitate the eternal perspective:

Habent enim quoddam esse suum res in mente hominis, ubi illa etiam, quae in seipsis vel iam praeterierunt, vel adhuc futura sunt, simul subsistere possunt. Et in hoc quodammodo rationalis anima similitudinem sui Creatoris habet, quia sicut in mente divina omnium rerum causae aeternaliter sine mutabilitate, et distinctione temporali substiterunt, ita etiam in mente nostra praeterita, praesentia, et futura per cogitationem simul subsistunt. (*De Arca Noe* 2.1; PL 176.635; *Spiritual Writings* 73)

(For things have their own kind of being in the mind of man, where even those which, in themselves, are past can coexist with those yet to come. And in this respect the soul bears a certain resemblance to its Maker. For as in the mind of God the causes of all things exist eternally without change or temporal differentiation, so also in our minds things past, present, and future exist together by the means of thought.)³⁸

38. This is how Hugh introduces the *arca sapientiae*, 'Ark of Wisdom' in *De Archa Noe Morali*. The Ark of Wisdom is roughly equivalent with the Ark's moral significance in *De Pictura* (according to which it becomes a ladder of spiritual ascent, above page 14). The Ark of Wisdom essentially refers to the interior reality of the Ark, the building practice we carry out daily in our souls. See the commentary by Coolman 182–85.

39. "Ibi alter quidam mundus huic praetereunti et transitorio contrarius invenitur, quia ea quae in hoc mundo per diversa tempora transeunt, in illo mundo quasi in quodam aeternitatis statu simul consistunt" (PL 176.680; *Spiritual Writings* 152).

40. PL 176.663; *Spiritual Writings* 122.

He describes the Ark in similar terms when closing *De Archa Noe*: "there another world is found, over and against this passing, transitory one; because the things which go through different times in this world exist in that one simultaneously, as in a condition of eternity" (4.21).³⁹ Also in that work he repeats the use of the term *dilato*: "[God] wants to dwell in your own heart – extend [*amplifica*] and enlarge [*dilata*] that! Enlarge [*dilata*] it I say" (4.1).⁴⁰ Such statements in both *De Archa Noe*, and *De Vanitate*, so far read in isolation from the actual *pictura*, help us to reflect more thoroughly (I think) on Hugh's ekphrastic method. His 'present' picturing might be understood not simply as indicative of his engagement with mnemotechnical tradition, but as a genuine contemplative strategy for making us reflect on and overcome time – asking us to 'make present' what comes into being 'narratively,' in imitation of the 'eternal present.'

But while the stasis and 'presence' of the image or object in an *ekphrasis* arrests the 'becoming' of the text, it is equally true that the visual is subjected to the text's mode of 'becoming,' that is, reading. Continuity of exposition is disrupted by simultaneity; simultaneity is continually forestalled by temporality. This double-motion of *ekphrasis* – setting the visual in motion at the same time as the visual 'stills' text (Aeneas' shield, after all, has to be read) – has been less commonly pointed out by literary scholars. An exception is Claire Barbetti, who has argued in a recent study of *ekphrasis* in the medieval dream vision that,

Instead of constructing a rigid body, the objective of the ekphrastic principle is [...] to create relationships, connections. The ekphrastic body expands; its contemplative functioning is a mode of becoming rather than attempting to fix. It re-sees, re-perceives compositions; it assimilates, restructures, and makes something new [...] stretch[ing] them into new shapes and dimensions. (Barbetti 49).

This 'stretching' of compositions might be said to be especially pronounced in isolated *ekphrases* (that is, ones not interrupting or providing 'relief' from a larger conventional narrative) – like Hugh's Ark. Indeed, while Hugh's *pictura*, coming into being in the present, excites our expectation for synoptic, simultaneous viewing, that 'view' is also continually frustrated. To bring Hugh's picture into a 'present' of imagination and memory is a *mental effort* and challenge in regathering and re-synthesising what is inevitably 'stretched' over the course of the text. Recall his remark to those who "cannot or do not want to do any more" (which reads almost as a jocular backtrack on his statement in *De Archa Noe Morali* about our ability to bring together times through thought). And indeed elsewhere in *De Archa Noe* he admits how we sit between stability and instability:

Tria enim sunt, id est per infinita distrahi, in eodem semper persistere, moderate vagari, quorum primum habere non debemus, secundum hic habere non possumus, et idcirco solum hoc tertium superest, ut quia adhuc vere corde stabiles esse non possumus, interim saltem ab immoderata distractione corda nostra colligamus, ut dum semper nitimur minus instabiles fieri semper magis ac magis incipiamus veram stabilitatem imitari. (4.4; PL 176.666; *Spiritual Writings* 126)

(There are three possibilities: we can divide our attention between a number of things, we can concentrate on one thing only, or we can change within limits. Of these possibilities, there is one that we cannot achieve, and one to which we ought not to submit. So that leaves only one, namely that, since we cannot at present be really constant in heart, we should for the time being at least recollect our hearts from their unrestrained distractions. And in this way, while we are always striving to be less unstable, we may be getting ever nearer to some semblance of true stability.)

Again, such comments make better sense of the *pictura*'s presenta-

tion: it is precisely in the struggle to unify what is described in time, Hugh seems to intend, that we imitate eternity and 'achieve' the providential perspective. Hugh's Ark is introduced as a means for reaching a compromise between change and constancy, for limiting our distraction in changeableness. And his *pictura* calls for our active recollection of what is constantly changing, or rather to view and experience change in a more focussed, limited way, within bounds. And it is in this respect – the way the Ark does not just *give us* an eternal view, but asks us, ekphrastically, to concentrate 'becoming' into simultaneous 'being' – that I want to suggest it might be better understood as a reworking of the *kataskopos* according to the Augustinian understanding of time in the *Confessions*: where ascent to eternity is imagined precisely as an inner, grounded exercise in perceiving the passage of time through the 'stretched-out' present of imagination and memory, known as the *distentio* or *extentio animi*.

3. Augustine's *distentio animi* and the limits of the present

Augustine's influence on Hugh of Saint-Victor – himself an Augustinian canon – has been well studied.⁴¹ But the influence of his *Confessions* is an exception, as are his famous reflections on time, memory, and eternity therein. We know that the *Confessions* were widely read throughout the Middle Ages, and its personal narrative of progress towards God that is also a movement inwards seems to have appealed especially to readers in the twelfth century.⁴² Sometime after 1150 the Cistercian Walter Daniel described in the biography of his mentor Aelred of Rievaulx how the saint "generally had in his hands the *Confessions* of Augustine, for it was these which had been his guide when he was converted from the world" (Webber); and writing in around 1115 Guibert of Nogent explicitly modelled his *Monodiae*, or memoirs, on the *Confessions* (Benton 265). Finally, Gilbert Ouy and André Wilmart both identified two copies of the work at Saint Victor, one a twelfth-century manuscript that could conceivably have belonged to Hugh (Ouy 210 and Wilmart 264).⁴³ In this final part of the paper, I want to suggest that, like Aelred and Guibert, Hugh found something in Augustine's *Confessions* – in his case, Augustine's reflections on time as an inner *distentio* – that invigorated his own spiritual project.⁴⁴ While Boethius himself was working along Augustinian lines in his formulation of time's relation to eter-

41. Studies of Hugh's theology (rightly) take for granted the influence of Augustine: see, for example, the number of allusions to Augustine's works in the overview of Hugh's thought by Rorem. Douglas Gray has spoken of the "diffused Augustinian Tradition," whereby Augustine was simply in the air in the Middle Ages (Gray 20).

42. Eric Leland Saak notes that hundreds of manuscripts of the *Confessions* survive from the medieval period, production peaking in the ninth, twelfth, and fifteenth centuries (263). Its appeal in the twelfth century can be seen as a symptom of changes in spirituality more widely and the need for a literature that would reflect the growing emphasis on salvation as self-examination, as discussed briefly above.

43. The manuscript is Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, 478. Wilmart also lists a second manuscript of the *Confessions*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, 14293 as having a St. Victor provenance, although this dates from the thirteenth century and so is too late to be Hugh's.

44. And see above, note 13, for Patricia Dailey's general observation that medieval mystics inherited an Augustinian model of time and memory, interpreted and deployed in various ways.

nity in *De consolatione*, he did not seize (at least so visibly) on this element. Thus, I argue it is Hugh's recourse to Augustine's psychology of time that is the fundamental difference between the Boethian vision and the Hugonian *ekphrasis* – and the key to the latter's inventiveness (and obscurity for modern readers).⁴⁵

45. For the influence of Augustine's meditations on time on Boethius' *De consolatione*, see O'Neill.

It is in book eleven of the *Confessions*, as a climax to the narrative of his life and conversion, that Augustine tackled the same conundrum that would appear to Hugh and Boethius as a kataskopic imperative: of how, as humans in temporal creation, we can imagine or become reunited with an eternal God. In terms that recall those used by Hugh, particularly in *De Vanitate Mundi*, Augustine opened his reflections lamenting how we try to know God while still enthralled to transience, blinded by attachment to fleeting moments which we fail to set in the context of time's passing:

Qui [...] conantur aeterna sapere, sed adhuc in praeteritis et futuris rerum motibus cor eorum volitat [...] quis tenebit illud et figet illud, ut paululum stet, et paululum rapiat splendorem semper stantis aeternitatis, et comparet cum temporibus numquam stantibus, et videat esse incomparabilem: et videat longum tempus nisi ex multis praetereuntibus motibus, qui simul extendi non possunt, longum non fieri; non autem praeterire quicquam in aeterno, sed totum esse praesens.
(Augustine, *Confessiones* 1.11.13; Watts 230–32; Chadwick 228).

(They attempt to taste eternity when their heart is still flitting about in the realm where things change [...] Who can lay hold of the heart and give it fixity, so that for some little moment it may be stable, and for a fraction of time may grasp the splendour of a constant eternity? Then it may compare eternity with temporal successiveness which never has any constancy, and will see there is no comparison possible. It will see that a long time is long only because constituted of many successive movements which cannot be simultaneously extended. In the eternal, nothing is transient, but the whole is present.)

A first step is then to recognise the inconstancy of time and 'temporal successiveness.' Augustine's words here are likely Hugh's source for the notion of the present that is always renewing itself, *innovatio praesentium*, in *De Vanitate*. Augustine elaborates on this idea that time is made up of the tiniest particles that 'cannot be extended':

Si quid intellegitur temporis, quod in nullas iam vel minutissimas momentorum partes dividi possit, id solum est, quod praesens dicatur; quod tamen ita raptim a futuro in praeteritum transvolat, ut nulla morula extendatur. nam si extenditur, dividitur in praeteritum et futurum: praesens autem nullum habet spatium. (*Confessiones* 11.15.20; Watts 242–45; Chadwick 232)

(If we can think of some bit of time which cannot be divided into even the smallest instantaneous moments, that alone is what we can call 'present.' And this time flies so quickly from future into past that it is an interval with no duration. If it has duration, it is divisible into past and future. But the present occupies no space.)

So, Augustine asks, what of the future and past? People sing prophecies, and others narrate history – just as, he admits, he has related his own personal history in the *Confessions*.⁴⁶ Future and past most certainly exist; but where? “If I have not the strength to discover the answer, at least I know that wherever they are, they are not there as future or past, but as present” (11.18.23).⁴⁷ And this ‘present’ that contains past and future (“the present of things past, the present of things present, and the present of things to come”) is the mind (11.20.26): “My confession to you is surely truthful when my soul declares that times are measured by me;” “I have come to think that time is simply a distension [*distensionem*][...] of the mind [*animi*] itself” (*Confessiones* 11.25.32–11.26.33).⁴⁸ Thus, Augustine determines (as Hugh echoes in his passage about the coexistence of times ‘by means of thought’) it is the mind that gives space to the otherwise fleeting present that has ‘no space’ – that makes the present contain past things and anticipate future things that we then call (rather imprecisely, in Augustine’s view) ‘past’ and ‘present.’ This idea becomes more familiar when we consider that for Augustine, mind is synonymous with memory. Throughout the *Confessions*, memory is described not as a ‘faculty’ distinct from other mental faculties, such as reason, and imagination – as we might think of it. Memory gives us our very sense of identity and continuity: it is what contains our past actions, their circumstances, and feelings, and therefore also motivates our future actions and feelings.⁴⁹ We both ‘remember’ and anticipate with memory; we look backwards and forwards with it.

Therefore, it is in the mind, or memory, that we overcome the reality of the fleeting present to perceive time as a durational whole. Time

46. Augustine takes note of the work of prophets and historians at 11.17.22. He opens book eleven asking himself why he has set out his life in chronological order (for an eternal God) at all: “Your vision of occurrences in time is not temporally conditioned. Why then do I set before you an ordered account of so many things?” (11.1.1; Watts 208–209; Chadwick 221). Rowan Williams eloquently describes how the narrative of the *Confessions* treats God as the primary reader, its partly fragmented quality seemingly “acknowledging the existence of a perspective that remains intrinsically inaccessible” (Williams 18).

47. “quod si nondum valeo, scio tamen, ubicumque sunt, non ibi ea futura esse aut praeterita, sed praesentia” (Watts 246; Chadwick 233).

48. “inde mihi visum est nihil esse aliud tempus quam distentionem: sed cuius rei, nescio, et mirum, si non ipsius animi” (Watts 240–41; Chadwick 239–40).

49. In memory, Augustine says, “I also meet myself” (10.8.14). One of many helpful commentaries on Augustine’s broad definition of memory is the essay by Karfíková 176.

50. Plotinus had described time as the “spreading out [*diastasis*] of [...] the life of the soul,” which may have inspired Augustine's term *distentio*, at *Enneads* 3.7.11.41. This is footnoted in Chadwick in his translation (240). Karfíková discusses Plotinus' inspiration at 181.

is the stretching out of the present moment through remembering and expectation, and this is called by Augustine the *distentio animi*.⁵⁰ He proceeds to demonstrate this ‘distension’ by making us reflect on the psychological processes involved in reciting a well-known psalm. When we do this, he observes, we watch what is future (what we anticipate saying or singing) become past (turn into something ‘said’ or ‘sung’), through the prism of a stretched-out attention in the present:

Dicturus sum canticum, quod novi [...], atque distenditur vita huius actionis meae, in memoriam propter quod dixi, et in expectationem propter quod dicturus sum: praesens tamen adest attentio mea, per quam traicitur quod erat futurum, ut fiat praeteritum. (*Confessiones* 10.28.38; Watts 276–77; Chadwick 243)

(Suppose I am about to recite a psalm which I know [...]. The life of this act of mine is stretched [*distenditur*] in two ways, into my memory because of the words I have already said, and into my expectation because of those which I am about to say. But my attention is on what is present: by that the future is transferred to become the past.)

He continues, “no one can deny that present time lacks any extension because it passes in a flash [*in puncto*]. Yet attention is continuous, and it is through this that what will be present progresses towards being absent” (11.28.37).⁵¹ The psalm then exemplifies how it is in (or from) the present, distended by memory and attention, that time (past, present, and future) originates and spreads.⁵²

On the one hand, in the wider context of book eleven, this *distentio animi* – the stretching of our attention across past, present, and future – becomes a metaphor for our sinful distraction in created mutability, and distance from eternity (such as Hugh sets out to cure in *De Vanitate Mundi*).⁵³ “See how my life is a distension in several directions,” Augustine laments in the middle of his discussion: “I live in a multiplicity of distraction by many things” (11.29.39).⁵⁴ Yet as he moves towards his conclusion, *distentio* also takes on a redemptive aspect. Recognising our distension, the way our entire sense of continuity and identity really consists in looking backwards and forwards from and in the present (realised in the recitation of a psalm) reveals to us the ultimate unity or ‘unifiability’ of time and transience. Distension also becomes for Augustine a route towards eternity, since in it we sense or ‘taste’ the (more per-

51. “et quis negat praesens tempus carere spatio, quia in puncto praeterit? Sed tamen perdurat attentio, per quam pergat abesse quod aderit” (Watts 276–77; Chadwick 243).

52. For Augustine's use of the psalm as a way of understanding time, see Johnston.

53. Drever 78–79.

54. “ecce distentio est vita mea” (Watts 278; Chadwick 244).

fect) continuity and reconciliation of times in God's 'eternal present,' far above us:

certe si est tam grandi scientia et praescientia pollens animus, cui cuncta praeterita et futura ita nota sint, sicut mihi unum canticum notissimum, nimium mirabilis est animus iste atque ad horrorem stupendus, quippe quem ita non lateat quidquid peractum et quidquid relicum saeculorum est, quemadmodum me non lateat cantantem illud canticum, quid et quantum eius abierit ab exordio, quid et quantum restet ad finem. sed absit, ut tu, conditor universitatis [...] ut ita noveris omnia futura et praeterita. longe tu, longe mirabilius longeque secretius. neque enim sicut nota cantantis notumve canticum audientis expectatione vocum futurarum et memoria praeteritarum variatur affectus sensusque distenditur, ita tibi aliquid accidit inconmutabiliter aeterno, hoc est vere aeterno creatori mentium. (*Confessiones* 11.31.40; Watts 282–84; Chadwick 245)

(Certainly if there were a mind endowed with such great knowledge and prescience that all things past and future could be known in the way I know a very familiar psalm, this mind would be utterly miraculous and amazing to the point of inducing awe. From such a mind nothing would be hidden, nor anything of what remaining ages has in store, just as I have full knowledge of that psalm I sing. I know by heart what and how much of it has passed since the beginning, and what and how much remains until the end. But far be it for you, Creator of the universe [...] to know all future and past events in this kind of sense. You know them in a much more wonderful and much more mysterious way. A person singing or listening to a song he knows well suffers a distension or stretching in feeling and in sense perception from the expectation of future sounds and the memory of past sound. With you it is otherwise. You are unchangeably eternal, that is the truly eternal Creator of minds.)

Therefore, singing the psalm – seeing how past and future flow through the present of our attention – becomes an exercise in imitating the Creator. More specifically, it is in feeling out the limits of the present, how difficult it is to see things 'all at once' in imagination and memory (for the psalm still evades total, simultaneous

imagining) that we fathom how the Creator knows time (as Augustine says, we humans *suffer* a stretching: “with you it is otherwise”).

With this realisation of our finitude, what was our distension sublimates into something fruitful – our *extentio*: a kind of rooted and concentrated ‘stretching forth’ of the soul towards eternity, from within the confines of the present. As the book draws to an end, Augustine hopes he “might be gathered to follow the One,” moving towards the things which are before him, “not stretched out but extended in reach,” (*non distentus, sed extentus* 11.29.39).⁵⁵ And a few lines later, quoting Philippians 3:13 (his source for the idea of *extentio*), he expresses the same hope for those who have not yet found the faith: “Let them also be ‘extended’ towards ‘those things which are before,’ and understand that before all times you are eternal Creator of all time” (11.30.40).⁵⁶ For Augustine this *extentio* of the self towards eternity is the closest we come to divine ‘union’ (just as Hugh clarified that notions of ‘vertical’ uplift were really inner, more ‘horizontal’ movements – *ascendere* meaning ‘to enter,’ *intrare*; and *elevator* meaning ‘to be gathered together,’ *colligitur*). In book eleven Augustine influentially formulates ‘knowing’ God not as a matter of transcending worldly limits, then, but becoming aware of those limits, comparing our entrapment in the present with God’s eternal present that so mysteriously encircles us, both coming ‘before’ and constituting our ‘end goal.’ For Augustine it is precisely by accepting how our minds and memories are bound to and cannot fully extend the temporal, ever-renewing present that we are – somewhat paradoxically – gathered and extended to eternity itself.

To return to Hugh’s Ark, then, I would propose that this discussion in the *Confessions*, thus far never considered in conjunction with Hugh’s treatises, helps us to make better sense of what exactly Hugh intends by his *pictura*. What has puzzled scholars for so long is how the Ark in *De Pictura* evades total imagining in its size and detail. This led Lecoq, Sicard, and most recently Conrad Rudolph to argue Hugh’s description must have referred to a ‘real’ picture after all. But what we find in Augustine – one of Hugh’s foundational theological authorities – is a strategy of ‘ascent’ that involves exactly the mind or soul’s horizontal distension, and the sense that we discover the divine order in testing our memorial and mental limitations.

It seems plausible to me that Hugh’s *ekphrasis* of the Ark – narrated for the mind, in an ongoing, or ‘stretched-out’ present – reflects, then, not only an absorption and interpretation of monastic mnemotechnical tradition, but a feeling for the Augustinian *disten-*

55. “a veteribus diebus colligar sequens unum, praeterita oblitus, non in ea quae futura et transitura sunt, sed in ea quae ante sunt non distentus, sed extentus” (Watts 278; Chadwick 244).

56. “extendantur etiam in ea, quae ante sunt, et intellegant te ante omnia tempora aeternum creatorem omnium temporum” (Watts 280; Chadwick 244).

tio animi, which Hugh adopts to forge a new kind of eternal view, or *kataskopos*, as a 'terrestrial,' memorial practice and discipline (like the psalm) in confronting the limits of the present. In looking to the *Confessions*, consciously or subconsciously, Hugh returns to what was probably one of Boethius' chief sources. But instead of emphasising the 'perfect possession' of boundless life in eternity (as Boethius' poem does), Hugh – in answering the practical needs of his brethren for a spiritual discipline – prioritises Augustine's formulation of the eternal present as a *human* analogy, something we grasp by trying to stretch the present moment. In the Ark *pictura*, we perceive and remake creation as seen under the aspect of eternity in the pressure the *ekphrasis* puts on our present attention. The works of restoration are the realisation of our inward, 'restorative' movement (in the course of reading) from sinful *distentio* to hopeful *extentio*. Hugh's eternal view, his *kataskopos*, in the form of a baffling present-tense *ekphrasis*, ingeniously both inspires and charts our genuine transformation from scatteredness in successive presents, to reintegration within the present – holding us in the present moment just long enough that we feel it as a mirror image (and particle) of God's eternal one.

Conclusion: the *kataskopos* and ever-presence

At the end of *De Archa Noe Morali*, Hugh cites Paul's words in 1 *Corinthians* 7.13, "the fashion of this world passeth" – announcing how the Ark opens out, within this passing, 'lesser' world, a new, far greater, unchanging world:

qui est alter mundus, cuius figura non praeterit, cuius forma non transit, cuius species non marcescit, cuius pulchritudo non deficit. Ille mundus in isto mundo est, et iste mundus illo mundo minor est, quia ille capit quem capere iste non potest. Istum mundum vident oculi carnis, illum mundum intrinsecus contemplantur oculi cordis. (*De Archa Noe* 4.21; *PL* 176.680; *Spiritual Writings* 152)

(For there is another world [besides this earthly one], whose 'fashion' does not pass, nor does its form change, nor its appearance wither, nor its beauty fail. That world is in this world, and this world is less than that world, for that world contains Him whom this world cannot contain. Eyes of the

flesh see this world, the eyes of the heart behold that world
after an inward manner.)

57. This aspect of Augustine's theology is especially emphasised by Williams, who writes that for Augustine "holy life always begins with a Christlike acceptance of humanity's finitude, of an incomplete, sinful, and frustrated present moment" (33).

This puts neatly (as well as paradoxically) the idea and distinction we have been tracing: that the Ark, instead of lifting us to eternity, offers a way of discovering eternity in worldly limits and worldly time, the infinite in and through the limits of our present – a contemplative dynamic with foundations in Augustine (his meditations on time, and his theology more broadly).⁵⁷ By way of conclusion, I want to put this re-reading of Hugh's *pictura* as a kataskopic exercise into some wider historical context. The Ark has been discussed before in the context of medieval diagrams, *ekphrases*, and mnemotechnical devices. But it can also be seen, I think, as part of a longer-term imaginative trend in (what could be called) northern-European 'contemplative aesthetics,' from the twelfth century onwards, to reframe or undercut the classical view from outside time and space as more of an earthbound project in embracing the limitations of the *hic et nunc*. In the short space available here, I want to single out just several authors from the 1170s onwards who (consciously or unconsciously) replicate Hugh's turn to Augustine's *distentio* in their own spiritual projects. On the one hand this helps set Hugh's innovation in historical perspective, as one experiment amongst (and possibly inspiring) others. At the same time, putting these later meditations into conversation with Hugh's *Ark* brings their literary inheritance up to date, offering a new twelfth-century precedent for (and so bringing into sharper focus) their attempts to enfold human temporality and divine eternity in their own rhetorically engaging ways.

First of all, while the question of Hugh's 'influence' on later authors is not my primary one, it is worth noting the extraordinary success and circulation of the *Ark* treatises. Eighty-eight copies of *De Pictura* survive (almost all of them paired with *De Archa Noe Morali*, of which 143 copies survive, along with thirty-three fragments of either *De Pictura* or *De Archa Noe*). Approximately thirty-nine of the manuscripts of *De Pictura* date from the twelfth century. Thus, we can be sure the exercise found immediate (as well as sustained) popularity (Rudolph 361–62). And we can be certain that it inspired at least one of the authors I want to mention: Richard of Saint-Victor, a successor at the school who wrote his own work on the Ark of the Covenant. His *De Arca Mystica* (or *Benjamin Major*, c. 1153–62) differs in aim and structure to *De Pictura* (being closer to a scientific analysis of the varieties of contemplative experience than a composition exercise *per se*). But it describes spiritual ascent in the

58. "Mentis dilatatio est quando animi acies latius expanditur et vehementius acuitur, modum tamen humanae industriae nullatenus supergreditur" (PL 169.170; Zinn 310). See also Atturo, who sees the inspiration for Dante's "extended moment[s] of *admiratio*" in Richard's theology (Atturo 108).

59. "Vides certe quod et superius locuti sumus, quomodo contemplationis nostrae negotium semper iuxta aliquid suspenditur atque protrahitur, dum contemplantis animus iucunditatis suae spectaculo libenter immoratur, dum semper studet, vel in ipsum saepe redire, vel in eodem diutius immobiliter permanere" (PL 196.69; Zinn 160). Richard uses *nunc* repeatedly to describe the actions of the contemplating mind, as though the temporal instant is itself extended. The comparison to birds comes a few lines earlier: "Videre licet alia quomodo tremulis alis saepeque reverberatis se in uno eodemque loco diutius suspendunt, et mobili se agitatione quasi immobiliter figunt" (*ibid.*; Zinn 159).

60. At 2.20 Richard asks us to imagine time as a circle around (and collapsible to) a central *punctus* (Zinn 207). At another stage he describes the contemplative moving with ease "from the part to the whole; at another time from the whole to the part" (2.5, Zinn 159) – as though this Hugonian mental *habitus* has become natural to him.

61. It is possible she read Hugh, but the records of the Rupertsberg Library holdings are not preserved, and Hildegard does not cite her sources. Her visions are often prefaced by explicit references to time and place that ground them resolutely in historical reality, a rhetorical move which may be linked to her broadly Augustinian 'theology' of time suggested in the visions discussed by Rabasso. For the convention of temporal markers in visions see Dailey 343.

62. The three images Rabasso concentrates on accompany the visions in the *Liber Divinorum Operum* at 1.2, 1.3, and 3.5 in the only surviving illuminated manuscript of the work in the Biblioteca Statale di Lucca (Lucca, Biblioteca Statale 1942; at fols 9r, 28v, and 143r).

63. It is in the second vision of part one (1.2), that man is described as a "crossroads," or as finding himself at a

same Augustinian way that Hugh encourages in *De Pictura*. For Richard, as for Hugh, this begins with *dilatatio*, "when the sharp point of the soul is expanded more widely" (*De Arca Mystica* 5.2).⁵⁸ And this dilation seems also to be understood by Richard, as it was by Hugh, as a dilation of the soul's present – for he describes the next stage of reflection, contemplation, as ceasing our wandering from one moment to the next, to a kind of lingering in a fixed space "for a long time," that is (paradoxically) always and repeatedly "now" (*De Arca Mystica* 1.5), just as birds (paradoxically) fix themselves motionless (*immobiliter*) in the sky by means of agitated motion (*mobili*).⁵⁹ Time passes and it does not. In this state of concentration we experience movement and stillness at once, and as one. The influence of Augustine, now filtered via Hugh, is then again felt in Richard several decades later – where these and many other passages imply that God's eternity is somehow accessible to sustained mental attentiveness, and the possibility of making the present the bearer of the whole.⁶⁰

At around the same time as Richard was writing, though less obviously descended from the Hugonian project, Hildegard of Bingen adopted a strikingly Augustinian view of temporality that helped furnish her numerous visions of the cosmos or salvation history from within time.⁶¹ Georgina Rabasso has argued that in certain visions in her *Liber Divinorum Operum* (c. 1163–73), and their accompanying visual representations, Hildegard gestures towards a conception of eternity as present to man's present, encoded in the images in the geometrical relationship between circle, line, and point (e.g. figure 3).⁶² In three of the book's famous illuminations, Rabasso suggests, on the basis of the written visions, that the circle (or wheel) figures eternity, its horizontal diameter imagines time, and the centre of the diameter, superimposed with a standing figure of man the microcosm (or at 3.5, a personification of *Caritas*), may be conceived as a kind of 'now-axis,' on which God's eternal will becomes discoverable to our souls, as participating in created time (Rabasso 93).⁶³

In the thirteenth century, the reintroduction of Aristotelian natural philosophy, with its emphasis on the Prime Mover, continually 'present' and acting in the physical universe, seems to have had the effect of underscoring or at least not contradicting Augustine's sense of God's immanence in time. Aquinas may well have had Augustine in mind, as well as the problem of God's continued action in an Aristotelian universe, when he wrote in his *Commentary on the Sentences* of Peter Lombard (c. 1252) that "the unchanged now of eternity is

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"fork in the road" ("homo quasi in biuio est"): although he exists within creation, he can, with an open heart (*dilatato corde*), seek and receive God's love and salvation. Also in this vision Hildegard

says, "per veram et puram poenitentiam quam ad Deum habeo, in aeternitate vivam" (PL 197.772; "I shall live in eternity through the true and pure penitence that I offer to God").

64. "quia nunc aeternitatis invariaturum adest omnibus partibus temporis:" Thomas Aquinas, *Scripta super libros septentiarum* I. 37.2. 1 ad 4, cited and analysed by Fox 323–24.

65. I am indebted to explanations of these developments by Grabowski and Woods, who have both tied them to spatial experiments in literature, and specifically Chaucer's poetry.

66. For the millet seed, see Albert of Saxony *De Celo*, bk. 1, qu. 9, 93v, col. 2; see also the discussion of the millet seed in Woods 61.

present to all the parts of time."⁶⁴ It is in the context of fourteenth-century mysticism, however, that we find more radical examples of eternity being 'scaled' to the present (and vice versa) in ways we might connect back to (at the same time as they go far beyond) the rhetoric of Hugh's Ark. Why now, in the fourteenth century, might provisionally be answered with reference again to developments in the spheres of science and logic, and specifically to discussions from Aquinas onwards about the absolute power of God to put worlds within worlds, and to fold dimensions into one another.⁶⁵ The thought experiments of scholars like Albert of Saxony, who famously argued God could place a body as large as a world inside a millet seed, conceivably ignited the imaginations of Middle English mystics of the fourteenth century, already well-versed in Augustine, who become particularly fascinated by the affective potential of the minute to open up infinite spaces in the mind.⁶⁶ These 'miniaturising' visions mostly touch on the temporal, using spatial metaphor to puzzle out the relation of instant to eternity. The author of the fourteenth-century *Cloud of Unknowing*, for example, clearly deploys Augustine (but might also be thinking of contemporary thought experiments) in their strategy of what Eleanor Johnson has called 'atomic prayer,' whereby union with God is achieved by meditatively isolating particles of time (Johnson 32–48). We are instructed to repeat monosyllabic words – 'God,' 'love,' 'sin' – which together create, by their joined-up minuteness, lacking a past and future of enunciation, a "particulate stream of time" that imitates "the seamless wholeness of eternal presence" (Johnson 35; *The Cloud of Unknowing* 37; Gallacher 65–68). Another better-known image from the same period, clearly kataskopic and Boethian in origin, but also perhaps informed by scholars like Albert of Saxony – as well as Augustine – is Julian of Norwich's vision of the world "the quantite of a haselle nutte, lygande in the palme of my hande" (Julian of Norwich 4; Watson and Jenkins 69). Again, eternity and timelessness (concepts Julian returns to again and again) reveal themselves in the particular, the homely even: the greater world unfolds in the lesser – or specifically, in a raised awareness of this world as lesser, passing, transitory, and particulate.

The hazelnut, like the monosyllable, might then be identified as consummate expressions of a trend towards 'earthing,' or 'now-ing' eternity, which, I would argue, begins to take shape in spiritual practices authored in the twelfth century – exemplified here (though not limited to) Hugh's Ark. The intricacies (and indeed the validity) of such a longer-term intellectual-aesthetic genealogy require a sepa-

67. Squire 29, cited above, p. 6.

rate and much larger study. Here my concern has not been with this genealogy or with claiming Hugh's Ark directly inspired or paved the way for later developments, but rather with reattending to the theology and rhetoric of Hugh's treatises themselves. Reading these for the first time in the light of what Squire called Hugh's "obsession" with temporality, and his Boethian and Augustinian inheritance, I have tried to restore to the *pictura* a sense of its genuinely transformative, transcendent function.⁶⁷ As well as – or more than – an astonishing painting, or mnemotechnical device, the Ark had the actual potential in Hugh's mind of reorganising, and in so doing, elevating the soul. The challenge it posed to the space of human imagination was not incidental, but *its means* of elevating. Like devotional exercises that came after it, in Hugh's Ark the discovery of God's administration of the world becomes a process in feeling out the *limits* of the self and memory; and grasping eternity a paradoxically frustrated effort in extending the inextensive, diminutive 'now.'



Figure 1. The Ark digitally reconstructed by Rudolph in his *Mystic Ark* (Rudolph colour fig. 1).



Figure 2. 'Hugh conducting the Ark lectures': the Ark as Rudolph imagines it may have been depicted and expounded at the Abbey of St Victor (Rudolph fig. 37).



Figure 3. *Liber Divinorum Operum* 1.3: Macrocosm of Winds, Microcosm of Humors, Lucca, Biblioteca Statale, 1942, f. 28v (early thirteenth century).

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Out of Time: Ekphrasis, Narration, and Temporal Experience in Twelfth-Century Romances of Antiquity

Abstract

This article considers the affective and conceptual work demanded in sophisticated moments of ekphrasis that abound in twelfth-century Old French romances, with particular attention to Alexandre de Paris's *Roman d'Alexandre* (1180s) and to two of the trio of *romans d'antiquité*, composed in French at the court of Henry II in England: the *Roman de Thebes* (c. 1150) and Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie* (1165). Of concern is the description of mechanical artefacts or tents that are depicted with representations of temporal progression, in the light of Virgil, *Aeneid*, 8 and Homer, *Iliad*, 18, available to twelfth-century Latins via Baebius's abbreviated Latin epitome. Narrative time stops for these ekphrastic moments which describe the pictorial representation of time. Henri Bergson's concept of duration (*durée*) and Boethius's representation of human and divine time in *Consolation of Philosophy*, 4 are used to think through the productive tension between time as forward movement, as represented through narration, and time as juxtaposed stasis, by which events all happen simultaneously, as represented through pictorial representation. Beyond that, the cosmic implications of these temporal questions bring out the relationship between twelfth-century literary ekphrasis and the medieval reception of the cosmogony of Plato's *Timaeus*. Particular attention is paid to the marvellous tents of Adrastus in the *Thebes* and of Alexander the Great in the *Alexandre*; to the chariot of Amphiarus in the *Thebes* with its depiction of Ovidian myth and Macrobian cosmos; and to the astonishing cosmogrammatical automaton in the *Troie*'s Chamber of Beauties. Ekphrases of artefacts representing time and the world clearly resonated with medieval audiences; rather than being superfluous to the action, they appear as fundamental to the composition and performance of historical narrative in French romance.

Twelfth-century narratives of antiquity obsessively stage aesthetic experiences that force listeners and readers to become conscious of their own relationship to time and to its mediation through narrative art. At certain moments, literature becomes a tool that can generate

a certain kind of aesthetic experience that is idiosyncratically philosophical in the specific sense that it gives its audiences the chance to grapple with or to sit with conceptual difficulties that are beyond philosophy's ability to resolve. Beyond these more specific moments, twelfth-century romance, set in a legendary past, produces a general phantasmatic suspension of time for its audiences. Just as historical novels or television period dramas do for modern audiences, they bring the past into a complex affective relation of similarity to and overlap with the present. Aimé Petit is right to say of anachronism in French *romans antiques* (romances of Antiquity) that it

illustre l'impossibilité pour l'homme d'accomplir parfaitement la synthèse du passé et du présent, il représente en même temps une tentative pour échapper au(x) temps, mais c'est aussi l'objet d'une ingénieuse technique. (*L'Anachronisme* 285)

(illustrates the impossibility for humans of perfectly accomplishing the synthesis between the past and the present; at the same time, it represents an attempt to escape from time/temporalities, but it is also the object of an ingenious technique.)

Anachronisms, such as allusions to Eleanor of Aquitaine's cultural centres of Poitiers and London in the *Roman de Thebes*, set in distant Antiquity but probably composed at her husband Henry II's Angevin court, draw attention to the work of the literary technician, and thus to how the audience's relationship to the distant events related is mediated through the poetic work in performance (Petit, *L'Anachronisme* 50–51). A different literary genre, the Latin prose histories of twelfth-century monastic writers such as William of Malmesbury, Geoffrey of Monmouth, Gerald of Wales, and Walter Map, show a particularly alert and sophisticated sensitivity to the ways that texts can use fiction to think about history (Otter). This essay, concerned both with literary history and literary theory, is less interested in fictionality itself than in a specific literary practice, strangely recurrent in twelfth-century poetic narrative, that generates very specific aesthetic experiences for audiences for thinking and feeling temporality. I am referring to breaks within narratives of antiquity in which narrative time stops to accommodate extended descriptions of marvellous artefacts, which themselves are decorated with visual representations of historical time.

It is not possible to give an inventory of all the various moments of ekphrasis in twelfth-century literature, a task which would demand a book-length study (Wandhoff). Instead, I want to consider a few ekphrastic moments, whose extreme self-consciousness in their own status as literary objects makes different kinds of time particularly visible. The moments of ekphrasis under discussion come from twelfth-century French-language romance composed in England and Northern France: the retellings of the exploits of Alexander the Great collated by Alexandre de Paris in his *Roman d'Alexandre* (1180s) and the mid-twelfth-century trio of so-called *romans d'antiquité*, composed in French at the Angevin court of Henry II in England: the *Roman de Thebes* (c. 1150), the *Roman d'Eneas* (c. 1160), and Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie* (1165).¹ As we will see below, they entail representations of time through the changing of the seasons, through historical or mythical events, and even through the depiction of the whole cosmos, as represented on the inside panels of tents, on decorative automata, and on war machines. They draw on the seminal moments of ekphrasis of the shield of Aeneas in Virgil's *Aeneid*, 8 and of the shield of Achilles that medieval students of Latin would have read in Baebius's Latin epitome of Homer's *Iliad*. In all of these works the past is reanimated and repurposed. Moments of narrative or temporal suspension in the description of marvellous artefacts, themselves depicted with historical or even cosmic events, enact self-conscious reflection on the nature and value of the artful and uncertain work of historical narrative, in particular as it bridges past and present through acts of imagination (on which, see Karnes 28 and *passim*). Beyond the self-referentiality of narrative art thinking artfully about the art of narration, these moments also, in a manner of speaking, make different kinds of time visible.

The ontology and phenomenology of time are important themes for some medieval philosophers and theologians, whose influence on poets can at times be seen, but the thinking work of narrative art is quite different to the thinking work of other discursive regimes. Beyond accounting for the intellectual influences that philosophical texts might have exerted on literary production, a reckoning with these descriptions demands attention to the particularity of the literary: the specific potential of these ekphrastic moments for engineering aesthetic experiences of temporal breakdown. The experience of time is at stake more than the theory of time – although there is no experience without some kind of implicit theoretical framework and no one theorizes without feeling some kind of affect. West-

1. I follow the dating given by Aimé Petit (*Le roman d'Eneas* 6; *Le Roman de Thèbes* 20–23).

ern thought has a long tradition of representing time, imperfectly, in relation to place and, as we will discuss below, Henri Bergson's analysis of the phenomenology of time as *durée* (duration) reveals the limitations of the spatial metaphors of, for example, discrete juxtaposition. Where philosophical language comes short, there is space for the thinking work of narrative; Paul Ricoeur suggests the theoretical work on time done through the practice of storytelling, which is

le moyen privilégié par lequel nous re-configurons notre expérience temporelle confuse, informe et, à la limite, muette. (Ricoeur 12)

(the privileged means by which we reconfigure our confused, shapeless, and even speechless experience of time.)

So, following Ricoeur, within broader narratives that help to make sense of time, ekphrasis marks a certain breakdown in the temporal order, affording its reading or listening subjects the momentary chance to reconfigure their relationship to their present, to the past, even to the timelessness of eternity. This is not to say that such moments provide an escape from the present; like the anachronism that Petit discusses, these ekphrastic breaks are marked by a pronounced awareness, shared by author and audience, of the artifice and the present-ness, so to speak, of the literary experience. Such studied artificiality is a particular kind of fictionality, one of the “plural conventions of suspending referential truth claims and of commenting on that suspension in medieval writing,” to cite Julie Orlemanski's generative articulation of the possibilities of medieval fiction (Orlemanski 147).

Ekphrasis and narration

Ekphrasis disrupts the regular workings of narrative time. By ekphrasis I mean the extended verbal description of a work of visual art, and I am particularly interested in what John Hollander calls “notional ekphrasis” (Hollander 4), the description not of real, physical, visible artefacts that could be compared with their verbal representation, but rather of imagined, invented objects. The objects described by our twelfth-century authors in prolific detail are decorated with images that represent events in the cyclical time of the world or in the linear telling of history, which adds a level of self-consciousness. In these moments the time of the story necessarily pauses so

that audiences and performers reading the work out become especially aware of different ways of understanding, of representing, or of experiencing the temporal order. It is not that these are moments “in which a poem aspires to the atemporal ‘eternity’ of the stopped-action” (Steiner 13–14). The aim is not to transcend time, but to reflect on our experience of it and the vexed relationship between present and past.

Ekphrasis, then, can be usefully understood as a moment of concentrated negotiation, a suspension that forces an awareness about the flow of narrative time, which has to stop to accommodate it. Regular narrative time involves the recounting of action of speech: Achilles spurred his horses on, Paris pulled his bow-string taut, etc. With an ekphrastic moment, however, the action must stop so that, like a camera panning in slow-motion, the details of the work of visual art are listed, before narrative time resumes for its action to continue. The visual artefact, though, has its own narrative with a different temporal logic; James Heffernan suggests that ekphrasis “typically represents the arrested moment of graphic art not only by re-creating its fixity in words but rather by releasing its embryonically narrative impulse” (Heffernan 307). In his study of ekphrasis in Virgil’s *Aeneid*, Michael Putnam notes, “by its very act of disruption, ekphrasis forces itself on the reader as a generative moment, as two types of narrativity confront each other” (Putnam 3). One kind of narrative time stops; another kind begins; in the tense suspension between the two of them, questions about time, teleology, and history are at stake, allowing a certain kind of experience of time, a temporary contemplation, affective and theoretical.

To understand the iterability and intertextuality of medieval romance ekphrasis, we have to start with Virgil’s narrative art. The *Aeneid* was perhaps the most important text for the medieval study of Latin and for the very idea of what literature was in the Middle Ages (Wetherbee, “The study of classical authors” 100–06; Ziolkowski and Putnam), and its history of Troy and the wanderings of Aeneas were a direct inspiration for twelfth-century romance, far beyond its direct reworking as the *Roman d’Eneas*. The most important moment in the *Aeneid* for the historical ekphrases in medieval romance is its eighth book’s description of the shield made by the god Vulcan and given to the hero Aeneas by Venus. Vulcan’s smiths forge an “ingen-tem clipeum” (a giant shield) (Virgil, *Aeneid* 8, 447), welding seven circles together, and the shield is a huge circle that is metal but also impossibly depicted as indescribable textile in the image of “clipei non enarrabile textum” (the shield’s unnarratable fabric) (8, 625,

translation emended). Its indescribability does not prevent Virgil's narrator from describing it, and it is important to stress the paradoxical breakdown in narrative sense occasioned by this impossible and perhaps mystical object. Such a breakdown marks the ekphrastic moment as a site outside of action that is proper for thinking about (and feeling) time, narrativity, and textuality.

On this shield, whose description runs for just over a hundred verses, Vulcan, “*haud vatum ignarus venturique inscius aevi*” (not unversed in prophecy or unknowing of the age to come) (8, 627), had fashioned images and deeds of the generations of Rome descended from Ascanius, Aeneas's son. The prophetic shield foretells events all the way to Virgil's patron Emperor Augustus's victory in the sea-battle of Actium and the triumphant entry into Rome that began his glorious reign. There is something nonsensical about this. It may be history to Virgil and his contemporaries but Aeneas himself does not understand what is happening; he is *ignarus* (the antinomy to Vulcan, the “*haud vatum ignarus*”): “*miratur rerumque ignarus imagine gaudet*” (though he knows not the events, he rejoices in their representation) (8, 730). If the future shown to him is a mystery for Aeneas, his shield serves as a map of events beyond the human experience of past, present, and future in which each is fixed in time-space: this moment of ekphrasis is outside of narrative time so that its studied extratemporality becomes a tool to think through the divine destiny that led to the ascent of Augustus Caesar. More than that, the shield's circularity and the patterned history that cycles round it convey a sense of the loops and repetitions that still mark the forward thrust of events (Putnam 119–88). The work of literature serves as a kind of bridging ritual, performed or enacted in an attempt to bring the legendary hero-time of Aeneas in contact with the time of Augustus, all the while bringing up its own questions about history, destiny, and free will.

It is this aspect of Virgil's ekphrasis that resonates most immediately for the twelfth-century authors who wrote their own time-bending narratives for courtly audiences, such as those in the milieu of Henry II of England and his queen Eleanor of Aquitaine. These narratives of antiquity are situated in a legendary historical time that is nonetheless brought into a kind of presence or present. In what follows, then, I will consider the specific temporal and historical ekphrases of French romance literature in the second half of the twelfth century as tools for particular kinds of affective, philosophical experience for thinking and feeling time. The ekphrastic moments I wish to dwell on differ from the Virgilian model in their concern for cos-

2. See Anya Burgon's contribution to this collection.

mography, bearing witness to the twelfth-century's Neoplatonist interest in human history in relation to the time of the cosmos. Beyond simply representing historical time and national destiny, they represent universal space-time in a way that partially closes (at least phantasmatically) the gulf between human and cosmic or divine time. In this they resonate with other cosmograms (Tresch) that proliferate in religious or clerical circles in the High Middle Ages, such as the representations of the cosmos as an egg (Dronke 79–99) or, especially, Hugh of Saint-Victor's spiritual painting of Noah's Ark, which is also allegorically the world, and on which he gave a series of lectures (Rudolph).² They also recall the descriptions of the cosmos that feature in the Neoplatonist philosophical tradition, from the cosmography of Plato's *Timaeus*, mediated via Chalcidius and Macrobius, to Bernard Sylvester, Thierry of Chartres, and other twelfth-century philosophers (Dronke; Hicks; Hicks and Morton; Wetherbee, *Platonism and Poetry*). While the philosophical stakes of romance ekphrasis are brought out by considering their relation to Neoplatonist philosophy in particular, narrative, whether or not it is understood as fictional, works in its own particular way to help its audiences make sense of their relationship to time and the world.

Le Roman de Thèbes, 1: The tent of Adrastus and the philosophy of time

The first example comes from the *Roman de Thèbes*, a French *mise en romanz* of Statius's first-century *Thebaid*, an epic poem in the mode of the *Aeneid*. The story is of the bloody war that took place before the battle of Troy between Oedipus's sons (and, through his incest, also his brothers) Eteocles and Polyneices. The audience are treated to two asides that describes the interior decoration of the tent of King Adrastus of Argos, who has taken Polyneices's side in the Theban civil war (Baumgartner, *De l'histoire de Troie* 179–87; Petit, “Les premières descriptions”). The second description mentions two panels, one decorated with a mappamundi, an encyclopaedic map of the whole world, and the other with the twelve months of the year represented. It also tells how the king has painted all of his judgments and the historic laws of his Greek ancestors there, as well as the history of memorable Greek kings and their memorable battles and conquests (4217–84). Here we will focus, though, on the earlier passage, a different ekphrastic set-piece with a complex depiction of

the world in time (3175–3212). There the events represented on the tent's panels appear first to be a pale imitation of Virgil's virtuosic ekphrasis. As with the mappamundi described in the later passage, though, the shift of emphasis from a specific national history to a general picture of the world is illustrative of a characteristically twelfth-century concern for putting human history in a tension with a more universal perspective on time:

<p>Devant la porte du donjon tendent au roi son paveillon ; touz fu de pailles de coulors, tailliez a bestes et a flors. Bien i sont peintes les estoires, les vielles gestes, les memoires et les justises et les plés, les jugemenz et les forfés, et les montaignes et li val, et les quaroles et li bal, les puceles et leur ami et les dames et leur mari, les larges prez et les rivieres et les bestes de mil maneres, les ostoirs et les epreviers et les roncins et les destriers, les vielz houmes et les chanus et les chاوز et les cheveluz, les granz bois et les granz forez, les embuchemenz, les aguez, les cembiaux et les envaïes que danzel font por lor amies, et les chastiaux et les citez, les forteresces, les fertez. De trestoutes les creatures sont el tref peintes les natures (<i>Le roman de Thèbes</i> 3175–3200).</p>	<p>(In front of the keep's gate they set up the king's tent; it was all made from coloured silks, decorated with animals and flowers. On it were painted histories, old noble deeds, the chronicles [/'memo-ries?'] and the courts and the pleas, the judgements and the penalties, and the mountains and the valleys, and the carols and the dances, the girls and their lovers and the ladies and their husbands, the wide meadows and the rivers and beasts of a thousand kinds, the goshawks and sparrowhawks, and the packhorses and the chargers, the old men and those with white hair, the bald and the hairy, the great woods and the great forests, the ambushes, the surprise attacks, the onslaughts and the assaults that young men carry out for the sake of their lovers, and the castles and walled cities, the strongholds and strong-places. The natures of all creatures are painted on the tent.)</p>
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The first things described are histories, great deeds perhaps to inspire imitation, but, as the description goes on, we move from war to the legal arena to love, presumably causes of strife and potentially of warfare. Here it is useful to remember Heffernan and Putnam's point that the representational art object has its own kind of narrative impulse.

This ekphrastic moment differs from the more ordered vision of history laid out on the shield of Aeneas in that its events are not displayed in temporal succession. All of these judgements, disputes, and struggles are taking place at the same time laid out on the tent, or in a temporality beyond that of lived human experience with no guiding through-line or obvious pattern. Instead of the forward thrust of destiny found in *Aeneid* 8, everything just happens without any obvious wider narrative. The apparent lack of narrative purpose is itself, though, a kind of narrative and reflects the Theban war, a fruitless, fratricidal, mutually destructive conflict, so different in outcome to the wandering of Aeneas, whose escape from Troy leads ultimately to the founding of Rome.

A significant shift occurs with the final couplet that changes the meaning of the painting (or of the description of the painting), as the perspective suddenly expands to represent the natures of absolutely all creatures in the world (“De trestoutes les creatures / sont el tref paintes les natures,” 3199–3200). The medieval idea of a ‘creature’ is a broader category than the primary modern sense of animals and encompasses everything created by God. In one breath the perspective has gone cosmic, and the accumulation of human and animal interactions represented on the tent goes from a haphazard collection of events to a universal vision of the world against which human disputes in general and the war of the Seven against Thebes in particular should be understood. But what vision of human actions and the natural world does this notional painting represent?

The vision of time it portrays is superhuman: all of the carols and dances and love-affairs and birds flying are laid out together without any indication of anteriority and posteriority and thus in a spatial relation of simultaneity. Yet verbal narrative is durational and demands an order so that the unfolding that happens in time is the narrator’s explication of the histories (*histoires*) and the events, people, and creatures that are laid out spatially in the painting. No explicit account is given here about the nature of time. Instead, with the interruption of narrative’s progress to accommodate the representation of a different temporal disposition, audiences are fleetingly prompted to an awareness of the limited linearity of the lived human experience of time whose specificity becomes more clearly seen when contrasted with the simultaneity shown on the tent’s panel. Reflections on time and the cosmos are very much part of the philosophical movement whose centre was the cathedral school of Chartres, and the key sources for such reflection are Boethius’s sixth-century

Consolation of Philosophy, Plato's *Timaeus*, 38b–39e, as translated and commented on by Calcidius in 1, c. 23 of his fourth-century gloss *On Plato's "Timaeus"* (Calcidius 64–69; 154–57), and Macrobius's fifth-century *On the Dream of Scipio* 2, c. 10 (Macrobius 124–27), which itself drew heavily on Plato's account of time and the spheres. Beyond that, monastic institutions, especially the influential Abbey of Saint-Victor in Paris, saw the dissemination and teaching of Augustine's wrestling with questions of time in book 11 of his *Confessions* (late fourth century). The *Roman de Thèbes* does not replicate those discussions and teachings but offers lay audiences a brief aesthetic experience of some of the mind-bending pleasures and thinking about time that took place in the Schools.

It stands as a moment of temporal experience outside of normal time, one which, more than the *Aeneid*, recalls Homer's *Iliad*, the Greek model for Virgil's Latin epic, in which Hephaistos (*i.e.*, Vulcan) makes a huge, dazzling shield to whose complexity it is not possible here to do justice (18, 483–608).³ Ringed round by “the mighty stream of Ocean” (Homer, *Iliad* 18, 607), the shield contains scenes of rural labour through the seasons and civil strife, but Homer begins his word-picture with details of the shield's cosmic aspect:

On it he fashioned the earth, the sea, and the heavens,
the unwearying sun, the moon on its increase to full,
and every constellation with which the heavens are crowned
(18, 483–85).

Homer's text may not have been accessible directly to medieval authors, but a Latin abridged version, the *Ilias latina* – also called the *Homerus latinus* – now attributed to a first-century Roman poet Baebius Italicus, was a key school-text for the learning of Latin (Green), extant in at least 140 manuscripts that testify to the extent of its circulation throughout England, France, Germany, and Italy (McKinley 3; Marshall 191–94; Scaffai; Wandhoff 43; Woods 53 and 93–94). Edmond Faral suggests the *Ilias latina* as a source while also noting that the author of the *Thebes* incorporates elements of the description of the palace of the Sun at the beginning of Book Two of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Faral 65–68; see also Petit, “Les premières descriptions” 307). Comprising just over a thousand verses, the *Ilias* is a hyper-condensed version of the Troy-story in relatively simple Latin. It contains a description of Achilles' shield, compressed to 30 verses, which starts with the following vision of the cosmos before proceeding to mention scenes of judgement and law, agriculture, and the playing of music:

3. Here I disagree with Donovan 227, who sees in these scenes the imitation of a *mappamundi*. More generally I agree with him on the influence of Neoplatonist thought on the ekphrastic scenes in the *Thebes*.

Illic Ignipotens mundi caelaverat arcem
 Sideraque et liquido redimitum lumine Olympum,
 Omnes et terras et cinctum Nerea circum. (*Ilias latina*,
 862–64)

(There the master of fire had engraved the arc of heaven and the constellations and Olympus wreathed with shining light, and all territories and Nereus [a sea-god] a girdle around them.)

There is, I suggest, a philosophical aspect to the spatial-temporal ekphrasis in Baebius's text as received in the twelfth century shared with the cosmic artefacts from the *Romans de Thèbes*, *d'Alexandre*, and *de Troie* under discussion in this piece. Before proceeding, then, I want to take a moment to think about the implications of using artefacts as images of or for time by drawing on one of the most influential philosophical accounts of time for twelfth-century thinkers, Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* (Nauta; Wetherbee, "The *Consolation*"). The *Consolation* was a cornerstone of the curriculum at the influential cathedral school of Chartres, where William of Conches wrote a significant commentary on it, his *Glosae super Boethium*. William tutored the future King Henry II of England, whose court, the probable context for the *Roman de Thebes*, is widely acknowledged to have been deeply engaged with clerical learning (Burnett 31–60; Gaullier-Bougassas 2: 794–98 and 3: 1334–45; Mora-Lebrun 36–86; Ribémont 36–52), and it is hardly a stretch to suggest the relevance of the *Consolation of Philosophy* for the intellectual context of the *romans d'antiquité*. Boethius has the figure of Philosophy attempt to explain the difference between human experience of time and the extratemporal nature of the world as it is known by God and ordered by divine providence. Her aim is to explain that God's omniscience does not obviate human free will, and to explain this knotty problem she represents time itself as a work of art. Attention to this image will help us understand better the stakes of using narrative verse, which proceeds or unfolds through time, to describe cosmological artefacts that represent the world as static and laid out together in space.

Philosophy uses a series of metaphors to help the Prisoner get closer to understanding the problem of free will and the human experience of time. She draws a distinction between divine providence and fate that relies on an idea of time as a kind of space, so that events' succession in time is figured as a juxtaposition:

Providentia namque cuncta pariter quamvis diversa quamvis infinita complectitur; fatum vero singula digerit in motum locis formis ac temporibus distributa, ut haec temporalis ordinis explicatio in divinae mentis adunata prospectum providentia sit, eadem vero adunatio digesta atque explicata temporibus fatum vocetur. Quae licet diversa sint, alterum tamen pendet ex altero. Ordo namque fatalis ex providentiae simplicitate procedit. Sicut enim artifex faciendae rei formam mente praecipiens movet operis effectum, et quod simpliciter praesentarieque prospexerat, per temporales ordines ducit, ita deus providentia quidem singulariter stabiliterque facienda disponit, fato vero haec ipsa quae disposuit multipliciter ac temporaliter administrat. (Boethius, *Consolation* 4, pr. 6, 36–51)

(For providence embraces all things together, though they are different, though they are infinite; but fate arranges as to their motion separate things, distributed in place, form and time; so that this unfolding of temporal order being united in the foresight of the divine mind is providence, and the same unity when distributed and unfolded in time is called fate. Now although these are different, yet the one depends on the other; for the order of fate proceeds from the simplicity of providence. For in the same way as a craftsman first conceives in his mind the form of the thing he is to make and then puts the work into effect, and produces by stages in temporal order what he had previously envisaged in a simple and instantaneous manner, just so God by providence disposes what is to be done in a single and unchanging way, but by fate accomplishes those same things he has disposed in a manifold and temporal way.)

John Marenbon has noted both the sophistication of Boethius's solution to the problem of divine prescience and human freedom and Philosophy's ultimate failure to defend human freedom by not wishing to detract from God's agency (143–45). My concern here is less the success of Boethius's philosophical argument than the work done through the stylistic or rhetorical aspects of this part of it. The analogy of God to an *artifex* (craftsman), proceeding from the idea of the artwork to its manufacture, derives from the allegorical image for the creator used by Plato in *Timaeus* 32b: "mundi opifex" (craftsman of the world; Calcidius 50–51). Shortly after introducing the idea of a cosmic artisan, the *Timaeus* goes on to discuss the institution of time

in the image of eternity and the movement of the spheres and the constellations which were made so that time could be recorded and numbered (*Timaeus* 38c–e; Calcidius 64–67). The image of creation as a divine artefact informs the twelfth-century reception of the shield of Achilles decorated with celestial bodies and the sublunary world, as well as the proliferation of the marvellous artefacts of French romance that represent creation and even time. It is hard to overstate the importance of Plato and Calcidius for the Neoplatonists of the twelfth century, and in this intellectual context the image of the world as a cosmic artefact gives philosophical resonance to the cosmogrammatical works of art described in romance. According to Calcidius's commentary at 2, c. 26 (Calcidius 158–61), Plato deploys the fictional figure of the craftsman due to the difficulty of convincing an audience about the difficult philosophical truths around time, God, and creation. By definition, humans can never actually arrive at an understanding of time that is beyond humans, and any image or allegory of a Divine conception of the world, whether in Plato or in the *Roman de Thèbes*, will then be a stand-in for a full understanding. As with Plato's *mundi opifex*, that image will be something more like the symbol of a divine conception of time.

If, for medieval intellectuals, the Platonic legacy legitimates the idea of a cosmic work of art as philosophically meaningful, it is worth staying a bit longer with Boethius's very Platonic image of the world as an artefact, as it points to a particular tension between the representations of human and super-human understandings of time. The image of *explicatio* (unfolding) that Boethius uses to describe the progression of the temporal order (*ordo temporalis*) is a figure for the order of time that is experienced by humans, a forward-moving process of change; it is a coming-into-being of the divine artefact of creation that has been disposed – *i.e.* ordered into an arrangement – in the eternity of God's mind, which is beyond the unfolding of duration that is the human experience. This eternal disposition cannot be fully understood but is indicated gesturally through the allegorical image employed by Boethius's personification of Philosophy. In his essay in this collection, George Younge notes the importance of the same metaphors of unfolding (*explicare*) or rolling up (*volvere*) for Honorius Augustodunensis in representing the human encounter with time. The image of the world in the ekphrastic literary moments under discussion is that of a static work of art, such as that painted onto the tent of Adrastus in the *Roman de Thèbes* or depicted on the shield of Achilles. This image is a gesture towards the divine perspec-

tive beyond human time, but in the notional ekphrasis of medieval romance this static representation is only conveyed through its narrative description, which unfolds in time.

To help understand some of the contradictions inherent in representing time as we experience it, it is useful to turn, very briefly, to Henri Bergson's discussion of temporal metaphors in his late essays, published together as *La pensée et le mouvant*. As Bergson took pains to show, the structures of human language and the history of Western thought – from Zeno's paradoxes onwards – have produced an understanding of time as analogous to location and position. Moments are represented as closer or more distant in time, just as objects can be nearer or farther from each other; in this analytical mode, where place has juxtaposition, time has succession, so that moments in time are understood as spread out in a fixed order (Bergson 5–8). Bergson contrasts this analytical, quasi-spatial approach to time with the idea of *durée*, of a duration that is internal to the active and evolving subject and in which, through memory, moments of the past continue as part of the present. Ekphrasis puts these two versions of time into tension: the durational, related to narration, and the quasi-spatial, related to vision, in which events in time are both fully discrete and fixed in relation to each other. Bergson describes the continuing of consciousness in time as first an unrolling (*déroulement*) of a scroll and a simultaneous rolling up (*enroulement*), like a thread on a spool as our past follows us, expanding with the present that it picks up on its way and turns into memory (Bergson 183). He then rejects the image he has just used, along with other spatial metaphors, since

ce qui est durée pure exclut toute idée de juxtaposition,
d'extériorité réciproque et d'étendue. (Bergson 184)

(that which is pure duration excludes every idea of juxtaposition, of reciprocal exteriority and of extension.)

What Bergson brings out is both the inevitability of thinking about time in relation to space and the insufficiency of using figures of space to think about time as we actually live it, *i.e.*, as duration. He is clear that no image will be able truly to convey the phenomenon of time that we experience. Attempts to picture time inevitably render it into a kind of space, which is something fixed and which is quite different to the phenomenology of time. Bergson's attention to the metaphors we live by in trying to grasp the human experience of time reveals their inherent inadequacy. The insufficiency of their figures

4. While for the medieval people under discussion, this superhuman vision entails God, it certainly does not need to. Twentieth- and twenty-first-century philosophy and physics, for example, can think about the time of the universe without theological concepts (Gell 149–55).

for grasping time point, also, towards their own status as insufficient artistic representations of phenomena beyond the capacity of complete human understanding. With this in mind, the stakes of the medieval representation of time come out more clearly. Where Plato, Boethius, and our twelfth-century writers differ from Bergson is that they are using these static figures not to represent the phenomenology of time but to represent time as it cannot be experienced by humans. And here the particular value of ekphrasis comes out in its bringing together of representational modes (the visual and the verbal): no image can represent our experience of time as duration; verbal narration comes far closer to representing it, even as narrative itself shapes how we make sense of our being in time (Ricoeur). With this in mind, the particular narrative moment of cosmogrammatical ekphrasis allows for the representation of and potentially the shaping of the human encounter with a superhuman vision of the world.⁴

Le Roman d'Alexandre: The tent of Alexander the Great

Having drawn out some of the theoretical considerations relevant to the representation of the world, I would like to go further in exploring other instances of cosmogrammatical ekphrasis, whose recurrence as a distinctive factor in historical romance is evidence of their appeal to and their value for their lay aristocratic audiences. Following the *Roman de Thèbes*'s first editor Léopold Constans (2: 339–40), Faral lists analogous ekphrastic moments in later works of the twelfth century: the decasyllabic *Roman d'Alexandre*, a fragment of *Doon de Nanteuil*, a crusade *chanson de geste* imitating Baudri of Bourgueil's *History of Jerusalem*, and the romance *Athis et Prophilias* (Faral 65). A particularly striking example is found in Alexandre de Paris's *Roman d'Alexandre*, which describes the Macedonian emperor's tent at great length (Alexandre de Paris 1, 1948–2064) in a passage whose debt to the *Thèbes* is clear. Among all sorts of marvellous features, its four interior panels are decorated in a way that also offers a cosmic vision outside of the normal temporal regime. Two have histories represented on them, one panel containing the story of Hercules and another that of the matter of Troy, both of which stand as exempla or models for Alexander. Hercules establishes his pillars to fix the limits of the explorable world that Alexander will later surpass (3, 2388ff.), while Alexander draws inspiration from the history of his Greek forbears' sacking of Troy, express-

ing his desire to do the same to the Persians (1, 2066–69).

This *mise-en-abyme* – narratives of the past appearing within narratives of the past – already points to a self-consciousness about the complicated relationship between narrative present and historical past. Alexandre de Paris’s Alexander-romance was finished not long before the start of the Third Crusade (1189–92), and Aimé Petit forcefully argues for the relationship between *romans antiques* and twelfth-century Crusades (Petit, *L’Anachronisme* 46). Just as Alexander seems to emulate Hercules and the Greek war on Troy, so too Anglo-Norman aristocratic audiences, preoccupied with Crusade, would have held Alexander as an analogous exemplum whose successful Oriental campaign of conquest could have been read as a feat to be imitated in the twelfth century. The time-out-of-time of ekphrasis stages a meditation about the value of narrative for inciting military heroism; in the reflective space outside of narrative thrust, Alexandre de Paris’s text, far more than that of Adrastus in the *Thebes*, reflects on the value of narrative itself for understanding political and historical destiny in the present or near future.

However, the description of these historical panels is preceded by that of the other two panels, each showing a concern for the representation of time shared with the first description of Adrastus’ tent in the *Roman de Thèbes* and with similar cosmic implications. These other two panels in Alexander’s tent are not written but painted, although the images nonetheless have textual annotation. One picture the progression of time through the seasons:

Or vos reconterai par dedens la biauté.
 El premier chief devant fu pains li mois d’esté,
 Tout si com li vergier verdoient et li pré
 Et tout si com les vignes florissent et li blé.
 Li douze mois de l’an i sont tuit devisé
 Ensi comme chascuns mostre sa poësté ;
 Les eures et li jor i sont tuit aconté ;
 Li cieus et les planetes, li signe, tuit nomé ;
 Li solaus et la lune i getent grant clarté
 Et li ans est desus pains en sa maiesté ;
 Par letres sor escrites i est tout devisé. (1, 2008–19)

(Now I will tell you about the beauty of the [tent’s] inside.
 First of all, the summer month was painted, represented
 precisely how the orchards and the meadows turn green and

the vines and the wheat ripen. The twelve months of the year are all represented so that each month shows its power[/dominion]; the hours and the days are all counted there; the heavens and the planets, the star-signs all named; the sun and the moon throw out great light and the year is painted on it in its majesty; it is all represented in text written above.)

The twelve months can be pictured by the changes in the natural world, as implied by the mention of the flourishing of vines and wheat in the first part of this passage, but after the months, we come to other units of time that are harder to represent. Evidently, the tent is a marvel and hard to picture in its complexity, but what this strange detail brings out is that the panel is a representation not just of the changing seasons but of time itself in its regulation and calculation. As we see through all of the ekphrastic examples under discussion in this article, the revealing details of these cosmogrammatical depictions indicate different temporal regimes. Months can be represented pictorially, but what kind of representation allows the narrator to say that “all the hours and the days are counted there” (“Les eures et li jor i sont tuit aconté”)? An ungenerous reading by a modern scholar or the inattentive listening of medieval audience would allow this detail to be accepted as the banal hyperbole of romance literature’s marvels, but, as with the previous example from the *Thèbes*, and as with all the examples in this piece, the details of the ekphrasis point towards reflections on the nature of time in the authoritative philosophical texts of the twelfth century. Alexandre de Paris proceeds directly from listing of units of time (hours and days) to discussing the rotating heavens, with their planets and constellations. According to the Neoplatonic model of the universe inspired by the *Timaeus*, 38c, time itself comes into being through the creation of the heavens and can be numbered and recorded thanks to the movements of the celestial bodies (Calcidius 64–65). This representation of recordable time from its smaller units (hours) to the rotation of the entire universe presents a different temporality to that of the panels representing the histories of Hercules and the Trojan War; it is time independent of human action and pointing towards the wholly inhuman temporal regime of the universe or even the timelessness of its Creator.

Which “ans” (year) is “desus pains en sa maiesté” (painted on it in its majesty)? There are two kinds of years in Neoplatonist cosmology and while most readers would probably interpret this line as referring to the solar year (the 365 or so days it took the sun to circle round the medieval Earth), the perspectival shift to discuss the rota-

5. William of Conches repeats this figure in the twelfth century in his *Glosae super Platonem* 1, c. 103 (182).

tion of the heavens and their planets can also suggest the other kind of year, as discussed in medieval cosmology: the *annus mundanus* or the cosmic year (*In somnium Scipionis*, 2, c. 11, par. 8; Macrobius 128), which Plato calls the *perfectus annus*, the perfect year (*Timaeus* 39c; Calcidius 68) and which takes fifteen thousand years (*In somnium Scipionis*, 2, c. 11, par. 11; Macrobius 129).⁵ The *annus mundanus* is the time taken for all of the planets and constellations to fully circle the earth to all return to the same configuration. The first part of the *Timaeus* concludes with the assertion that the perfect year by which all eight spheres will have rotated was created

ut quam simillimum esset omne hoc perfecto illi quod mente
perspicitur animali aevoque exaequatae naturae temporis
socia natura nancisceretur imaginem. (*Timaeus* 39d–e;
Calcidius 68–69)

(so that this All might resemble in the highest possible
degree that perfect living being which is visible to the mind,
and so that the associated nature of time might obtain a
likeness of the nature that equals eternity.)

Is this to say that a Neoplatonist cosmos in all its philosophical complexity is represented on Alexander's tent and that it necessarily demands attention to the relationship of humans to God and of time to eternity? Of course not. Rather, by sketching out some philosophical commonplaces on the relationship of the spheres to time and time to eternity, it is possible for us to see in this panel more than simply a depiction of the changing seasons. Instead, in the stopped narrative of ekphrasis we encounter (the verbal description of) a visual representation of time at a cosmic degree, from the variable hours of the day through to the perfect and changeless rotation of the *aplanes*, the outermost sphere of the fixed stars. The first two panels of the tent represent a temporal regime of history, the ordering of human action into a meaningful story in time, into which Alexander can write himself as world-historical figure. In tension with the temporal regime of history, this panel displays an alternative form of divinely ordered time against which individual actions become insignificant.

On the remaining panel we find a representation of geography:

En l'autre pan après, se voliés garder,
Veïssiés mapamonde enseigner et mostrer.
(Alexandre de Paris 1, 2020–21)

(On the other panel, if you wished to look, you would have seen a mappamundi depicted and shown).

A mappamundi is both a map and a story of the relationship between its viewers and their world in time (Edson; Terkla). It contains place-names and representations and brief descriptions of geographical details, local animals or monsters, and cities, with Jerusalem at the centre, all of which have the potential to trigger associations, memories, and stories, not least the peoples of Gog and Magog, who connect Alexander's history to salvation history and the Apocalypse. Drawing on a cartographical tradition going back at least as far as Isidore, mappaemundi flourished especially in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Here is not the place to dwell on the intellectual and affective work convoked by these artefacts but let it suffice to say for the moment that the map provides a God's-eye view of the world, or at least a superhuman perspective – similar to the view of the world that Alexander famously achieves with his flying machine, powered by griffins (Maus de Rolley; Morton, "Engin;" Schmidt; Settis-Frugoni). Similarly, the vision represented on the tent of all times of the year and of the whole world at once is a superhuman perspective. Petit draws links between Alexander's tent and the images of the months of the year found in some medieval church art, suggesting a broader concern with visualizing time (Petit, "Les premières description" 307–08). The situation of this tent in the middle of a historical story, however, cannot help but bring in more specific questions about narration and destiny. The lesson that the extreme, inimitable, and morally ambiguous Alexander draws is basic, and it self-consciously stages the monarch's failure to reflect on the philosophical implications of the tent that is also a text and his refusal to submit to the limitations of being a time-bound mortal. For him the world has been made too small for his extreme drive for empire and conquest (Alexandre de Paris 1, 2031–34). But this representation of place on one panel is juxtaposed (*i.e.*, situated in place) on the tent alongside the visual depiction of time just discussed and immediately followed by the aforementioned histories of Hercules and Troy that involve both distance in time and locomotion through the world in search of conquest and adventure. If they are read together, all sorts of questions and tensions can emerge that go to the heart of historical romance and its exploration of the individual in its relationship to history and to time.

It is striking that the images on these two panels of the tent are painted not woven; when combined with the writing on the other two,

they resemble not so much woven textile as the multimodality of a medieval written text: Alexander's tent is a double of an illuminated medieval book, inside which Alexander lives and, like a medieval book, it is portable and can be transported and reopened anywhere. Wherever Alexander goes, he sleeps inside the colonizing narrative of Oriental exploration that he also represents for his European readers, who could potentially bring their manuscripts with them on their missions out East, to Cyprus, Acre, and, ideally, Jerusalem. My aim is not to iron out the difficulties and tensions in how this tent can signify but to suggest that the textual artefacts at stake are, to borrow the phrase that Claude Lévi-Strauss uses to describe mythologies, “des machines à supprimer le temps” (“machines for the suppression of time”) (Lévi-Strauss 22). In the ritual-time of literary performance, the past and the present, the dead and the living are brought into a complex temporal relationship, a kind of spectral simultaneity that can be used to reinforce, undermine, or complicate prevailing narratives of conquest.

Le Roman de Thèbes 2: The chariot of Amphiaraus

The tents of Adrastus and Alexander are woven texts and are ways of thinking about the work of the written and painted books of medieval romance, but the final section of this piece considers the particular temporal thinking that comes from the ekphrasis of the machines, partially or fully automatic, that feature in the *Roman de Thèbes* and in the *Roman de Troie*. Even more than the image of a painted tent or a book, the idea of the *machina* or the machine, not unrelated to that of the *ingenium* or *engin*, brings the mechanical in relation to the cosmic.⁶ The *machina mundi* – the machine of the world – is the mechanism, in Neoplatonist accounts of the universe, by which the elements – earth, air, fire, water – are held together in cosmic harmony and proportion (*musica mundana*), which allows the world to endure. This principle is expressed in the *Consolation of Philosophy* 2, m. 8, and features repeatedly in the works of twelfth-century Neoplatonists such as Hisdosus, William of Conches, and Bernard Sylvester. Without the order and concord imposed by love or by the *anima mundi* (the soul of the world), the *machina mundi* would be wrecked by the warring elements (Boethius, *Consolation* 2, m. 8, 16–21; see also Hicks 17–20, 41–42, 277, and *passim*). In his authoritative discussion of the Neoplatonist world-machine, Andrew Hicks notes that the mathematically proportioned concord that holds the

6. The definition of a machine given by Huguccio of Pisa in the very late twelfth century in his *Derivationes* is “omne quod ingenio paratur” (“everything made with ingenuity”). He lists war machines first and then goes on to say that “quelibet artificiosa compositio vel constructio dicatur quandoque machina” (“any artful composition or construction at all can be called a machine”) (Huguccio 717).

world together governs the structures of the world around us, “for instance, in the elements, the movements of the planets, the seasonal round, and the bodies of animals and plants, as well as, of course, in vibrating strings and other resonant musical instruments” (Hicks 19).

In the twelfth century, the description of machines constructed with engineering’s mathematical proportions entails questions of harmony whose mathematical proportions obtain within performed music, as well as the human body and the ordering of the cosmos; this is especially true of machines that produce music, as we shall see. Ekphrastic descriptions of machines in the text – through the machine of the text – bring human history and temporality even more clearly in relation to a superhuman cosmic time than for other artefacts, such as shields or tents.

For the first example we return to the *Roman de Thèbes*, in particular its description of a chariot ridden into battle by the prophet Amphiaraus, on the side of Polyneices. Amphiaraus, like Vulcan in the *Aeneid*, can see into the future, and such clairvoyance necessarily brings up familiar questions of free will, destiny, and the temporal order. Knowing from his auguries that he will die that day (5053–60), he goes on a suicide mission in his amazing chariot, which, like Aeneas’s shield, is made by the god Vulcan. Pulled around by magnificent zebras that leave no footprints and that run faster than birds can fly (5013–16), Amphiaraus rampages, killing as many enemies as he can before the earth swallows him up. Like Alexander, he is a figure who transgresses the natural order and his death is explicitly compared to the punishment meted out to the Biblical figures Abiram and Dathan (*Num* 16), the sons of Korach who rebelled against Moses’ divinely granted authority (5053–56; 5070–76).⁷ The description of his chariot is astonishing and our considerations of ekphrasis up to this point will help illuminate the temporal nature of this strange machine. It is decorated with marvellous sculptures and paintings, which, like the panels on Alexander’s tent, each situate the romance’s master-narrative in relation to a different vision of time. The shield of Aeneas that Vulcan fashions in the *Aeneid* is a conscious meditation on temporal progression and the thrust of history, and here, in the twelfth century, is a self-consciously intertextual machine, that contains on it a version of the cosmos, which, given the intellectual context, necessarily entails a relationship to time.

Par estuide et par grant conseil
i mist la lune et le soleill
et tresgita le firmament

7. In one manuscript version Amphiaraus descends to hell where he is tormented by Pluto. See London, British Library, Additional 34114, f. 188r–v; *Roman de Thèbes*, ed. Constans, 2: 16–17.

par art et par enchantement.
 Neuf esperes par ordre i fist,
 en la greingnor les signes mist
 et es autres qui sont menors
 mist les plannetes et les cors.
 La neume mist en mi le monde,
 ce est la terre et mer parfonde.
 En terre paint houmes et bestes,
 en mer, poissons, venz et tempestes.
 Qui des set arz set rien entendre,
 iluec em puet assez aprendre. (4955–68)

(With great effort and great care he [Vulcan] put the moon and the sun there and cast the firmament through art and enchantment. He put nine spheres there in order, and he put the constellations in the biggest and in the others which are smaller he put the planets and heavenly bodies. In the middle of the universe he put the ninth sphere, which is the earth and the deep sea. On earth he paints men and beasts and in the sea fish, winds, and storms. Whoever knows how to understand anything of the seven arts can learn plenty from it.)

As on Alexander's tent, the depiction of the wandering stars (planets) and fixed stars (constellations), as well as the representation of the nine spheres of the cosmos as a sculpture, necessarily recalls Neoplatonist accounts of the ontology and origin of time; this model of the heavens and their movements draws on Macrobius's account of the planets in *In somnium Scipionis* 1, c. 18–19 (Macrobius 70–78), which itself draws significantly from Plato's *Timaeus*. I want to stress the importance here of harmony as a principle underlying this fantastic orrery. The Pythagorean and Neoplatonist idea of the harmony of the spheres was far from uniform in Antiquity and the Middle Ages (Hicks 189–245) and here is not the place to discuss the nuances of the concept's history, but a couple of influential viewpoints are worth bringing out to demonstrate some of the philosophical possibilities of this ekphrasis. First is that of Calcidius who notes in 1, c. 95 of his commentary on Plato that the spheres are spaced out “*intervallis musicis, ut iuxta Pythagoram motu harmonico stellae rotatae musicos in vertigine modos edant*” (by musical intervals such that the stars, as according to Pythagoras, in harmonized movement produce musical modes as they rotate in their spinning) (Calcidius 284–85). These harmonious proportions are the same as the proportions

by which the World Soul (*anima mundi*) and the human soul are composed, and can be mapped onto the proportions of the musical scale (1, c. 44; Calcidius 188–93; cf. *In somnium Scipionis* 1, c. 6, par. 43; Macrobius 26). The description of the universal model mounted on Amphiarauus’s chariot has stopped the narrative temporality of the Theban civil war to allow a moment for the contemplation of the harmonious and perfect balance of the time of the cosmos.

The musical aspect of this machine is emphasized by other details on this strange chariot, whose decoration insistently points to its own curious relationship to the ordering and acquisition of learning and knowledge. Its frontal, made of jewels and enamel, is decorated with personifications of the seven Liberal Arts as part of the allegorical tradition instituted by Martianus Capella’s fifth-century *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* (“The Marriage of Philology and Mercury”), another of the key texts for the twelfth-century Latin Neoplatonists. The personified art of Music or Harmony is represented singing her scale and the three key intervals of Greek musical theory – the fourth, the fifth, and the octave – are represented alongside her, “dÿathesaron, / dÿapainté, dÿapason” (“diatessaron, diapente, diapason;” 4995–96). These musical intervals determine the harmonious mathematical proportions of the *anima mundi* which is described at some length in Plato’s cosmogony in the *Timaeus* (35b–37c; Calcidius 40–50), immediately preceding its account of the creation of the heavenly bodies that institute time and which, as we have seen, are represented on Amphiarauus’s chariot. Even more obvious musical representation appears after the representation of the Liberal Arts, as we learn that there are two *ymages* (sculptures) mounted on the chariot, automata who play *musica instrumentalis*:

Une ymage y ot tresgitee
qui vet cornant a la menee,
une autre qui toz tens fretele
plus cler que rote ne viele. (5003–06)

(There was a cast statue there which went along trumpeting the charge and a second one playing the flute more sweetly than a rote or a viol.)

These ingenious machines confirm the musical nature of this chariot. To use the terminology of Boethius’s influential *De institutione musica*, 1, c. 2, the model of the spheres is a representation of cosmic harmony – *musica mundana* – by which the universe holds together

and moves, and the statues are playing *musica instrumentalis* or sonic music as heard by human ears (Boethius, “De institutione” 187–89). It is tempting to suggest that this chariot presents a vision of harmony in its various forms, with *musica mundana* and *musica instrumentalis* reflecting each other and implicitly gesturing towards the third kind of harmony identified by Boethius, *musica humana*, the proportions of the human soul, which can be brought to greater understanding through the experience of the other two kinds of harmony. In this reading, the ekphrastic moment opens up a break in the narrative of fratricidal civil strife to give a vision of cosmic and musical harmony, a different temporal perspective that situates the discords of historical human struggles against the more perfect concord of the universe. The notional artefact that is Amphiarus’s chariot is too complex, however, to allow it to stand simply as an ennobling, harmonious vision. Beyond the fact that the vehicle is a war machine, the two statues mounted on it play different kinds of instrumental music that themselves are in opposition or disharmony with each other: the first summons troops to action with a horn and the other plays the sweetest music conceivable on a wind instrument. These two kinds of organized sound, martial summons and sweet fluting, cannot work together musically or thematically, and this incompatible juxtaposition mimics in its structure the tension of the ekphrastic moment, the narrative oxymoron of having a stopped-time moment within a timebound narrative. That narrative may have paused but in the *durée* of the text (to repurpose Bergson’s term) it nonetheless continues to resonate and signify in that pause. The chariot, like Alexander the Great’s tent, does not allow an escape from one way of conceiving of time and the world into another as much as, nested within the larger context of the narrative of the whole *Roman de Thèbes*, it brings two incompatible conceptions together. As Petit suggests and as discussed above, the *Thèbes* allows a certain break from the time of lived experience to experience the time of narrative, which it nonetheless disrupts periodically with anachronisms that bring distant past into tension with the present of the twelfth century. The ekphrasis does analogous work creating a different temporal logic that can never be completely separate from its narrative context. The harmony it may represent remains tantalizingly out of reach.

The final aspect of decoration on the chariot complicates it still further. After the cosmogrammatical vision of the universe with the earth at its centre, painted with creatures and weather events, we have the depiction of a different kind of temporal narrative, one that like that of the

Roman d'Alexandre entails the representation of a mythic history. On the other side of the chariot we have the Titans (“[L]i Jaiant”), who “les diex veulent desheriter / et par force des cieus giter” (“who want to dispossess the gods and to cast them down from heavens”) (*Roman de Thèbes* 4969; 4971–72). While medieval French narrative often switches between past and present tenses in narration, here the switch in tense is striking and particularly significant. The verbs that govern Vulcan’s making of the chariot are in the past tense (*fist, mist, tresgita*, etc.), while the eighteen-verse description of the struggle between titans and gods, taken from *Metamorphoses*, 1, 151–62 (Ovid 12–13), is all recounted in the present tense. In this complex, impossible artefact, different temporal and narratological regimes play out and interfere with each other, not least in a fourteenth-century manuscript of the *Thèbes* that almost certainly draws on an earlier now-lost version (*Roman de Thèbes*, ed. Petit 8–9). This manuscript sees an addition to the scene of the gods fighting the giants, so that the characters become animated. The image on the chariot turns into a sixty-five-verse romance-style narrative of the giants’ assault on Olympus, including a verbal altercation between a giant who calls Phebus the son of a prostitute before the latter kills him with a spear (London, British Library, MS Additional 34114, fol. 187v; *Roman de Thèbes*, ed. Constans 2, 14–16). The narration of the *Thèbes* describes a visual object that pictures another narration whose time-bound speech is brought to life by the paradox of self-conscious ekphrasis.

This nesting effect of narrative self-consciously points to the relationship between the romance itself and the extratextual real-world context that encloses its composition and performance. The recounting of the Titans’ attack (4969–86) adds a mythical narrative of rebellious war to the model of universal time and harmony, pointing both to the narrative framework of the Theban civil war and to the interfamilial conflicts that ravaged the polities of twelfth-century Normandy and Great Britain (Petit, *L’Anachronisme*, 54–60). While all ekphrasis reckons with temporality, this specific, self-consciously temporal ekphrasis is an even more extreme withdrawal from the forward thrust of time in the middle of political confusion. We can be sure that this desire to reanimate and reckon with a more immediate past had great appeal for the court of Henry II of England and his court. The king commissioned Wace’s slightly later, unfinished verse chronicle of his Norman forebears in the *Roman de Rou* (c. 1160–70) going up to the 1106 Battle of Tinchebray between Henry I of England and his brother Robert Duke of Normandy, with which the fratricidal plot of the Theban

8. Henry would later commission a second lengthy work on the same theme by Wace’s rival Benoît de Sainte-Maure, the 44,500-verse *Chroniques de Ducs de Normandie* (c. 1180).

War so resonates.⁸ The ekphrasis of the chariot – animating the distant past of the Titans’ rebellion and pointing towards the Theban War whose progression it interrupts – is a microcosmic analogy for the *Roman de Thèbes*, whose courtly performance or reading is a break from the political life of twelfth-century Britain to which it self-consciously points. What this passage in the *Thèbes* brings out is the potential for such literature to be tools to reflect in an idiosyncratically philosophical way on the nature of conflict and of history, rather than just to celebrate it or to recount it.

The middle of a battle may not be the most appropriate time to have a little think about the meaning of time and the pleasures and pains of history. And yet the juxtaposed representation of the pleasures of pagan myth alongside both a particularly philosophical version of cosmic time presented on the chariot and an allegory of clerical learning in the form of the Liberal Arts offers an alternative to the immediacy of the conflict. The chariot serves as an invitation or invocation to read, to study, and to think. It deliberately brings different temporalities into relation with each other in order to unsettle each of them: how useful can visions of cosmic harmony be in the middle of a war? How can civil war make sense in the light of the glorious harmony of the universe? While thinking about eternity and the world might seem absurd in a time of conflict, the nihilistic savagery of war can appear insignificant against the grander picture of the cosmos and eternity. Amphiarus’s chariot is both philosophical and ridiculous, cosmic and pointless, and its details offer its audiences opportunities to reflect on which makes more sense to them: the universe or the battlefield, eternity or the instant of war, and by extension, the study of philosophy or the preoccupations of internecine political strife.

Le Roman de Troie: The Chamber of Hector

This article is particularly interested in the question of what thinking, experience, or even knowledge can come from these moments of ekphrasis and, by extension, from the romances within which they are nested. For the final example I wish to touch on one of the most famous machines of the twelfth-century romances of antiquity, whose relationship to the tents and chariot of the *Romans de Thèbes* and *d’Alexandre* is unmistakable. Within a decade of the appearance of the *Roman de Thèbes*, Benoît de Sainte-Maure wrote his enormous *Roman de Troie* (1160s), a narrative account of the Trojan War of

more than 30,000 verses. During a break in hostilities, the injured Hector is recovering in a marvellous room decorated with Arabian gold. There, four automaton-figures play music or offer advice about appropriate dress and behaviour (Baumgartner, “Le temps” 17–21; Franklin-Brown 70–73; Hicks and Morton; Kay 111–21; Morton “Automates;” Rollo 87–88; Truitt, “‘Trei poetes;’” Ead., *Medieval Robots* 55–60). The chamber in which the automata work is its own discrete space cut off from the civilizational struggle of the Trojan War (Kay 112). Each machine, ordered by the same harmonious principles as the *machina mundi*, works to ensure that harmony obtains in the court, through advice on correct behaviour to the disbursal of incense, which removes quarrelsome thoughts, and through playing music more pleasurable to hear even than “l’armonie esperital” (“spiritual harmony;” 14, 788) and “li coron celestial” (“heavenly chorus;” 14, 789). One of the machines in particular is an epistemological spectacle that offers its fictional viewers – and, even more so, its real readers and listeners – a suspension of narrative in which to meditate on the mechanical world and its relationship to time or, to be more specific, to different kinds of time. Mounted on her pillar, a female automaton tumbles and juggles knives and she operates a wonderful cosmogrammatical machine:

Cent gieus divers riches e beaus
I fait le set feiz o uit. (Benoît de Sainte-Maure lines 14, 718–19)

(Seven or eight times a day she makes a hundred different
rich and beautiful games play out there.)

These *gieus* are moving statues which represent ferocious animals fighting, every kind of bird, ladies’ games, parliaments, ambushes, battles, all the ships in the sea, every reason to hate or love, snakes, and monsters (14, 724–38). The relationship of this ordered machine to harmony is not immediately apparent, but comes out when read against the source for the figure of Music painted on Amphiarus’s chariot in the *Thèbes*: the allegorical representation of Harmonia (Harmony/Music) in Martianus Capella’s fifth-century encyclopaedic *De nuptiis*, so influential both in the Carolingian period and for twelfth-century thought. As we have seen, these ekphrastic moments introduce learned Latin literature into the ostensibly lay, aristocratic frame of Francophone romances of antiquity and this moment in the *Troie* is no exception. In the *De nuptiis*, Harmonia claims, “numeros cogitabilium motionum totiusque voluntatis impulsus ipsa rerum dispensans congruentiam temperabam” (“I designated the nu-

merical ratios of perceptible motions and the impulses of perfect will, introducing restraint and harmony into all things”) (*De nuptiis* 9, pars. 922–23; Willis 354). She appears at the marriage of Mercury and Philology carrying two amazing artefacts:

dextra autem quoddam gyris multiplicibus circulatum et miris ductibus intertextum velut clipeum gestitabat, quod quidem suis invicem complexibus modulatum ex illis fidibus circulatis omnium modorum concinentiam personabat. laeva autem virginis quamplures ex auro assimilatae parvaeque effigies theatralium voluptatum religatae aequae pendebant. (*De nuptiis* 9, par. 909; *Martianus Capella* 347)

([Harmonia] bore in her right hand a kind of circular object like a shield [*clipeum*], interwoven with many rings and strange lines; well tuned according to its mutual interrelations, from the encircled strings it sounded out a harmony of all the musical modes [*omnium modorum concinentiam*]. In the girl’s left hand a multitude of golden little reproductions, figures [*effigies*] of theatrical shows, were fastened and suspended in equal balance.)

If Harmonia’s *clipeus* recalls Aeneas’s *clipeus* in *Aeneid* 8, and by extension Achilles’ shield in *Iliad* 18, the influence of miniature *effigies* can be seen in the automatic moving figures in the *Roman de Troie*, especially since, as we have seen throughout this piece, the romance tradition of ekphrasis consistently invokes key texts of twelfth-century Latin Neoplatonism, such as the *De nuptiis*. This representation of a mechanical world is somehow harmonious and accords with the social and political harmony effected by the other three automata in the courtly scene of Hector’s chamber. Where it differs from them is in being a cosmogram, a picture of the whole world, and, as with the *Thèbes*, this cosmic perspective is made possible through the Neoplatonist idea of music or harmony as an organizing principle that connects *musica instrumentalis*, *musica humana*, and *musica mundana*, the music of the universe. The machine, like music itself, makes possible a certain superhuman experience of the world and, accordingly, of time that would not otherwise be possible.

The marvellous moving images of all the creatures in the world are ambivalently epistemic, however. The magical statue makes them

[...] le jor joier
E lur nature demonstrer.

Conoistre fet bien e apert
De quei chascune vit e sert (14, 737–40).

(play through the day and demonstrate their nature[s]. She makes it known clearly and openly what each thing lives by and what its purpose is.)

This artefact comprises images of creatures so true to life that their observation produces knowledge about their causality and purpose, leading Emanuèle Baumgartner to categorize it as a “veritable encyclopédie animée” (veritable animated encyclopaedia; Baumgartner, “Le temps” 18). If the machine is a kind of moving text that serves as a catalogue of knowledge of the created world, it does not simply produce knowledge in its audience. As it educates, it also stupefies:

Grant merveille est ce que puet estre,
Qu’ainc ne fist Dex cel home nestre
Quis esgarde, ne s’entrobilit
De son pensé o de son dit,
E cui entendre n’i coveigne,
E cui l’image ne detiegne (14, 749–54).

(Its existence is a great marvel, for the man has not yet been born who could behold it and not lose himself, incapable of thought or speech, and who would not be incapable of understanding and whom the image would not captivate.)

If these moving statues simultaneously constitute and prevent knowledge in the subject, they cannot be meaningfully paralleled to an encyclopaedia in function; they are strange, resistant objects that evoke a kind of knowledge that is never quite accessible. In the light of the Neoplatonist philosophy towards which they gesture, these harmonious images, existing in ageless repetition, stand not just for the natural creatures of the world, but also serve as images of the more perfect Forms or Ideas of those creatures, the ideal exemplars that exist beyond human time and experience. To draw on Calcidius’s commentary on the *Timaeus* 1, c. 25, the time-bound visible world that we experience is a “simulacrum” (“image;” Calcidius 158–59) of the eternal, intelligible world of divine Forms. This machine offers a vision of mediation between the two spheres, but the fact that it perversely renders understanding impossible points to the human incapacity to truly understand divine, eternal truths. It is the gulf between human understanding and eternal divine principles that led Plato to

convey his account of universal principles allegorically as the story of the creation of the world by a craftsman deity, an “*opifex genitorquem universtat*” (“a maker and parent of the universe;” *Timaeus* 28c; Calcidius 42–43.) Plato’s creation myth of a demiurge who fashions the world soul and the material world is a “ratio” (explanation) that is only “*imagines imaginaria*” (“the image of an image;” *Timaeus* 29c; Calcidius 44–45). The mechanical cosmogram in the *Roman de Troie*, with the perpetual movement of its deathless forms, is a likeness of the perpetual invisible Forms of the Platonic cosmos, which cannot be seen directly but only, as Paul wrote, through the dark glass of the visible things of the world (*Rom* 1.19–20; *1 Cor* 13.12). This dazzling artefact simultaneously promises and withholds knowledge that surpasses human understanding and so this machine can be understood to convey some of the mysticism that underlies twelfth-century cosmology.

The use of a crafted artefact such as this cosmogrammatical automaton to represent the world resonates with the Neoplatonic idea of the cosmos made, at least figuratively, by an *opifex* (“craftsman”), while also echoing the crafted representational object that is written narrative. This machine, while pointing to philosophy, as we have just seen, also reflects the romance within which its ekphrasis occurs. The three makers of the wonderful automata are described as “[t]rei poëte, sages dotors, / Qui mout soient de nigromance” (“three priests, doctors of wisdom, who knew much about necromancy/black magic”) (14, 668–69), and the individual magician who made this statue maker, “[d]es arz e des secrez des cieus / Sot [...]assez” (“knew much of the arts and the secrets of the heavens”) (14, 744–45). In constructing a representation of the world, informed by science as much as by skill, he is a double for the *deus opifex* (craftsman god) and for Timaeus who, in Plato’s text, recounts the creation-narrative which is the image of an image of reality. What is more, he is another version of the poet whose own narrative forms an image of the world, and David Rollo aptly notes that Benoît de Sainte-Maure is “an author who systematically conflates the necromantic and literary arts” (72–73).⁹ The dubious morality and efficacy of necromancy (Truitt, *Medieval Robots* 86–87) contribute to the ambiguity of the literary artefact as a means to convey knowledge, which can be seen in the mechanical marvel (*merveille*). The automaton offers knowledge in making the hidden causes and natures of things clearly visible, but at the same time it so captivates the mind that the moving statues turn humans static, rendering thinking impossible. This of-

9. Cf. Truitt, “Trei poëte” 188: “The language used to describe the human automata and their makers suggests that the authors of the romances themselves were concerned with the intellectual and moral validity of their own work.”

fers a model both for the epistemological value of literature or fiction in general – does it illuminate or obfuscate? – and for the more concentrated dazzling moments of cosmological ekphrasis. Do they really provide knowledge, do they offer a poetically engineered bewildering, or do they enable or gesture towards a temporal experience beyond rationality?

Attention to the Neoplatonist cosmology that so animated twelfth-century European intellectual culture brings out the potential for these machines to offer philosophical reflections on the world, on time, and on the work of art to mediate between worlds and times. Baumgartner considers these automata as figures of an artificial paradise, a sterile eternity, not divine yet outside of lived human time (Baumgartner, “Le temps” 19), and she is right that the repetition that they enact opens up a space outside of lived experience in which thinking about time can happen. The relationship to time is very particular in this machine, compared to the more static representations of the world on the tents in the *Roman d’Alexandre* and the *Roman de Thebes*. For all its motion it certainly entails questions about the relationship between change and stasis. The fact that the machine repeats the movements continually every day suggests a kind of circularity, an endless repeatability according to which the past is never really past, as well as the impossibility of alteration. The creatures acting out in this cosmogram do not have free will and the machine is a vision of timelessness that endlessly repeats. Baumgartner closes her account of romance automata by concluding that the perpetual repetition conjured up by the automata presents a sterile eternity, an artificial paradise which had to be destroyed for Troy to become part of history and of narration or “récit” (Baumgartner, “Le temps” 20–21). I disagree: the time of the automata is bound up with the time of the *récit* and points to the machine of narrative poetry that is animated in its infinitely repeatable performance. The “parlement,” “repostauz,” “bataille,” “traïsons,” and “asauz” (“parliaments,” “ambushes,” “battles,” “betrayals,” and “assaults;” 14729–30) represented by the automaton are also events of the war of Troy, which run according to a secret narrative logic not visible to the participants. As for the ekphrases of the tents of Adrastus and Alexandre and of the chariot of Amphiaras, the descriptions of these machines bring with them the entanglement of different, incompatible temporal regimes that frustrates attempts to give a neat account of each of them.

Conclusions

Such ekphrases of artefacts representing time and the world clearly resonated with medieval audiences; rather than being superfluous to the action, they appear as fundamental to the composition and performance of historical narrative in French romance, so that a key element of narratives of antiquity, implicitly concerned with narration's capacity to mediate between past and present, is the recurrence of these fleeting ekphrastic moments in which time beyond human time is experienced and, phantasmatically, brought into contact with the *durée* of time as we live it.

As we saw above in the discussion of the *Consolation of Philosophy* 4, pr. 6, Boethius used the image of the work of art to represent the world in time according to two different temporal regimes: the first is the eternal and simultaneous present of God's and the is that of time experienced by humans as sequential and impermanent. These artful tents, chariots, automata with their visions of time and timelessness are also doubly positioned in time. As literary artefacts, they exist in the permanence of the suspended animation of narrative art and can be reanimated each time the text is reread. Their real or hypothetical existence, though, is subject to the historical events that cause their destruction. Another of Benoît's four automata in the *Troie* carries a permanent flame that heats a topaz censer. It caused such a harmonious smell, the narrator tells us, that it would have endured until Judgement Day had Troy not been destroyed (14, 917–18). As shown by the narratively inconsequential appearance and the almost immediate swallowing up of Amphiarus's cosmic chariot, these textual machines only offer fleeting moments of timelessness that do not provide a way forward or much of a way out of the human condition. They are not allowed to endure any more than the forward thrust of historical or romance poetry can tolerate anything other than a brief interruption to its task of durational narrative. And, beyond that, life itself can only be put on hold temporarily to accommodate the suspension of time that comes with the reading of a romance or with any other artistic performance.

Such objects point to the specific potential of the aesthetic experience as a mode of thinking. The automata of Hector's bed-chamber in the *Roman de Troie* are situated in a particularly courtly environment, as are the tents of Adrastus and Alexander, so that their wonderful images are reflections of the narrative art of the *récit*, composed for and performed in medieval courtly settings in England and

France. As with the *Consolation of Philosophy*, the depiction of an artefact that represents the world both in and out of time is an invocation to readers and audiences to situate themselves outside of events as they are commonly experienced and to contemplate different temporalities. This goes both for the characters within the texts, whose narrated lives must pause to enable the ekphrasis, and for the historical actors in the twelfth century when they pause their political, military, or other activity to contemplate the narration of romance. In the ekphrasis of temporal artefacts, different kinds of time are brought into contention. The result is not a resolution, but the opportunity for an experience of time, narrative or historical, not possible without the tool of poetry. Beyond simply thinking about time, they offer an experience of it that both is and is not theoretical.

Narrative art does not aspire to rival natural philosophy or metaphysics in offering accounts of theoretical questions, such as the nature of time or history. Instead, it offers experiences of thought that draw on mental images conjured up in the mind of each individual listener or reader. These images, unlike philosophical claims, are fleeting, wholly contingent, and do not necessarily lead to insights or new knowledge. They can simply dazzle (or even bore) their audiences. And yet all the authors at stake demonstrate their own self-consciousness about the potential of representative art to effect particular experiences that generate new understandings of history, time, and the self, without necessarily being able to determine precisely what those understandings may be. In this, the ekphrases of objects representing time are a microcosm, concentrated and revelatory versions of the sophisticated temporal tool of narration that they prompt their audiences to contemplate.

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Zukünfte im Konjunktiv. Versuche der Antizipation und Modellierung von Kommendem im *König Rother*

Abstract

The Middle High German *König Rother*, written in the second half of the twelfth century, tells the story of a dangerous bridal quest that creates conflicts between the Christian West and East, touching themes of correct governance, the role of violence in ruling, as well as the stabilization of society through political interaction. One of its dominant features is the intense modelling of possible future events and the optimal reactions to them. Attempting to anticipate this dangerous future, Rother and his men are depicted in the process of detailed and risk-aware planning. In a close reading of the text, this article shows how the future is conceptualized by both extradiegetic narrator and intradiegetic characters. It traces how these efforts to model the future change in the course of the narrative – from a risk-aware avoidance of contingencies to a relaxed trust in the stability of Rother’s rule and divine providence. This reading offers a new understanding of *König Rother’s* narrative complexity beyond the questions of structure and “Literarisierung” that have dominated criticism on the text so far.

1. Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek Cpg 390, im Folgenden zitiert nach der von Ingrid Bennewitz herausgegebenen Edition mit dem Kürzel KR; Übersetzungen von Peter K. Stein, wo nicht anders gekennzeichnet.

I. Einleitung

Der *König Rother* ist ein viel beforschter und diskutierter Text. Verfasst in der zweiten Hälfte des 12. Jahrhunderts und in einer Handschrift¹ und vier Fragmenten überliefert, steht er relativ am Anfang der sich im Laufe des 12. Jahrhunderts vervielfachenden mittelhochdeutschen Textproduktion. Oftmals wurde ihm aufgrund dieser Position eine Schlüsselrolle in der Entwicklung von mittelhochdeutscher Literatur bzw. volkssprachiger Literarizität zugewiesen; auf dieser “Literarisierungsschwelle” stehend (Haug), nehme er eine Scharnierstellung zwischen Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit, zwi-

2. Vgl. zu ihren sowohl für das Brautwerbungsschema und die Rolle der Raumbewegungen Stock, *Kombinationssinn*; für die Semantisierung der entworfenen Räume in politischer als auch religiöser Hinsicht Plotke, Kohnen, Bendheim, Weitbrecht.

3. Sie ist vor allem im Kontext von genealogischen Strukturen und ihrer Funktion für die Sicherung und Stabilisierung von Herrschaft ins Zentrum des Interesses gerückt (Stock, *Kombinationssinn*; Kiening; Ortmann-Ragotzky). Kiening hat erhellend gezeigt, wie im Text Brücken von der erzählten Vergangenheit zur erzählerischen Gegenwart geschlagen werden und dadurch ein Ursprungsmythos erzählt wird, der seinen Fluchtpunkt in der Gegenwart der Entstehungszeit hat (vgl. auch Bowden). Reiffenstein und Stock diskutieren zwar die Rolle von Vorausdeutungen im Text, binden dieses Phänomen aber wieder an die Frage der historischen Textgenese zurück (vgl. Stock, *Kombinationssinn* 235–37; Reiffenstein). Holtzhauer widmet sich exklusiv der Rolle von Analepsen als einem Mittel zur Erschließung des Inhaltsgerüsts einer Erzählung und der zentralen Elemente des Brautwerbungsschemas.

4. Ich definiere hier Antizipation mit Poli: “An anticipatory behavior is a behavior that ‘uses’ the future in its actual decision process. Anticipation as here understood includes two mandatory components: a forward-looking attitude, and the use of the former’s result for action” (Poli 1; vgl. auch Peres).

schen oralen Erzähltraditionen und Verschriftlichungspraktiken ein und könne deshalb Auskunft geben über einen wesentlichen Moment mittelalterlicher Literaturgeschichte. Daher ist er wiederholt auf seine “Literarisierungsstrategien” untersucht worden (Fromm, Haug, Kiening, vgl. kritisch hierzu Deutsch 2003, Bowden), unter anderem im Hinblick auf so zentrale poetologische Kategorien wie Komplexität (Kiening), Performativität (Fuchs-Jolie) oder Fiktionalität (Stock, *Kombinationssinn*). Das im Text aktualisierte Brautwerbungsschema hat in diesem Kontext ebenfalls viel Aufmerksamkeit auf sich gezogen, unter anderem in Bezug auf die Frage nach sinngebenden Strukturen in Texten (Stock, *Kombinationssinn*), der Rolle von Schemaliteratur (vgl. Bowden, Kohnen, Ortmann/Ragotzky, Seidl, Zimmermann, Müller), Doppelungen und ihrer Funktion (vgl. Reiffenstein, Frings, Haug, Stock, *Kombinationssinn*), dem Verhältnis von Handlungs- und Erzähllogik (Kiening) oder Gattungsentwicklungen in der frühen mittelhochdeutschen Literatur.

Auch wenn eine solche Perspektivierung des *König Rother* einen heuristisch fruchtbaren Nexus für die Untersuchung volkssprachlichen Erzählens und seiner Transformationen im 12. Jahrhundert darstellt, trägt sie doch das Risiko, durch die Indienstnahme des Textes für derartige große literaturgeschichtlichen Narrative die Erzählung selbst aus dem Blick zu verlieren, also gleichsam den Baum vor lauter Wald nicht mehr zu sehen (vgl. Kohnen 39). So ist denn auch wiederholt gefordert worden, den Text von diesem überdeterminierenden Forschungsballast zu befreien und nach Interpretationsansätzen jenseits der oft stark strukturalistisch orientierten Ansätze zu Brautwerbungs- und Literarisierungsdiskurs zu suchen (Deutsch, Bowden).

Einen fruchtbaren Ansatz, die narrativen Spezifika des *König Rother* induktiv herauszuarbeiten, bieten die zentralen narratologischen Kategorien Raum und Zeit. Während die Raumentwürfe des “Rothers” bereits mehrfach untersucht wurden,² hat die temporale Dimension des Textes bisher wenig Aufmerksamkeit gefunden.³ Das folgende *close reading* wird sich deshalb auf die temporale Komposition der Erzählung, genauer: auf die Darstellung und Funktion von Zukunftskonzeptionen konzentrieren.

Diskussionen von Zukunft und deren Antizipierbarkeit spielen eine große Rolle im *König Rother*. Die im Text vorgeführten und durchgespielten Versuche, mögliche Zukünfte auf der Basis vorhandener Informationen zu antizipieren⁴ und adäquate Handlungsstrategien (sowie ihre möglichen Konsequenzen) zu modellieren, lassen sich nicht nur als Einhegungsbemühungen von Kontingenz lesen.

Indem der Text über das ungewisse Kommende erzählt, werden ebenfalls gegenwärtige Hoffnungen und Ängste der Figurenperspektiven formuliert. Über die Zukunft zu sprechen, bedeutet immer auch einen Versuch der Positionierung der Gegenwart und des Selbst in ihrem Verhältnis zum gewünschten oder befürchteten Geschehen, sowie oftmals Rückbezüge auf die Vergangenheit, um die Entwicklung von Ereignissen und Prozessen zu reflektieren. Während das Verhältnis der im *König Rother* entworfenen fiktiven historischen Vergangenheit zur Jetztzeit des Entstehungszeitraums wiederholt diskutiert wurde (vgl. Kiening; Kohlen *et al.*), ist die Bedeutung der futurischen Temporalität des Textes in diesem Kontext bisher nur wenig beachtet worden.

Wie, so möchte ich daher im Folgenden fragen, werden im Text Zukunft und Zukunftsmöglichkeiten sprachlich formuliert? Wie werden in diesem Zusammenhang Wissbares und Unwissbares konturiert? Wie positionieren sich die einzelnen Figuren und Figurengruppen in ihrem Verhältnis zur Zukunft und der Einschätzung möglicher Einflussnahmen, und was lässt sich hieraus über die Figurenkonzeption des *König Rother* schließen? Und wie hängt die Konzeption von Zukunft mit anderen zentralen Themen der Erzählung – Herrschaft, Genealogie, Ehe, Religion – zusammen?

Um diese Fragen zu beantworten, werde ich zunächst die im Text entwickelten Zukunftsmodellierungen herausarbeiten. Als Zukunftsmodellierung verstehe ich hier das Sprechen von Figuren und Erzähler über kommende Ereignisse. Dieses Sprechen weist sehr unterschiedliche Grade von Verbindlichkeit auf und kann sich auf verschiedene Zeitebenen der Zukunft beziehen. Während extradiegetische Prolepsen des Erzählers in den meisten Fällen recht eindeutig zu identifizieren sind, ist die Figurenrede über die Zukunft oft fließend verknüpft mit dem Bezug auf andere Zeitebenen, denn bekannterweise hat im Mittelhochdeutschen das Futurische noch keine besondere morphologische Kennzeichnung, sondern wird umschrieben, oft unter Einsatz von Hilfsverben, deren Funktion auch innerhalb einer Passage zwischen modal und temporal schwanken kann. Auch der Konjunktiv Präteritum kann futurische Bedeutung erlangen, “[w]enn der untergeordnete Satz zu einem übergeordneten präteritalen Satz im Verhältnis der Nachzeitigkeit steht” (Paul 291).

Für die folgenden Überlegungen sind insbesondere drei Aspekte des mittelhochdeutschen umschriebenen Futurs von Interesse: Erstens unterscheidet das Mittelhochdeutsche weniger stark zwischen zukünftigen und gegenwärtigen Handlungen (Paul 288). Zweitens setzen die immer implizierten modalen Konnotationen der fu-

turisch verwendeten Hilfsverben “den Verbalvorgang in Beziehung zu dem Willen des Sprechenden” (Paul 294). Drittens sensibilisiert der im präteritalen Erzähltempus für die Umschreibung von Zukünftigem verwendete Konjunktiv dafür, dass diese Zukunft noch nicht eingetreten und damit unsicher ist. Zukunft wird so bereits sprachlich als etwas unter Umständen Fließendes, an Figurenabsicht und -handeln Gebundenes konzipiert.

Für die Analyse des *König Rother* bedeutet dies, dass über Zukunft und zukünftiges Geschehen auf sehr unterschiedlichen Ebenen und in unterschiedlicher Gewissheit gesprochen werden kann. Dieses Spektrum reicht von der Verbindlichkeit der Heilsgeschichte über die Abwägung unterschiedlicher Handlungsoptionen und ihrer möglichen Konsequenzen bis zur Artikulation fundamentaler Verunsicherung, es kann also sowohl die *agency* der intradiegetischen Figuren fokussieren als auch den Schwerpunkt auf Instanzen und Ereignisse außerhalb ihres Einflussbereichs legen. Der Figurenrede wird im *König Rother*, wie bereits Silvia Schmitz gezeigt hat, im Vergleich zu zeitnah entstandenen Erzähltexten ungewöhnlich viel Raum gegeben: “Fast die Hälfte des Werkes besteht aus Szenen, in denen die Figuren sprechen” (Schmitz 168). Wie Zukunft in diesen Figurenreden konzipiert wird – ob als form- und kontrollierbar, als außerhalb des eigenen Machbereichs stehende Bedrohung oder als planvoll geordnete Verheißung – hat Konsequenzen für die narrative Komposition der Erzählung als ganzer und für ihre zentralen Themen.

Um die entworfenen Forschungsfragen zu bearbeiten, werde ich zunächst im *close reading* einige Beispiele der von Figuren und Erzähler vorgenommenen Zukunftsmodellierungen untersuchen. Dabei orientiere ich mich an der Raumstruktur des Textes, die zwischen Bari und Konstantinopel (mit Umland) hin und her wechselt, statt an der gedoppelten Struktur des Brautwerbungsschemas, und unterteile den Text entsprechend heuristisch in vier Abschnitte, die ich zunächst nacheinander diskutiere, um abschließend den Blick noch einmal auf größere systematische Fragen zu weiten.

II. Ungewisse Zukünfte

Der Beginn des *König Rother* ist gekennzeichnet durch eine Gegenüberstellung von Fülle und Mangel. Rothers Hofhaltung geschieht “mit erin / unde mit grozen zuhtin” (“war angesehen und entsprach den gesellschaftlichen Vorstellungen,” KR 14–15); er ist “der aller her-

iste man, / der da zu Rome / ie intifinc die cronen” (“der mächtigste und würdigste Mann, der in Rom jemals die Krone empfangen hatte,” KR 10–12). Diese Idealität wird nur durch einen Makel eingeschränkt – das Fehlen einer Königin, mit der er gemeinsam regieren und seine Herrschaft durch Fortpflanzung übergenerational stabilisieren könnte. Dieser Mangel wird im Text zu einer existenziellen Unsicherheit aufgebaut, die als Gefahr nicht nur das Herrschergeschlecht, sondern auch das Schicksal jedes Einzelnen im Personengefüge des Hofes betrifft. Das wird von den “iungen graven” des Hofes reflektiert, die dieses Problem direkt zu Beginn der Erzählung explizit machen und als zentrale Bedrohung ihrer eigenen Zukunft in den Raum stellen, denn stürbe Rother ohne Erben, “so waneden se irsterben, / weme sie dan die cronen / solden gebin zo Roume” (“glaubten sie, an dem Problem verweifeln [umkommen/zur Grunde gehen, LB] zu müssen, wem sie nach ihm die Krone in Rom übertragen sollten,” KR 30–32).

Dieses ist das initiale Auftreten einer narrativen Strategie, die den ersten Teil des *König Rother* wesentlich prägt. Ein mögliches kommen- des Ereignis (oder das Ausbleiben eines solchen) wird mit seinen unwissbaren und unabwägbaren Konsequenzen Anlass zu besorgtem Nachdenken über die Zukunft. Zwar bietet Rother mit der Idee der Brautwerbung eine mögliche Lösung an, doch auch diese wird sofort wieder zum Anlass neuer Sorgen über zukünftige Beschwerden, denn Rother befürchtet: “daz hic kuoniges douter gehege / unde hiz tan uvele gethige, / dat her ez gewerchen ane minen lif” (“daß ich mich mit der Tochter eines Königs vermähle und dies dann (insofern) schlecht ausgeht, als dieser es an mir rächt,” KR 35–37).

Die Zukunft wird zu Beginn der Erzählung also trotz der gegenwärtigen Idealität von Rother's Hof als bedrohlich und unberechenbar modelliert.⁵ Rother und sein Hof befinden sich somit ihr zukünftiges Handeln betreffend in einer Pattsituation: Wirbt der König nicht um diese allein ihm geeignete Frau, sind seine Herrschaft und die Zukunft des Reiches gefährdet. Unternimmt er aber die Brautwerbung, setzen er und seine Männer sich einer neuen Art von Gefahr aus, die vom Brautvater Konstantin ausgeht.

Natürlich fällt die Entscheidung zugunsten der Brautwerbung, und Lupold wird zusammen mit elf weiteren Grafen ausgewählt, diese stellvertretend für Rother in Konstantinopel durchzuführen. Doch die Sache geht schief: Zwar werden Lupold und seine Gefährten dank seines geschickten Agierens nicht getötet, aber Konstantin lässt ihren Besitz einziehen und sie auf unbestimmte Zeit gefangen nehmen. Die unter Hunger und Not leidenden Männer Rother's ver-

5. Man kann dies als einen Effekt des Brautwerbungsschemas lesen (vgl. Kiening 213f.) – durch den inszenierten Druck wird der Handlungsimpuls der Werbungsreise ausgelöst. Dass die vom Grafen Lupold vorgeschlagene Braut Tochter des Königs Konstantin von Konstantinopel ist, greift dieses Bedrohungs- bewusstsein auf und erhöht es noch, denn “umbe de stat iz moweliche, / wande ir ne bat nie nechein man, / er mosten den lif virloren han” (“mit ihr verhält es sich gefährvoll, denn noch nie hat sich jemand um sie bemüht, der nicht sein Leben lassen mußte,” KR 81–83).

lieren nach einer Weile im Gefängnis jede Hoffnung. Ihre Sorge richtet sich jedoch nicht nur auf ihre eigene Lage, sondern auch auf die Zukunft ihrer Familien:

wie lange sulwir hie sin?
 wer helfit nu den magen
 den wir gotis schuldic waren?
 oder weme sal unser erbe
 zo iungestin werde?
 der Adamen gebilidote
 der helfe uns uze derrer note!

(wie lange noch müssen wir hier gefangen liegen? Wer bietet nun unseren Verwandten Schutz und Beistand, denen wir Unterstützung schuldeten, oder wem wird unser Erbe einst übertragen werden? Derjenige, der Adam erschaffen hat, der möge uns aus dieser Bedrängnis befreien!, KR 369–75)

Wie zu Beginn des Textes wird die problematische gegenwärtige Situation in die Zukunft verlängert und durch die daraus folgende Unsicherheit noch bedrohlicher gezeichnet. Die daraus folgende Wendung zu Gott – sie werfen sich in Kreuzesform nieder, rufen Gott an und klagen zu ihm – führt jedoch nicht zu gesteigerter Zuversicht, sondern betont mit einem dichten Wortfeld von Kummer und Klage nur ihre Verzweiflung: “we trorich sie weifen! / vil trurich iz uz ir herzen gienc” (“Wie schmerz erfüllt sie da wehklagen! Tief betrübt kam es aus ihren Herzen,” KR 379–80). Es ist allein der Erzähler, der mit einer anschließenden Prolepse (KR 383–85, s.u.) einen Gegenentwurf der Zuversicht anschlügt und Rettung durch Gott verspricht. Diesem ein Jahr anhaltenden Leidenszustand korrespondiert die Trauer in ihrer Heimat. Rother “vil sere trorote / unbe die botin gote” (“trauerte sehr um die vortrefflichen Boten,” KR 436–37), auch die Ratgeber “weinotin vil sere” (“klagten heftig,” KR 444). Während die Boten jedoch kein Ende Notlage antizipieren können, modellieren Rother und seine Berater intensiv mögliche Lösungen.

Es ist vielfach beobachtet worden, welche zentrale Rolle von Beratung und konsensuellen Entscheidungen im *Rother* spielen (vgl. Fuchs-Jolie 185ff.). Es ist unter anderem dieses auf den Personenverband und kollektives Handeln ausgerichtete Vorgehen, das Rother als Herrscher von Konstantin unterscheidet und ihn im Verlauf der Erzählung als überlegenen und idealen König ausweist. Pläne und Handlungen werden gemeinsam umgesetzt und der hohe Wert von

Beratung nicht nur zur Entscheidungsfindung, sondern auch zum Entwickeln von Szenarien im Text explizit betont. So begründet Rother Berchter gegenüber die Einberufung einer Hofversammlung der “herren allen” (“allen Herren (des Rates),” KR 506) damit, dass ein anderer Plan dem ihrigen überlegen sein könnte: “wat ob ittelih-ter ist, / der hat bezzere list / dan wir uns haben genumen?” (“Was wäre, wenn es da jemand gibt, der einen besseren Plan hat als den, den wir uns zurechtgelegt haben?” KR 511–13). Die ausgedehnten Passagen der Beratung mit ihren langen Sequenzen von Figurenrede dienen dazu, divergierende Einschätzungen der Jetztsituation, aber auch Antizipationen der Zukunft miteinander ins Spiel zu bringen und kritisch zu prüfen. Dieser Prozess soll hier beispielhaft am schrittweisen Beschluss der Konstantinopelfahrt gezeigt werden.

Rothers Problem in Bezug auf das Schicksal der Boten ist ein zweifach gestaffeltes: Erstens verfügen er und seine Männer über keinerlei Informationen bezüglich ihrer Situation). Diese Unklarheit erschwert zweitens die Entwicklung eines umsetzbaren Planes für ihre Rettung, da es zu viele unbekannte Variablen gibt. Das erste Problem ist im Text als Epistemisches entworfen: Es fehlt sicheres Wissen über die Situation in Konstantinopel, auf dessen Basis Rother agieren könnte. Rothers Pläne zielen dementsprechend auf visuelle Evidenz durch persönliche Präsenz. Die Ratgeber bitten ihn, “daz er sie [die Boten, LB] *silbe* geseche” (“dass er sie selber sehe” [Übersetzung LB], KR 446). Herrschaftliche Legitimität konstituiert sich hier nicht nur, wie Markus Stock gezeigt hat, über den Moment des herrscherlichen Sich-Sehen-Lassens (Stock, “Sich sehen”), sondern auch über die Fähigkeit des Sehens, also des korrekten Erfassens eines Sachstandes als Voraussetzung für erfolgreiches Herrschaftshandeln. Rother selbst überlegt, drei Tage und Nächte auf einem Stein sitzend, “we er kumen mochte / zo Kriechin in daz lant” (“wie er (am besten) gelangen könnte nach Griechenland,” KR 453–54). Diese Frage stellt er in Folge auch seinen Beratern, zunächst dem Grafen Berchter, der als alter und erfahrener Lehnsmann gezeichnet ist: “du salt mir ratin, Berter, / we wir kumen ober mer / zu Constonopole in de stat” (“Du mußt mich beraten, Berchter, auf welche Weise wir übers Meer fahren sollen in die Stadt Konstantinopel,” KR 462–64). Berchter, der selbst Vater von sieben der Boten ist, rät Rother daraufhin zu einer großen “herevart” (“Heerfahrt,” KR 494), bei der er sowohl die Ungarn als auch die Griechen vernichten soll. Rother nimmt diesen Rat zwar dankend auf, fokussiert in einer Gegenrede aber ausführlich die Gefahren eines solchen Vorgehens. Was, wenn seine Rettungsver-

suche genau das befürchtete Ergebnis, nämlich die Tötung der Boten, produziert? Rother formuliert diese Aporie Berchter gegenüber so:

warumbe solde wir mit so manigime kumen
 hin zo Creichen,
 wie ne wisten werliche,
 ob se waren gehoubitod?
 waz, ob sie der grimige tot
 noch hat neiht bevingin?
 soche wir sie mit here dan,
 so quelit men die helede lossam.

(Wie können wir mit einer so großen Schar nach Griechenland ziehen, wo wir doch gar nicht sicher wissen, ob sie enthauptet worden sind? Was ist, wenn sie der schreckliche Tod noch nicht in seiner Gewalt hat? Wenn wir die Griechen dann mit Heeresmacht heimsuchen, dann martert man die herrlichen Helden, KR 514–21)

Die mehrfachen Fragen verdeutlichen, dass Rother das Fehlen von zentralen Informationen über die Situation und die daraus resultierende Unsicherheit schmerzlich bewusst sind. Aus dem Unwissen über die gegenwärtige Lage lässt sich nur schwer ein effektives zukünftiges Handeln schließen. In der Figurenrede Rother wird vorgeführt, wie auf der Basis verschiedener Annahmen über die Gegenwart unterschiedliche Antizipationen kommender Handlungen und Situationen hergeleitet werden können. Im möglichen Falle der bereits erfolgten Hinrichtung der Boten spricht scheinbar nichts gegen den von Berchter vorgeschlagenen Rachefeldzug – Gewalt wird hier nicht prinzipiell vermieden oder als Möglichkeit abgewiesen, wie dies manchmal in der Forschung angenommen wird (vgl. Fuchs-Jolie 183). Rother's Fokus in dieser Passage liegt jedoch auf der Möglichkeit, dass die Boten noch am Leben sein könnten – diese Option wird wiederum vor allem auf ihr bedrohliches Potenzial hin befragt: Im Falle ihres bisherigen Überlebens werde der Kriegszug zur weiteren Folter oder Tötung der Boten führen, eine Entwicklung, die bei Rother zu noch größeren Schmerzen führen würde ("so ruwin sie mich sere," "dann erfaßt mich ihretwegen (erst recht) großer Schmerz!," KR 524).

Ausgehend von der mangelnden Datenlage über die Gegenwart und der damit einhergehenden Unsicherheit greift Rother also eine Option heraus und entwickelt von ihr ausgehend ein mehrschrittiges Modell zukünftigen Agierens und Reagierens: 1. Die Boten le-

ben; 2. Rother unternimmt eine Heerfahrt; 3. Daraufhin “quelin” (“quälen“) die Konstantinopler die Boten; 4. Rother empfindet deswegen Reue und Schmerzen. Die Vorannahme, auf der diese Zukunftsmodellierung basiert, wird zunächst nicht gegenüber der Vorannahme Berchters privilegiert – Berchter selbst betont wenige Verse später die mit Rother geteilte Unwissenheit (“nu westu, lieber herre, / also vil als ich,” “Nun weißt du, teurer Herr, genauso wenig [viel, LB] wie ich,” KR 539–40). Aber allein das theoretische Durchspielen dieser Möglichkeit führt bei beiden Figuren zu Trauer: “do weinitin de herren” (“Da weinten die beiden Herren,” KR 525). Ihr Eintreten ist somit dringend zu vermeiden; die Antizipation einer möglichen negativen Zukunft diktiert die Handlungsspielräume der Figurengegenwart.

Die folgenden weiteren Beratungen beim Hoftag finden zunächst ohne Rother und vor der “kameran” (“dem königlichen Ratsgemach,” KR 557) statt. Sie werden nicht im Detail referiert, bis auf den abweichenden Vorschlag eines “ald herzoge” (KR 562), die Fahrt ganz zu unterlassen, der von Berchter mit einem Faustschlag und dem Vorwurf der Feigheit beantwortet wird (KR 566–67; vgl. ausführlich zu der Szene und der hierin zum Ausdruck kommenden Gewaltkonzeption im Text Fuchs-Jolie). Davon abgesehen wird das Ergebnis der Beratung als fertiger Plan zusammengefasst: Sie raten Rother, “mit grozen erin / in reckewis over mer vare, / so mochter sin ere aller bezzist beware” (“zwar mit prächtigem Aufwand, aber als Landesvertriebener über das Meer fahren, auf diese Weise könne er sein Anliegen am besten wahrnehmen,” KR 559–61).

Die Erklärung der Ratgeber, warum sie dieses Vorgehen als das Sinnvollste erachten, enthält sowohl ein Echo von Rothers Befürchtungen als auch eine alternative Modellierung zukünftigen Handelns:

wande soche wer die Kriechen
 – daz wizzestu werliche –,
 sie ton uns vil zo leide.
 unde lebit der boden sichenir,
 sie mozen alle kiesen den tod:
 des is den Kriechen michil not.
 nu vore golt unde schaz, [...]
 des bistu, kuninc, riche
 nu tiel ene vrumeliche,
 min vil lieber herre!
 Da mide stent din ere.
 Wir nemugen mit unsen sinnin

Nichit bezzerris ratis vinden.
Ne volges du des nichtig, Rother,
so ne kumistu nimmer uber mer!

(Denn wenn wir die Griechen [mit großer Heeresmacht] heimsuchen, – das weißt du selbst am besten –, werden sie uns großen Kummer zufügen. Wenn dann auch nur ein einziger Bote noch am Leben ist, werden sie auch diesen noch töten: diese Handlungsweise ist für die Griechen die einzig mögliche. Nimm nun Gold und Wertsachen mit dir, [...] dadurch bist du, König, mächtig. Diesen Schatz verteile nun zweckentsprechend, mein teurer Herrscher! Damit steht dein Ansehen [fest]. Wir können alle mit unserem Nachdenken keinen besseren Vorschlag finden. Wenn du diesen nicht annimmst, Rother, wirst du niemals erfolgreich über das Meer gelangen!, KR 590–605)

Auch die Ratgeber können keine sichere Einschätzung der aktuellen Situation in Konstantinopel geben, denn sie verfügen nicht über mehr Informationen als Rother. Ein klares Urteil fällen sie dagegen über einen Teil der vom König entwickelten Relationskette künftiger Handlungen: Wenn die Boten noch lebten, dann wäre eine Heerfahrt ihr aller Tod. Diese Überzeugung wird mit dem Verweis auf Rother's eigenes Wissen bekräftigt und sie führt zu einem Modell zukünftigen Handelns, das diese Gefahr antizipiert und deshalb vermeidet. Rother's Fahrt inkognito umgeht die kriegerische Auseinandersetzung und ermöglicht zugleich, sicheres Wissen über die Situation in Konstantinopel zu sammeln. Die Mitnahme von "golt unde schaz" sichert ihm weitreichende zukünftige Handlungsoptionen und Macht; beides garantiert den Erhalt und die Mehrung seiner Ehre. Das dergestalt an die antizipierte Zukunft angepasste Handlungsmodell wird abschließend konsensuell als nicht nur das beste, sondern das einzig erfolgsversprechende bekräftigt.

Christian Kiening und Stefan Fuchs-Jolie verstehen diese und andere im Text präsentierte Vorgehensvorschläge als Erzählvarianten, die eingespielt und zugleich abgewiesen werden (vgl. Kiening 232; Fuchs-Jolie 184), sehen sie also als Teil der vom *König Rother* durchgeführten "Arbeit am Muster" des Brautwerbungsschemas. Wie der Tunnel, den Rother's Männer in Konstantinopel zum Gefängnis der Boten graben und der dann nie wieder erwähnt wird, deuten sie an, "was möglich wäre, aber nicht geschehen soll" (Kiening 233). Im Falle der Beratungsszenen ist allerdings anzumerken, dass genau diese

Möglichkeiten verschiedener Handlungsvarianten in der Figurenrede explizit reflektiert und geprüft werden. Der Beratungs- und Entscheidungsfindungsprozess ist sprachliches Handeln im Modus des als-ob, ein Erproben verschiedener Optionen, das nicht lediglich erzähllogisch funktional ist, um Kienings Differenzierung aufzunehmen, sondern auch handlungslogisch die Komplexität einer als kontingent und bedrohlich konzeptualisierten Zukunft vorzuführen.

Neben der ausführlichen Wiedergabe von Beratungsszenen präsentiert die Erzählung weitere Strategien der Rückversicherung und Kontingenzeinhegung auf unterschiedlichen narrativen Ebenen. Extradiegetisch setzt der Erzähler durch mehrere Prolepsen und Verweise auf die göttliche Providenz Signale gegen die intradiegetisch auserzählte Wahrnehmung von Unsicherheit. Sie kontrastieren von der überlegenen Wissensposition des Erzählers aus die gegenwärtige bedrohliche Situation mit der kommenden Rettung in einem temporalen Sprung, der diese Unsicherheit als situativ und als Ergebnis der menschlich-eingeschränkten Perspektive markiert, denn Gott werde ihnen in seiner Gnade noch dazu verhelfen, „daz sie alle samen gesunde / quamen heim zo lande“ („daß sie allesamt gesund wieder in ihre Heimat gelangten,“ KR 362–63).

Dieser Sicherheit können sich die intradiegetischen Figuren nur annähern, indem sie Gegenwart und Zukunft der Erzählung durch Antizipationsversuche punktuell verschränken. Ihren im Konjunktiv modellierten Zukünften wird die indikative Zukunft des Erzählers gegenübergestellt. Damit wird das Wissensgefälle zwischen dem extradiegetischen Erzähler und den anderen Figuren auch auf die Rezipient*innen ausgedehnt.

Gottes Handeln im Sinne Rother und seiner Männer wird zugesichert, ohne sich auf Figurenebene als Gottvertrauen zu manifestieren. Hubertus Fischer hat das völlige Fehlen von Priestern oder Gottesdiensten im *Rother* betont (vgl. Fischer 231) – das Religiöse liege ganz in der Hand der Laien. Im ersten Bari-Teil und bei der ersten Konstantinopelfahrt tritt dieses Religiöse intradiegetisch nur in formelhaften und konjunktivischen Wendungen zutage, wie „unde will dasz got“ (KR 320) oder „daz wizze aber got der riche“ (KR 80) auf, die göttliches Wissen und göttliche Providenz zwar aufrufen, sie aber nicht inhaltlich füllen oder als Gottesvertrauen im Text wirksam werden lassen. Auch während die Boten sich im Gefängnis „in cruces stal“ („mit ausgebreiteten Armen (in Kreuzesform),“ KR 376) niederwerfen, hoffen sie auf niemanden mehr („sie nehetin szo niemanne trost,“ KR 359).

Zukunftssicherheit drücken die intradiegetischen Figuren in diesem ersten Teil vor allem in Bezug auf die Riesen aus, die sich Rother's Zug anschließen. Als Berchter den Riesen Asprian und seine Männer zum ersten Mal aus der Ferne sieht, formuliert er Rother gegenüber eine sehr positive Einschätzung ihrer Kampfkraft:

swar sie einin zorn willen han,
 sowilich in intwicheit vor der stangin
 unde her in mit deme swerte gelangit,
 der ne dorfte umbe daz sin leben
 nimmer einin pfenninc gegeben.
 Nu vore, kuninc Rother,
 derre wigande zwelfe ober mere,
 so ne dar uns nehein man
 mit sime volke bestan,
 her ne moze virlesin den leben

(Wohin immer sich ihr Zorn richtet, derjenige, der ihrer Stange entkommt, braucht dann, wenn einer von ihnen ihn mit dem Schwert erreicht, für sein Leben keinen Pfennig mehr zu geben. König Rother, nun führe mit dir zwölf dieser Helden über das Meer, dann wagt es niemand, sich uns mit seinen Kriegern gegenüberzustellen, ohne daß er sein Leben verlieren muß, KR 671–80)

Über die Riesen im *König Rother* ist viel nachgedacht worden (vgl. Boyer, "König Rother;" Boyer, "The Chained;" Freienhofer, *Verkörperungen*; Freienhofer, "Tabuisierung;" Fischer; Weißweiler; Winst; Gerok-Reiter). Im Hinblick auf die in der Erzählung entworfenen Zukunftsmodellierungen ist allerdings auffällig, dass die riesische Schlagkraft im Unterschied zu den anderen Handlungsoptionen Rother's als nicht situativ spezifisch modelliert wird. Sie fällt nicht unter die wenn-dann-Einschränkungen, die sonst in dieser Planungs- und Beratungsphase formuliert werden; Berchter verwendet generalisierende Ausdrücke wie "swar" und "nehein man," um sie zu beschreiben. Die Kraft der Riesen ist universal und nivelliert auf physischer Ebene die asymmetrischen Machtverhältnisse zwischen Konstantin und Rother. Verbal gefasst wird diese Eigenschaft in der Formulierung "in trowen" ("Meiner Treu"), die im *König Rother* von verschiedenen Figuren zur Bekräftigung einer Handlungsabsicht und ihrer zukünftigen Umsetzbarkeit verwendet wird; besonders häufig nutzen diese Formulierung die Riesen Asprian und Witold

(vgl. KR 1451, 1627, 1682, 3685, 4357). Diese transformative und zugleich destabilisierende Kraft der Riesen wird zu einem wesentlichen Instrument von Dietrich/Rothers Handeln während seines folgenden Konstantinopel-Aufenthaltes.

III. Zukunftssicherung

Als der von König Rother vertriebene Dietrich getarnt reist Rother mit seinen Männern und großem Reichtum nach Konstantinopel. Hatte Rother in Bari darunter gelitten, die Situation der Boten und der politischen Verhältnisse in Konstantinopel nicht ausreichend zu kennen, um eine Risikoabwägung und sichere Zukunftsplanung zu entwickeln, erlangt er an Konstantins Hof angekommen schnell Klarheit über die Situation: Bereits bei ihrer ersten Begegnung erwähnt Konstantin die noch lebenden Boten Rothers (KR 982–99), die er gefangen halte. Die antizipierte Zukunft ist also eingetreten und das entworfene Handlungsmodell erweist sich als situationsadäquat. Die daraus folgenden Ziele Dietrich/Rothers und seines Personenverbandes sind zweiteilig: Es geht ihnen um die Rettung der Boten und, nach wie vor, um die Gewinnung der Königstochter.

Das zu diesem Zweck eingesetzte "list"- und Gewalthandeln wurde von Fuchs-Jolie als "[f]eudales Gemeinschaftshandeln" (Fuchs-Jolie 186) beschrieben und ist in der Forschung umfassend analysiert worden (vgl. Pincikowski, Stock "Sich sehen;" Fischer; Weißweiler; Bowden). Mit herrscherlicher *milte* und der in den Riesen verkörperten Gewaltbereitschaft destabilisiert Rother die Machtsituation an Konstantins Hof. Dieser Prozess hat auch eine für die Frage der Zukunftsmodellierung relevante epistemische Komponente, denn Dietrich/Rother und seine Männer manövrieren Konstantin und den Hof in eine Situation doppelter Unsicherheit, die der Dopplung Rother-Dietrich korrespondiert: Dem Herrscher Konstantinopels sind weder die Absichten und Handlungsspielräume des fern geglaubten Herrschers von Bari bekannt, noch kann er die aus der Ankunft Dietrichs und seiner Männern folgenden Konsequenzen sicher antizipieren.

Die Macht Dietrichs, der sich als Rother unterlegen und von ihm verbannt einführt, bringt, wie Christian Kiening formuliert, die latente Präsenz Rothers durch Dietrich an den Hof (Kiening 226), denn Dietrichs Handeln kann und muss stets als Verweis auf Rothers nur erahnbare Exorbitanz gelesen werden. Wie zuvor Konstantin in Bari als nicht klar einzuschätzende und damit uneinhegbare Bedro-

hung gelesen wurde, ist Rother nun in Konstantinopel als gefährlichere Sonne zu Dietrichs Mond stets mitzudenken. Gleichzeitig ist Rother's Macht amorph, da nur durch Inferenzen zu erschließen, und fungiert deshalb wie zuvor auf Rother's Seite der unklare Status der Boten als Antizipation erschwerende Variable.

Die epistemische Verunsicherung Konstantins und seines Hofes geht allerdings noch weiter. Bereits der erste Bericht, den Konstantin von Dietrichs Ankunft erhält, ist wesentlich geprägt durch die Unmöglichkeit, Wissen über die eingetroffenen Fremden und damit eine klare Einschätzung der von ihnen ausgehenden Bedrohung zu erreichen: “wannen mac diz volc sin? / daz veret mit so getaner craft, / daz iz neman gesagen ne mach” (“Woher können diese Leute sein? Sie ziehen mit so großer Pracht und Kampfkraft einher, daß es niemand beschreiben kann,” KR 840–42). Die initiale Frage des anonym bleibenden Boten, gepaart mit einem Unsagbarkeitstopos, markiert klar die Unverfügbarkeit sicheren Wissens über die Fremden. Von der Königin über den Grund ihrer Ankunft befragt, berichtet der Bote, dass die meisten Bürger “de ne zo rechte nebesagen den kiel. / wer vorten die vreislichen diet: / da newart schowenigs niet!” (“ja nicht einmal das Schiff richtig gesehen [haben, LB]. Wir hatten Angst vor den grauenerregenden Leuten: So kam es gar nicht zu einer Besichtigung!,” KR 848–50). Nur von dem angeketteten und lebensbedrohlichen Witold und den langen und großen eisernen Stangen an Bord kann der Bote berichten. Die visuelle Exorbitanz der Riesen einerseits, die im Einzug in Konstantinopel entfaltete Pracht andererseits (Miller, Sahn) ziehen alle Aufmerksamkeit auf sich und tarnen zugleich die tiefergreifenden Absichten Dietrichs/Rother's.⁶ Dieser Kontrast produziert neben dem Bedürfnis nach mehr Informationen auch erhebliche Zukunftsangst und daraus folgende Antizipationsversuche. Während Konstantin noch “in manigen rieten” darüber nachdenkt, “wie de herren mochen sin” (“Da saß in angestremtem Nachdenken der König Konstantin, darüber, wer die Herren sein könnten,” KR 875–77) – eine Parallele zu Rother's längerem Sitzen auf dem Stein –, verknüpft sein Ratgeber bereits die gegenwärtigen Besucher mit Konstantins vergangenem Verhalten gegen die Boten Rother's:

herre, dir ist uvele geschen
an den boten walgetan
die du hast gevangin lan!
unde sin diz ir herren,

6. Es ist anzumerken, dass diese beiden Aspekte – riesische Gewaltbereitschaft und herrscherliche Schätze – enger als oft beobachtet miteinander verknüpft sind, denn die Riesen werden nicht nur zur Bewachung von Dietrichs/Rother's Reichtümern eingesetzt (vgl. KR 859–62, 1041), sondern es ist oftmals auch Asprian, der die Kostbarkeiten aus Dietrichs Schatzkammer holt und verteilt: “do moste der riese Asprian / dicke zo der kameren gan / bizher sie gewerte / des sie an den herren gerten” (“Da mußte der Riese Asprian immer wieder in die Schatzkammer gehen, bis er ihnen alles erfüllt hatte, was sie von dem Herrn beehrten,” KR 1513–1516; vgl. auch KR 1345–50).

sie mogint unsich alle sere.
 des intgeldet ettelicher man,
 der is nie scult ne gewan.
 die da mit den stangen
 kumen sint so langen
 den ne mach nehein man widir stan.
 du hast den valant getan!

(Herr, dir ist ein Mißgriff unterlaufen mit den vornehmen Boten, die du gefangennehmen ließest! Und wenn dies nun ihre Herren sind, dann werden sie uns allen große Unannehmlichkeiten bereiten. So mancher wird dafür büßen müssen, der niemals daran beteiligt war. Denen, die da mit den so langen Stangen hergekommen sind, kann sich niemand entgegenstellen. Du hast den Teufel getan!, KR 880–90)

Diese Passage ist in vielerlei Hinsicht hochinteressant: Die klare Schuldzuweisung Konstantin gegenüber, die sein Handeln schließlich mit dem Teufel gleichsetzt, sowie die Ankündigung, dass an der Situation Schuldlose nun deswegen würden leiden müssen, markieren die Distanz zwischen Konstantin und seinem Hof, die mit Rother's engem Personenverbund kontrastiert wird. Der namenlose Berater wiederholt Berchters Aussage beim ersten Anblick der Riesen ("so ne dar uns nehein man / mit sime volke bestan," "dann wagt es niemand, sich uns mit seinen Kriegern gegenüberzustellen," KR 678–79) und betont damit noch einmal die universale Schlagkraft der Riesen. Der Kontrast zwischen Dietrichs Verhalten und der Gewaltbereitschaft der Riesen wirkt wie eine Interferenz, die zukünftiges Verhalten abgesehen von der allgegenwärtigen Gewaltgefahr unantizipierbar macht.

Vor allem aber bietet diese Aussage seines Beraters Konstantin keine konstruktive Modellierung einer zukünftigen Umgangsweise mit der Situation an. Ein alternatives Verhalten, dass die zukünftige Bedrohung abwenden könnte, wird in die Vergangenheit projiziert: Wenn Konstantin den Boten gegenüber in der Vergangenheit anders gehandelt hätte, dann würde sich die Zukunft nun als weniger gefährlich darstellen. Während Rother's Ratgeber also konstruktiv mögliche gegenwärtige Handlungsoptionen abgewogen hatten, wird Konstantins Handlungsspielraum in die Vergangenheit verschoben; in seiner Gegenwart ist er dem Kommenden gegenüber hilflos, es ist bereits zu spät für eine adäquate Reaktion.

Diese Spielart der in den Beratungen Rother's etablierten wenn-dann-Relationen wird am Hof Konstantins mehrfach wiederholt, besonders deutlich durch seine Frau, die in dieser Weise immer wieder auf Konstantins Defizite als Herrscher und Vater hinweist:

owi, we tump wer do waren,
 daz wer unse tochter virsageten Rothere
 der diese virtreif uber mere: [...]
 owi, herre gote,
 nu mochtistu diese van oder slan,
 ob wer minen rat hedden getan! [...]
 owi, hetten sie nu min gemote,
 so heizen sie in geben daz selve wif,
 dar umbe du manegen man daz lif
 hast benumen unde bracht in arbeid:
 so wolde ich sien dine kundicheit!

(O weh, wie unbesonnen wir doch damals waren, daß wir Rother unsere Tochter erweigert haben, der diese über das Meer verjagt hat: [...] O weh edler Herr, du könntest nun diese hier gefangennehmen oder töten lassen, wenn wir nach meinem Rat gehandelt hätten! [...] Ach, hätten sie doch die gleiche Absicht wie ich, dann würden sie jene Frau fordern, derentwegen du so manchen in Not und ums Leben gebracht hast: da hätte ich dann gerne deine Schläue gesehen!, KR 1065–81)

Das anfängliche "wir" dieser Klage schlägt schnell in Vorwürfe gegen Konstantin und sogar den Wunsch nach göttlicher Strafe für sein Fehlhandeln um. Wie der Berater beginnt auch die Königin im Präteritum, um deutlich zu machen, dass Konstantins Versagen nicht mehr kompensierbar ist. Sie verweist darauf, dass ihre vergangenen Vorschläge die Handlungsoptionen der Gegenwart erheblich erweitert hätten, stellt ihre vergangene Zukunftsantizipation also als die überlegene dar. Sie geht aber noch weiter, indem sie sich imaginativ mit den Fremden solidarisiert – hätten diese nur den gleichen "gemote" wie die Königin und würden die Königstochter fordern: "so wolde ich sien dine kundicheit!" Statt wie Rother's Berater ein viables Handlungsmodell für diesen möglichen kommenden Konflikt zu erarbeiten, stellt sie spöttisch Konstantins Perspektivlosigkeit heraus und desavouiert die Herrscherfähigkeiten ihres Mannes mithilfe dieser mehrfachen konjunktivischen Modellierungen in Vergan-

genheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft. Dass diese Opposition nicht intern und diskret formuliert wird, sondern durchaus auch als kommunikatives Signal an die Fremden zu verstehen ist, markiert Berchter, der nach einer der kritischen Reden der Königin anmerkt: “ich troste mich an de kunigin!,” (“Die Königin macht mich zuversichtlich!,” KR 1224) und dabei mit dem Begriff “trost” eine der zentralen Vokabeln für Zukunftshoffnung im *König Rother* aufgreift.

Konstantins Unfähigkeit, die Zukunft korrekt zu antizipieren und sein Handeln entsprechend zu planen, kommt bereits in seiner ersten Interaktion mit Dietrich/Rother am Hof zum Ausdruck. Während des Osterfestes unterwirft sich Dietrich Konstantin mit Verweis auf seine Vertreibung durch Rother (KR 918–40). Konstantin nimmt nach Beratung diese Unterwerfung zögerlich an und demonstriert verbal seine *milte*-Bereitschaft (KR 983–86), formuliert dann aber seine anfängliche Einschätzung, Dietrich sei als Werber um seine Tochter nach Konstantinopel gereist. In diesem Falle “so tet ich also Rothere / der dich virtreib ober mere. / den han ich iedoch bedwungin” (“[Wäre dem so,] so würde ich wie Rother handeln, der dich über das Meer vertrieben hat. Den habe ich jedoch besiegt,” KR 990–92). Die damit von Konstantin eingespielte Alternative zur von Dietrich erklärten Intention seiner Reise ist präsentisch formuliert, bezieht sich aber auf die Zukunft und versucht, als verdeckte Drohung und Machtgeste die Option einer Werbung von Dietrichs Seite abzuweisen und gleichzeitig Konstantins Überlegenheit Dietrich und Rother gegenüber zu demonstrieren. Sie geht fehl: Asprian reagiert mit einer offenen Gewaltandrohung. Er verlangt seine Rüstung und kündigt an, wer die Boten in Ketten gelegt habe, “des mochte her noch lichte untgelden!” (“dem kann es noch leicht geschehen, daß er dafür müßen muß,” KR 1007). Wolle Konstantin versuchen, Dietrich und die seinen gefangen zu nehmen, “er geligit ettelicher tod / der allteurist will sin, / mir ne zobreche die stange min!” (“wird so mancher tot daliegen, der sich besonders tapfer hervortun will, es sei denn, mir zerbricht meine Stange!,” KR 1011–13). Diese Reaktion verbindet offene Gewaltankündigung mit einer mehrstufigen Zukunftsantizipation: Wenn Konstantin sie gefangen nehmen würde, dann würde es zu vielen Toten kommen. Dieses Modell des kommenden Ereignisablaufs kennt nur eine Einschränkung, und die ist nicht von der ‚agency‘ der Figuren abhängig, sondern kontingent – ausschließlich das Zerbrechen von Asprians Stange könnte ihr Eintreffen verhindern. Angesichts dieser offenen Gewaltandrohung muss Konstantin zurückrudern und begründet seine Worte mit Trunkenheit (KR 1020), was sei-

ne Stellung bei Hof weiter schädigt (KR 1089–91).

Im Kontrast zu den eintreffenden Zukunftsmodellierungen Rother und seines Personenverbandes macht Konstantin also nur wenige Antizipationsversuche, die größtenteils fehl gehen. Meist steht er hilflos einer von ihm selbst produzierten Gegenwart gegenüber, die er sich nur unzureichend erklären kann. Seine Ehefrau und seine Ratgeber, die wie beschrieben wiederholt sein vergangenes Fehlverhalten mit der gegenwärtigen Misere und zukünftigen potentiellen Bedrohungen in Verbindung bringen, stehen ihm in dieser Hinsicht weit reflektierter gegenüber und betonen damit noch einmal sein Versagen als Herrscher im Kontrast zu Rother. Mehr als jede andere dem Konstantinopler Hof zuzurechnende Figur ist es aber seine Tochter, die zusammen mit ihrer Zofe Herlint erfolgreich die Zukunft antizipiert und manipuliert und sich damit als Rother ebenbürtig erweist.

Wie Rother und Berchter stehen die Königstochter und Herlint in einem engen Beratungsaustausch und planen Schritt für Schritt die Kontaktaufnahme mit Dietrich/Rother. Dieser Austausch beginnt mit einer offenen Frage der Königstochter nach Handlungsoptionen:

“owi, we sal ich,” sprach die kuningin,
 “irwerbe umbe den vater min,
 daz wer den selven herren [Dietrich]
 gesien mit unsen eren?”

(“O weh,” sprach die Königstochter, wie bringe ich es fertig,
 bei meinem Vater zu erreichen, daß wir diesen Herrn so
 treffen können, daß es unserem Ansehen nicht schadet?,” KR
 1531–34).

Diese Frage parallelisiert nicht nur Rother's wiederholte Verwendung des Klageausrufs “owi” bei der Auslotung seiner Handlungsoptionen vor der ersten Reise nach Konstantinopel (vgl. KR 462–73), sondern nimmt mit Herlints Antwort auch das bis zu diesem Punkt nur von den Riesen verwendete “introwen” (KR 1535) auf (Herlint und die Königstochter verwenden diesen Ausdruck am Zweithäufigsten nach den Riesen, vgl. KR 1535, 1939 und 2086 für Herlint und KR 2076, 2210, 2247 und 2297 für die Königstochter). Die von den beiden Frauen als beste Handlungsoption entwickelte Abfolge von Listen und Manipulationen Konstantins bringt sie schließlich an das gewünschte Ziel: Dietrich/Rother trifft die Königstochter in ihrer Kemenate und sie können offen miteinander sprechen.

Die ungewohnt aktive Rolle der Frauenfiguren im *Rother* ist wiederholt angemerkt worden (vgl. Kerth; Plotke; Kohnen); Kerth spricht sogar davon, dass die Königstochter “undertakes her own wooing expedition” (Kerth ix). In der viel diskutierten Kemenaten-szene (vgl. für eine ausführliche Diskussion Kiening 226; Schulz, “Iz ne wart;” Schulz, *Eherechtsdiskurse*; Deutsch) entwickeln die beiden gemeinsam und auf Augenhöhe einen Plan, wie sie die Boten befreien und, sofern Dietrichs Identität als Rother von ihnen bestätigt würde, gemeinsam in sein Land fliehen können.

Zunächst jedoch beginnt Dietrich/Rother, indem er die Königstochter nach ihrem bevorzugten Ehemann fragt, “ob iz an dinin willin solde stan” (“wenn es nun deine Wahl überlassen wäre,” KR 2206). Dies ist nicht nur signifikant, weil hier zum ersten Mal nach über 2000 Versen, in denen diverse Figuren über die Hand der Königstochter verhandeln, sie nach ihrem “willin” gefragt wird, sondern auch, weil es der Königstochter Anlass gibt, eine beispiellose Zukunftsgewissheit zu formulieren: Zwar gäbe es keinen Mann, der sich in seiner Vortrefflichkeit mit Dietrich messen könne, sollte sie aber die Wahl haben, so würde sie Rother nehmen. Und sie bekräftigt: “Ich will ouch immer magit gan, / me ne werde der helit lossam!” (“Ich will auch für immer unberührt bleiben, wenn dieser wundervolle Held nicht mein wird!,” KR 2231–32). Mit gleicher Absolutheit sichert sie kurz darauf dem vermeintlichen Dietrich ihre Verschwiegenheit zu: “swaz mir hute wirt gesagit, / das ist immer wole virdagit / bis an den iungistin tac.” (“Was immer du mir jetzt anvertraust, das bleibt streng verschwiegen bis zum Jüngsten Tag,” KR 2255–57). Und als er ihr seine wahre Identität anvertraut, bekräftigt sie, sollte sich diese bestätigen: “unde wariz dan al der werlde liet, / so rumde ich sichirliche / mit samt der die riche” (“Dann allerdings würde ich, selbst wenn die ganze Welt dagegen wäre, ganz gewiß mit dir zusammen aus diesem Lande ziehen,” KR 2282–84).

Diese geballte Zukunftssicherheit, die zwar an diesem Punkt noch an Dietrichs/Rothers wahre Identität und andere Konditionen gebunden bleibt, ist im ersten Teil der Erzählung ein starker Kontrast zu Rother und Konstantins Wahrnehmung der Zukunft als kontingent und bedrohlich. Mit dem Verweis auf den “iungistin tac” spielt sie zudem eine christlich-heilsgeschichtliche Dimension ein. Die Königstochter, das wird hier überdeutlich betont, ist eine Partnerin, mit der Rother seine Zukunft klar antizipieren, sichern und stabilisieren kann, und die daran ein ebenso großes Interesse hat wie er.

Diese Eignung und mindestens Ebenbürtigkeit wird auch er-

kennbar in der zentralen “list” der Königstochter, mit der sie Boten und Dietrich/Rother wieder vereinigt und gleichzeitig letzte Klarheit über seine Identität erhält. Nach einer schlaflosen Nacht kleidet sie sich als Pilgerin mit Stab, schwarzem Kleid und Palmzweig, und geht zu Konstantin in seine Kemenate. Sie eröffnet ihm, Abschied nehmen zu wollen, denn

mir ist so getroumot,
 mer ne sende der waldindicger goth
 sinin botin underdan
 ich moz in abgrunde ganz
 mit lewendigen live,
 des nist nehein zwivil.
 Is ne mac mich neman irwenden,
 ich ne wille daz elelende
 buwin immer mere
 zo troste minir sele

(Mir hat solches geträumt, daß ich, falls mir nicht der allmächtige Gott seinen ihm ergebenen Boten sendet, ganz gewiß zur Hölle fahren werde bei lebendigem Leib, darüber gibt es keinen Zweifel. Und so wird mich niemand davon abhalten können, fern der Heimat für immer zu leben zum Heile meiner Seele, KR 2339–48)

Dieses Schicksal könne nur vermieden werden, indem ihr die Boten Rother überantwortet würden. Für drei Tage wolle sie ihnen Linderung verschaffen. Konstantin sagt zu, insofern sich ein Bürge für die Gefangenen finden lasse, und wie zuvor von Dietrich/Rother und der Königstochter geplant, übernimmt Dietrich bereitwillig dieses Amt.

Diese mehrstufige, von Dietrich/Rother und der Königstochter geplante und umgesetzte Zukunftsmodellierung, zeigt nicht nur, wie gut die beiden Figuren zusammenarbeiten um Konstantin zu manipulieren, sie parallelisiert zugleich das zukünftige Ehepaar durch ihre Verwendung von Verkleidungen und fingierten Geschichten. Darüber hinaus spielt die Königstochter mit ihrer Selbstcodierung als Pilgerin und dem Verweis auf einen prophetischen Traum, an dem es “nehein zwivil” gäbe, die Zukunftsvereindeutigung durch eine transzendente Schicksalsinstanz und die Erweiterung der Figurenperspektive auf jenseitiges Heil und Verdammnis auf der intradiegetischen Ebene ein. Beide Aspekte gewinnen für Rother und seinen Personenverband in der weiteren Erzählung massiv an Bedeutung.

Mit dem Gewinn der Königstochter und der Rückgewinnung der Boten geht eine deutliche Verschiebung in der Darstellung von Zukunftsmodellierungen einher. Rother und sein Personenverband handeln zwar weiter listig und bedacht, ihre Zukunftsantizipationen und daraus folgende Überlegungen werden jedoch nicht mehr im Detail dargelegt. Als Ymelot von Babylon, „ein heidin vreisam“ („ein furchterregender Heide“, KR 2570), eine riesige Heeresmacht gegen Konstantin aufbringt, verlangt Rother die Befreiung der Boten und zieht mit ihnen in den Krieg. Mithilfe einer List besiegt er Ymelot und entscheidet so den Kampf für Konstantins Seite. Die Planung dieser List – Dietrich/Rother, Asprian und zwölf Ritter geben sich als Männer Ymelots aus, dringen so bis zu ihm vor und nehmen ihn gefangen – wird jedoch nicht auserzählt, abgesehen von einer mit „introwin“ eingeleiteten Voraussage Witolds, die „Heiden“ zu besiegen (KR 2673–79). Gleiches gilt für die darauf folgende Flucht Rothers, der Prinzessin und ihres Personenverbandes aus Konstantinopel: Weder erfahren die Rezipient*innen die Einzelheiten des Plans vorab, noch gibt der Erzähler den Prozess der Situationsabwägung und Entscheidungsfindung wieder. Stattdessen wird die List im Vollzug entfaltet und mit im Vergleich zum Vorangehenden sehr geringer Wiedergabe von Figurenrede durch den Erzähler referiert. Der Fokus verschiebt sich damit von der Darstellung reflektierender und antizipierender Zukunftsmodellierung hin zum erfolgreichen Handeln in der Gegenwart. Die zugrunde liegenden strategischen Erwägungen können nun nurmehr aus dem Handeln erschlossen werden; in dem Maße, in dem Rother und die seinen zukunftsicherer agieren, sind auch die Rezipient*innen darauf angewiesen, den Protagonist*innen zu vertrauen, da sie nicht länger in ihre Motivationen und Pläne eingeweiht sind. Im gleichen Maße nehmen Aussagen über die Zukunft in diesem Teil generell ab; es bleiben wenige Absichtserklärungen einzelner Figuren und eine singuläre Erzählerprolepse über den kommenden Tod Ymelots (KR 2578).

IV. *alde zuht* und Zukunftszuversicht

Die Rückreise Rothers und seiner Frau über das Meer wird zusammengefasst in einer Erzählerprolepse, die das für den *Rother* so relevante Thema der Genealogie und genauer der Geschlechtergründung der Karolinger zentral setzt: Rothers „vrowe“ wird „swanger einis kindis, einis seligin barnis“ („empfang die wunderschöne Herrin

ein Kind, einen zu gesegneter Zukunft bestimmten Königssproß,” KR 2945–46; vgl. auch die noch detailliertere Prolepsen in V. 3483–3491 und V. 4788–4790). Damit ist die zu Beginn der Erzählung fokussierte Furcht – das Fehlen einer Verstetigungsoption für Rothers Herrschaft – abgewendet.

Nach der Beseitigung dieser antizipierten Gefahr finden sich Rother und seine Männer bei ihrer Ankunft in Bari einer eigentlich hochgradig instabilen Situation gegenüber: Der Regent Amelger ist tot und “die lant alle verstorot” (“und das ganze Reich in Wirren gestürzt,” KR 2948) durch sechs rebellierende Markgrafen. Rothers Reich befindet sich im (Bürger)Krieg. Ohne Ruhepause muss er mit seinen Männern und Amelgers loyalem Sohn Wolfrat die Rebellen besiegen. Diese Situation wird, trotz ihrer objektiven Bedrohlichkeit, jedoch nicht als echte Gefährdung von Rothers Herrschaft dargestellt. Rother, so berichtet der Erzähler, “moste durch gerichte varen” (“denn es war seine Pflicht auszuziehen und die Ordnung wiederherzustellen,” KR 2971). Die Vokabel “gerichte” ruft die zentrale Richterkompetenz eines Herrschers auf (vgl. Braun) und setzt Rother damit in eine Position der Autorität, verweist aber auch auf das Gerade, Richtige, Ordentliche, das wieder hergestellt werden muss. Dieser Prozess wird sehr knapp und mit einem Fokus auf die Leistung der beteiligten Männer geschildert; der Erzähler verzichtet auf die Wiedergabe von Emotionalität oder Zukunftsängsten. Weder werden Rothers Pläne und Intentionen geschildert, noch erhält die Gegenseite eine Stimme.

Während Rother im Vollzug seiner berechtigten Herrschaft und auf die Gegenwart ausgerichtet dargestellt wird, ist es nun die parallel erzählte Konstantinopel-Handlung, die Versuche von Zukunftsantizipation und Listhandeln fokussiert. Der Verlust seiner Tochter stürzt Konstantin in eine tiefe Verzweiflung, die wie eine Übersteigerung von Rothers Kummer über das Schicksal der Boten dargestellt wird – er “begunde sere weinin” (“Er begann heftig zu schluchzen,” KR 3015), “quelite sich von leide” (“quälte sich in Selbstmitleid [/Leid, LB],” KR 3016) und fällt sogar in Ohnmacht. Dieser emotionale Zustand führt jedoch weder zu Beratungen innerhalb seines Personenverbandes noch zu prudentialem Handeln, sondern zu Kontrollverlust, denn der gefangene Ymelot kann im folgenden Chaos entkommen. Die von ihm ausgehende zukünftige Gefahr wird mit einer weiteren Erzählerprolepse angekündigt (KR 3039–40). Konstantin beauftragt seine Frau, die Kämpfer gegen Ymelot zu belohnen und fortzuschicken, anstatt sie in seine Planungen miteinzubeziehen.

Und es sind keinesfalls die Hohen des Hofes, sondern ein Spielmann (KR 3062) ohne klare institutionelle Anbindung, der Konstantin eine Lösung für das Problem der entführten Tochter vorschlägt.

Dieser Spielmann, reichhaltig ausgestattet von Konstantin, agiert bei der folgenden Rückentführung der Königstochter auf ähnliche Weise wie Dietrich/Rother bei ihrer Gewinnung: Er nimmt eine falsche Identität, nämlich die eines Händlers an, reist unter merkantilem Vorwand nach Bari und lockt die Frau Rothers mit einer unwahren Geschichte an Bord seines Schiffes. Ähnlich wie Rother und die Seinen versucht er, die Zukunft bis ins Detail zu antizipieren (KR 3063–83). Es fehlt ihm allerdings, neben der herrscherlichen Legitimation, die Konsensbildung mit Beratern und das Einverständnis der Königstochter für diese Entführung.⁷ Anders als Rother wird Konstantin also nicht als klug die Zukunft antizipierender oder planender Herrscher gezeigt. Er muss die Rolle des listenreichen Entführers delegieren und ist so von seiner eigenen Emotionalität überwältigt, dass er einen wichtigen Gefangenen entkommen lässt.

Rothers Umgang mit dem Verlust seiner Frau wird scharf mit der Reaktion Konstantins kontrastiert. Sein Verhalten und das seines Hofes in dieser zweiten Bari-Episode sind exemplarisch für die bereits im Kampf gegen Ymelot auftretende veränderte Zukunftsmodellierung. Als sich die Nachricht von der Entführung in Bari verbreitet, wollen die Stadtbewohner fliehen, denn "sie vorten Rotcheres zorn" ("sie fürchteten Rothers Unmut," KR 3272). Lupold aber, der ursprüngliche Werber um die Königstochter und einer der gefangenen Boten, spendet ihnen "torste" ("Mut/Hoffnung," KR 3276) und

he bat sie dar beliven:
des inwære negein zwivel,
he ne gewonne die hulde,
daz Rocther die sculde
an ir negeime reche
oder ihtes leides spreche.

(Es gäbe keinen Zweifel daran [Er bat sie zu glauben, LB], daß er die Gnade erwirken könne, daß Rother das Vorgefallene an keinem von ihnen ahnden oder irgendeinen für sie nachteiligen Spruch fällen würde, KR 3277–82)

Die Stadtbewohner vertrauen dieser Zukunftsantizipation und unterwerfen sich Lupold. In seiner abschließenden Bekräftigung verquickt Lupold den Glauben an Rothers "truwe" mit dem Vertrauen

7. Interessanterweise stimmen auch die von ihm in Konstantinopel modellierte Zukunft und sein tatsächliches Handeln nicht überein: Hatte er Konstantin gegenüber angekündigt, seine Tochter mit "seltsene wat" (KR 3076) auf sein Schiff locken zu wollen, bedient er sich in Bari angekommen einer ganz anderen "list" (vgl. Kiening 221, der auch betont, wie abhängig der Plan des Spielmanns von diversen Zufällen ist).

auf Gott: “goth helfe uns uzer not! / minis herren truwe is so vile: / wir genesen wol, of iz goth wil” (“Gott möge uns aus dieser schlimmen Lage befreien! Die Gerechtigkeit meines Herrn ist sehr groß: Es wird uns nichts geschehen, wenn Gott will,” KR 3290–92). Als Rother von seinen Kämpfen zurückkehrt, präsentiert sich Lupold entsprechend als Beschützer des unschuldigen Volkes und nimmt alle Schuld auf sich: er sei “eine sculdich wider dich” (“Ich allein bin dir gegenüber schuldig geworden,” KR 3319), da er Rothers Frau nicht bewahrt und damit seine “truwe unde ere” verloren habe. Zugleich verweist er am Beispiel seines Bruders Erwin auf die lange konstantinopelsche Gefangenschaft, die die Boten im Dienste Rothers erleiden mussten. Seine eigenen Leiden sind in diesem Verweis impliziert.

Rothers Reaktion auf den Verlust der Ehefrau wird also mehrfach und auf sehr unterschiedliche Weise antizipiert: Die Bevölkerung fürchtet seinen Zorn, Lupold verweist auf Rothers und Gottes Gnade, bietet sich aber zugleich als möglichen Sündenbock für das Versagen an. Durch einen Publikumsanruf (“Nu vernemet, wie Rother sprach, / deme das herzeleit geschah!” “Hört jetzt, wie Rother sprach, den der schwere Schlag getroffen hatte!,” KR 3327–28) markiert der Erzähler die Szene zusätzlich. Der antizipierte Zorn bleibt jedoch aus. Rother nimmt Lupolds Hand, küsst ihn auf den Mund und spricht ihm Mut zu:

gehawe dich wole, neve min!
 warumbe quelis du den lif?
 iz levet so manich schone wif!
 is uns aver sichein guot
 von der vrowen geordinot,
 daz mach ze iungest wal irgan.

(Sei guten Mutes, lieber Neffe! Warum quälst du dich? Es gibt ja noch so viele schöne Frauen! Wenn aber die edle Dame irgendwie zu unserem Glück vorherbestimmt ist, kann alles immer noch ein gutes Ende nehmen, KR 3332–37)

Die Möglichkeit einer zornigen Reaktion oder Strafung Lupolds weist er – ebenfalls mit dem Rückbezug auf dessen Gefangenschaft in Griechenland – scharf ab und nutzt dafür einen religiösen Vergleich: “gezornit ich immir widir dich, / so dadich alse Judas / der sich selvin virlos” (“Würde ich dir auch nur im geringsten zürnen, verhielte ich mich wie Judas, der sich selber ins Verderben stürzte,” KR 3346–48).

Diese komplexe Passage verknüpft Wortfelder des Glaubens, des

Strafens und der Herrschaft miteinander und bindet sie zurück an die für den *Rother* zentralen Begriffe der “truwe” und des “trostes” – Treue zueinander und Hoffnung für die Zukunft. Die negativen Emotionen Furcht und Zorn (Gerok-Reiter; Freienhofer, *Verkörperungen*) werden kontrastiert mit “trost” und “hulde,” und Beides wird in mehrfacher Hinsicht rückgebunden an eine starke religiöse Dimension. Dabei ist interessant, wer hier auf wen vertraut: Das Volk fürchtet Rother aber traut Lupold. Lupold vertraut auf Rother's Gnade und auf Gott. Rother dagegen verweist mit der Vokabel “geordinot” (geordnet, zugewiesen, bestimmt für, berufen zu) auf eine Schicksalsmacht, die das weitere Geschehen bestimmen werde. Kiening lehnt es ab, diese Stelle als Anerkennung göttlicher Providenz zu lesen, da hier nicht die Rede von Gott sei, und sieht darin mehr “eine Form auktorialen Urvertrauens” (Kiening 221), einen Ausdruck der narrativen Finalität des Textes, während Deutsch diese Argumentation als wenig überzeugend kritisiert (Deutsch 87). Festzuhalten ist, dass diese Aussage Rother's explizit gerahmt ist durch religiöse Verweise – Lupold ruft in V. 3290–92 Gott um Gnade an und betont sein Vertrauen auf Gottes Willen, während Rother nur wenige Verse nach seinem Verweis auf eine Schicksalsmacht den Verrat und Zweifel Judas' ins Spiel bringt (KR V. 3347–48).⁸ Selbst wenn Rother also nicht Gott direkt anruft, sind göttliche Providenz und Heilsgeschichte die Fluchtpunkte dieser Szene. Es ist aber kein bloßes Gottesvertrauen, das hier zum Ausdruck kommt, sondern ein rekursives, sich wechselseitig anreicherndes Vertrauen auf Gottes Plan für die Zukunft, Rother's Qualitäten als gerechtem Herrscher und Lupold's Qualitäten der Loyalität (KR 3340) und Tugend (“tugendhafter Mann” [LB], KR 3338), die metonymisch für den Personenverband um Rother steht. Es ist Berchter, Lupold's Vater und wichtigster Berater Rother's, der die erfolgreiche Harmonisierung dieser Elemente durch Rother auf den Punkt bringt:

hude hat din truwe
 an mir armin man
 die aldin zucht genuwet,
 der din vater plegete,
 die wile daz he levete! [...]

(Heute hast du in wahrhaft königlicher Haltung an mir, dem geringen Lehnsman, jene gute alte Loyalität fortgesetzt, die dein Vater hoch hielt, so lange er lebte! [...] KR 3360–64)

8. Interessanterweise bringt sich Rother in diesem Vergleich potenziell in die Rolle Judas' (noch verstärkt durch den Kuss, den er Lupold gibt), während Lupold in die Position Christi gestellt wird. Hier und an etlichen späteren Stellen wird deutlich, dass Rother zwar unhinterfragt herrscht, diese Herrschaft sich aber ebenso stark aus den Qualitäten seiner Lehnsleute und Ratgeber speist wie aus seiner eigenen Idealität.

Die auf eine genealogische Verstetigung und damit Stabilisierung zielende Zukunftsorientierung des Romanbeginns wird also im Anschluss an den Brautgewinn und die Rückkehr nach Bari in mehrfacher Hinsicht erweitert: Nicht nur wird mit der Zeugung Pippins das karolingische Geschlecht gegründet. Die Figuren zeigen auch ein generalisierteres Vertrauen in eine positive Zukunft, die ihnen durch eine wohlwollende Schicksalsmacht zugewiesen wird – und dieses Zukunftsvertrauen wird durch den Verlust der Königstochter und ähnliche Kontingenzen nicht erschüttert. Zugleich schreibt Berchters Kommentar an Rother dessen Herrschaftsform aber auch in die Vergangenheit rück und verstetigt sie als “aldin zucht,” die Rother idealtypisch aufgreift (vgl. Bowden 56). Dreihundert Verse später greift der Erzähler diese “alde zucht” noch einmal auf, weist sie nun aber den “manich tuere[n] wigant” (“viele[n] vortreffliche[n] Krieger[n],” KR 3651) zu, die Rother nach Konstantinopel begleiten:

an den lach die alde zucht
unde die wereltliche vorcht.
die solde ein iegelich man
wider sinen herren han,
sone worde die gruntveste
nuwet der helle geste.

(An ihnen war noch die gute alte Gesinnung zu finden und die Wertschätzung der weltlichen Ordnungsmacht. Diese Haltung müßte jeder Gefolgsmann seinem Herrn gegenüber zeigen, dann könnte es niemals geschehen, daß die Fundamente [unserer Gemeinschaft] vom Teufel geholt werden, KR 3654–59)

Auch hier werden Herrschaft, Loyalität und Tugenden religiös gerahmt und als Grundlage für eine stabile Gesellschaft benannt, der Fokus liegt aber nicht mehr nur auf Rother, sondern auf dem Personenverband als Ganzem. Dementsprechend ist Rother selbst im Folgenden weit weniger in die Heeraushebung und Planung involviert. Hatte er im ersten Teil noch den Rat einberufen und dessen Ergebnisse tatkräftig umgesetzt, scheint sich dieser Prozess nun zu verselbständigen. Rothers Redeanteil ist im Vergleich zum ersten Teil deutlich reduziert. Stattdessen sind es Wolfrat, Lupold, Berchter und die Riesen, die die Heerfahrt nach Konstantinopel in Rothers Namen vorantreiben. Es ist wiederum der Riese Witold, der das diesem Unternehmen zugrundeliegende Zukunftsvertrauen artikuliert: “wir

solin dir helpin ovir mere! / wer dir [Rother, LB] icht dienet, / deme wirt wal gelonet!“ (“Wir werden dir die Fahrt übers Meer ermöglichen! Wer immer sich dir zur Verfügung stellt, dem wird reicher Lohn zuteil!,” KR 3397–99).

V. Zukunftszuversicht im Jenseits und Diesseits

Die Zurücknahme wenn nicht sogar Passivität Rothers setzt sich auch bei der anschließenden Reise nach Konstantinopel fort. Von der längeren Redepassage mit Verweisen auf eine wohlwollende Schicksalsmacht an wird bis zur Ankunft nahe Konstantinopel keine Figurenrede Rothers weitergegeben; es sind seine Männer, die für ihn sprechen und Voraussagen über die kommende Schlacht und ihr Vorgehen machen. Als Rother nach über hundert Versen des Schweigens seine Absicht äußert, als Pilger verkleidet zu Konstantin zu gehen, um die Lage zu sondieren (KR 3666–70), greift Wolfrat ein und korrigiert Rothers Plan: Er solle nicht allein gehen, sondern Berchter, Lupold und Wolfrats Horn mitnehmen.

Rother, Berchter und Lupold treffen, “in pilegrimis gewete” (“Pilgerkleider,” KR 3695) gewandet, zunächst auf einen namenlos bleibenden Recken, der ihnen ausführlich über die Situation in Konstantinopel berichtet (vgl. Holtzhauer). Als sie von ihm hören, dass die Wiederverheiratung von Rothers Frau mit dem Sohn Ymelots direkt bevorstehen, brechen sie in die Stadt auf. In dieser Passage wird der Kontrast zum Beginn des *König Rother* besonders deutlich. Trotz der gefährlichen Situation, in die sie sich begeben, initiiert Rother kein Beratungsgespräch oder diskutiert seine Pläne. Weder wird zukünftiges Geschehen antizipiert, noch das bestmögliche kommende Verhalten modelliert. Stattdessen gibt der Erzähler eine knappe Zusammenfassung der Entscheidung, die jegliche Innensicht oder Emotionalität ausspart: “Rother gienc in de stat. / Berker sinin herren bat, / daz her wurbe gewerliche” (“Rother machte sich in die Stadt auf, Berchter bat seinen Herrn, vorsichtig vorzugehen,” KR 3834–36).

Während sich Rother der Voraussagen nahezu gänzlich enthält und seine Männer Voraussagen von großer Zukunftsgewissheit machen, sind es nun die gegnerischen Parteien, die planend und antizipierend über die Zukunft sprechen. Als Konstantins Frau laut wünscht, Rother möge von Gott gesandt werden, um die “heideniskuninge” zu strafen (KR 3862), betonen diese ihre Vorsichtsmaß-

nahmen gegen Rother: “wir hotin unsich wole!” (“Wir jedenfalls sind sehr wohl auf unserer Hut!,” KR 3900) und ihre Überlegenheit – “queme Rother / er wurde irtrenkit in deme mere / odir bosliche virhorn” (“Wenn Rother käme, würde er entweder im Meer ertränkt oder er nähme irgendwie anders ein schimpfliches Ende,” KR 3864–66). Konstantin postiert – zu spät! – seine Männer an der Saaltür, um Rother schon beim Eintritt zu entdecken.

Es überrascht nicht, dass die Zukunftsmodellierungen Ymelots und der Seinen nicht adäquat auf Rother's Widerstand reagieren; die Erzählung treibt den Kontrast zwischen beiden Parteien aber noch einen Schritt weiter, indem Rother selbst wie beratend in die Planung seiner Gegner eingreift und sie ‘verbessert.’ Als Ymelots Sohn Basilistium ankündigt, den gefangenen Rother ertränken zu lassen und voraussagt, Rother müsse “verloren werdin, / swie du wilt irsterven” (“Du entkommst dem Tod nicht, welchen du auch immer wählst!,” KR 3969–70) – Konstantin bestätigt dies fälschlich mit “introwen” (KR 3971), der einzige Fall seiner Verwendung dieser Vokabel –, schlägt Rother vor, dass er doch besser hängen solle, und weist als geeigneten Hinrichtungsplatz jene Hügelgruppe aus, bei der sein Heer und Asprian sich versteckt halten. Nicht nur hat Rother es nicht länger nötig, seine eigenen Zukunftsantizipationen zu artikulieren und zu hinterfragen, er manipuliert nun die anderer politischer Mächte.

Besonders auffällig ist jedoch wie bereits erwähnt die Rolle von religiösen und transzendenten Verweisen in dieser zweiten Konstantinopel-Episode. Beschränken sich im ersten Teil des *König Rother* diese Verweise noch auf wenige Ausrufe und extradiegetische Kommentare des Erzählers, so treten, beginnend mit dem fingierten prophetischen Traum der Königstochter, auch zunehmend intradiegetisch religiöse Elemente und insbesondere das Vertrauen auf göttliche Providenz in den Vordergrund der Erzählung. Markanterweise ist es Konstantin, der während der Festszaalszene einen prophetischen Traum referiert – und im Unterschied zum Traum seiner Tochter scheint dieser ‘echt’ zu sein, widerspricht er doch Konstantin's eigenen Interessen.⁹ Er erzählt seiner weinenden Tochter:

mir troumite nochte von der
des saltu wol geloubin mir –,
we ein valke quame
gevlogin von Rome
unde vorte dich widir over mere.

9. Die Parallelen und Varianzen der beiden Konstantinopel-Fahrten sind wiederholt diskutiert worden. Schulz hat beispielsweise gezeigt, wie die räumlichen Positionieren Rother's und seiner Frau in dieser Szene die Kemenatenszene des ersten Teils spiegeln (Schulz, *Eherechtsdiskurse* 50).

(Mir träumte in der Nacht von dir – das mußt du mir wirklich glauben –, daß ein Falke geflogen kam aus Rom und dich zurück über das Meer brachte, KR 3852–56)

Dieses frühe Beispiel eines prophetischen Falkentraumes verweist auf den bereits anwesenden Rother, erklärt also die gegenwärtige Situation (vgl. Stock, “Sich sehen” 234). Zugleich kündigt er die kommenden Ereignisse an und bietet damit für diejenigen, die ihn lesen können, ein hohes Maß an Zukunftssicherheit. Konstantin scheint unfähig, den Traum korrekt zu deuten, fungiert hier also als unwissender Übermittler einer prophetischen Botschaft, die sein eigenes Scheitern ankündigt.

Vor allem aber sind es Rother's Männer, durch deren Figurenrede diese zweite Hälfte des *König Rother* mit einem dichten Netz an religiösen Verweisen angereichert wird. Gellinek hat bereits früh herausgearbeitet, wie im *König Rother* durch die Synchronisierung der fiktiven literarischen Figuren mit verdienten Heiligen – genauer der Verknüpfung von Karls Schwester Gertrud mit der Heiligen Gertrud von Nivelles und der Mutter König Konstantins mit der Heiligen Helena – “ein Abglanz jenes Verdienstes auf den Abkömmling einer solchen Vorfahrin fallen” (Gellinek 500).¹⁰ Kiening spricht in Bezug auf die Funktionalisierung Helenas davon, dass “Reichsgeschichte und Heilsgeschichte [...] verklittert und überblendet” werden (Kiening 236–37). Neben diesen beiden Heiligen und mehrfachen Anrufungen des Heiligen Ägidius, der legendarisch mit Karl dem Großen in Verbindung gebracht wird, sind es Vergleiche mit biblischen Figuren, die zusätzliche religiöse Sinndimensionen in den Text tragen.

Ein für die Frage von Zukunftsmodellierungen und Vertrauen auf die göttliche Providenz besonders relevanter Vergleich wird von Berchter vorgenommen, als er mit Rother unter Konstantins Tisch-tuch versteckt über das weitere Vorgehen berät. Von Feinden umringt, argumentiert dafür, das Versteck im Namen des heiligen Ägidius zu verlassen:

wir sulin hie vore gan
 in ere des himiliskin koningis
 unde alles sinis heris,
 daz her uns beide behode
 durch sin othmote
 von der heidenscheffe,
 die mit sinir crefte
 Moysen heiz gan

10. Gellinek betont die Tatsache, dass es sich um zwei weibliche Heilige handelt, die in Zusammenhang mit den fiktiven Herrschern gebracht werden, was die besondere Rolle der Frauenfiguren im Text noch einmal verstärkt.

durch das Rote Mere vreissam
 mit der Israhelischen diet;
 dar nelevet ein barin nit
 an des meres grunde:
 got, der hat gebundin
 beide ovil unde guot
 swonnez widir ime duot!

(Wir müssen von hier hervorkommen, um des Ansehens des himmlischen Königs und seiner ganzen Heerschar willen, dadurch, daß er uns (beide) beschützt in seiner Gnade vor all den Ungläubigen; er, der in seiner Allmacht Moses befahl, zu Fuß durch das schreckliche Rote Meer zu ziehen mit dem Volke Israel: Kein Mensch hätte den Marsch auf dem Meeresgrunde überlebt; jener Gott, dessen Macht sowohl über das Böse als auch über das Gute gebietet, auch dann, wenn es gegen seinen Willen zu gehen scheint!, KR 3933–47)

Im Angesicht ihrer sicheren Gefangennahme verzichtet Berchter erstmalig auf jegliche Vorsichtsmaßnahmen. Stattdessen verweist er auf Gottes Allmacht und den Schutz und die Gnade, die er den Seinen zukommen ließe: “her inlezt uns under wege nit” (“dann wird er uns auf unserem Weg nicht im Stich lassen,” KR 3951). Das hier propagierte Hineinbegeben in eine unkontrollierbare und eigentlich hoffnungsvolle Situation im Vertrauen auf göttlichen Schutz steht im scharfen Kontrast zu Berchters gesamtem bisherigen Handeln und Sprechen. Die Refiguration Rothers als mosesgleichem Führer seines Volkes ist nicht kompatibel mit seinem bisherigen Listhandeln; sie hebt seine Herrscherrolle auf eine neue Ebene. Zugleich vertraut Berchter hier aber nicht lediglich auf Gottes Gnade, sondern mindestens ebenso sehr auf die “aldin zucht,” durch die sich Rother und die seinen auszeichnen, denn es ist ihr Verhalten “beide lutir unde licht” (“unbefleckt und in strahlender Reinheit,” KR 3950), welches Gott zu seiner Treue veranlasst. Richtiges Handeln und bedingungslose Loyalität im Diesseitigen sind die Basis für das hier artikulierte absolute Gottesvertrauen.

Dieses doppelte Vertrauen prägt auch das Verhalten von Rothers Heer und der ihm loyalen Truppen unter Graf Arnold in den folgenden Kämpfen gegen Ymelot und die “heiden.”¹¹ Die hier deutlich werdenden Bezüge zur Kreuzzugsideologie sind mehrfach angemerkt worden (vgl. Kiening 237–39; Fischer 202). Die Christen ziehen mit einer Reliquie an der Spitze in den Kampf; die “heidine”

11. Das mittelhochdeutsche Wort *heiden* wird hier mit kritischer Distanz als texteigene Bezeichnung für diese Gruppe verwendet. Für eine differenzierte Diskussion der Darstellung von Nichtchristen im Text vgl. Kohnen.

werden durch die von ihnen getragenen Hornpanzer deutlich geothered. Nach der bisher im Text herrschenden Gewaltvermeidung ist die entfesselte Gewalt umso frappierender. Präzisierend lässt sich feststellen, dass es insbesondere die mit dem Tod im Kampf gegen Nichtchristen verbundene Zukunfts- und Heilsgewissheit ist, die Arnold in seiner Rede an die Truppen aufgreift: “Swer hier hute wirt irschlagin, / des sele sal genade haben” (“Wer immer hier und heute im Kampfe fällt, dessen Seele wird Gnade zuteil werden,” KR 4073–74).

Dieser jenseitige Verdienst wird von Arnold in einem nächsten Schritt um einen diesseitigen erweitert, denn den Kämpfenden “sint gebotin zwei lon” (“Wir dürfen zweierlei Lohn erwarten,” KR 4127), zunächst “daz schone himelreiche” (“die Freuden des himmlischen Reiches,” KR 4130) im Falle des Todes. Gelänge es ihnen aber, Rother das Leben zu retten, “er vorit uch in sin lant / unde behalt unsich alle samt!” (“wird er euch in sein Reich mitnehmen und uns allen dort eine neue Heimat geben!,” KR 4137–38). Dieses zweifache Zukunftsversprechen erst entfacht “rechte gelouven” (“wahr[e] Glaubensgeist,” KR 4140) und gnadenlose Kampfeswut in den heimatlosen Kämpfern. Es führt im weiteren Verlauf zu einer Vernichtung der “heiden” einerseits, der Verschonung Konstantinopels unter Verweis auf die heilige Helena und die christlichen Wurzeln der Stadt andererseits.

Säkulare Herrschaft und göttliche Heilsverheißung werden hier verschränkt zu einem Modell, das Sarah Bowden mit dem *sacrum imperium*-Herrschaftsmodell Karls des Großen und der Staufer in Verbindung gebracht hat. Dass und wie der *König Rother* auch in anderer Hinsicht säkulare und religiöse Erzählinteressen hybridisiert, ist wiederholt gezeigt worden (vgl. Bowden; Müller; Biesterfeld). Für die hier untersuchte Frage der temporalen Modellierung des Textes kann festgehalten werden, dass sich die Art der Wahrnehmung von und des Sprechens über Zukunft des Rother-Personenverbandes grundlegend ändert. Der initialen Unsicherheit und den sie kompensierenden Antizipationsversuchen steht eine gedoppelte Zukunftssicherheit gegenüber, die Konzepte religiöser Providenz und säkularer Herrschaft rekursiv verknüpft. Diese Sicherheit ist generalisiert und basiert entsprechend nicht mehr auf der detaillierten Modellierung zukünftigen Handelns und Reagierens, sondern ist nur abhängig von einer tugendhaften Grundhaltung – wiederum gedoppelt rekursiv geschaltet als “aldin zuht” und christliche Lebensweise. Entsprechend verringert sich auch der Stellenwert von Wissen und Methoden des Wissenserwerbs im Text, und zwar auf allen narrativen Ebenen – weder erleben die intra-

diegetischen Figuren punktuelle Wissenlücken als bedrohlich, noch erfahren die extradiegetischen impliziten Rezipient*innen im zweiten Teil Details der Planung oder Emotionalität der Rotherfigur – die gesicherte Zukunft manifestiert sich in Gelassenheit im Umgang mit den Kontingenzen der Gegenwart.

VI. Fazit: Antizipation und Risiko

Das close reading der Zukunftsmodellierungen im *König Rother* hat erwiesen, dass der Text auf komplexe und vielfältige Weise von Zukunft erzählt. Neben den Erzählerprolepsen sind es vor allem intradiegetische Äußerungen der Figuren über ihre eigenen Zukunftsantizipationen und -pläne, die die sonst weitestgehend linear der *ordo naturalis* folgende Erzählung mit temporalen Sprüngen und Bezugsetzungen anreichern. Versuche der Zukunftsantizipation und -modellierung werden thematisch verknüpft mit dem Listhandeln Rother, mit Fragen von richtiger und falscher Herrschaft – insbesondere im Hinblick auf die Rolle von Beratung und konsensuellem Agieren im Personenverband – und sogar mit der Minnehandlung der Erzählung. Eine Sonderrolle nehmen hier die Riesen ein, deren Körperkraft und Gewaltbereitschaft nicht nur wie bisher beobachtet als eine Auslagerung des *violentia*-Anteils von Rother's *potestas* dient (vgl. Freienhofer, "Tabuisierung") und ihn dadurch von der Notwendigkeit zu Gewalthandeln befreit. Sie fungieren darüber hinaus als Garanten für die Umsetzbarkeit der Rother'schen Zukunftsmodellierungen. Ihr "introwen" und ihre Kampfkraft wandeln den antizipatorischen Konjunktiv seiner Pläne in den Indikativ einer sicher eintretenden Zukunft.

Die Herrscherfiguren Rother, Konstantin und im zweiten Teil des *König Rother* auch Ymelot werden u.a. durch ihre Fähigkeit, Kommen-des korrekt zu antizipieren und das eigene Handeln danach auszurichten, scharf kontrastiert. Auch die beiden prominenten Frauenfiguren des Textes, Konstantins Frau und Tochter, weisen sich durch besondere Formen der Zukunftsmodellierung aus – Konstantins Frau markiert durch die ins Präteritum verlagerten konjunktivischen wenn-dann-Relationen wiederholt Konstantins Defizite als Herrscher, während seine Tochter durch ihre Antizipations- und Planungsfähigkeiten als Rother ebenbürtige Partnerin charakterisiert wird. So erreicht Rother auch erst mit der Aufnahme der Prinzessin in sein Herrschafts- und Sozialgefüge die Gelegenheit zur Rettung der Boten.

Im Durchgang durch den Text lassen sich markante Veränderungen in der Darstellung der Zukunftsmodellierung der verschiedenen Figurengruppen feststellen. Ist die Zukunftswahrnehmung Rothers und seiner Männer anfangs durch erhebliche Zukunftsunsicherheit geprägt, die durch detailliert auserzählte Antizipations- und Modellierungsversuche kompensiert werden muss, verschiebt sich dieser Umgang mit der Zukunft nach dem Gewinn der Königstochter und der Rettung der Boten erheblich hin zu einer hohen Sicherheit, die von Vertrauen auf Gott und die eigene Wirkmächtigkeit geprägt ist. Mit der temporalen Stabilisierung von Rothers Herrschaft – rückgeschrieben in die Vergangenheit durch Anknüpfung an die Traditionen seines Vaters und projiziert in die Zukunft durch die Geschlechtsgründung – wird nicht nur seine Herrschaft als überzeitlich stabil entworfen, sondern die Handlung auch durch religiöse und providentielle Bezüge angereichert.

Konstantins antizipatorische Fähigkeiten bleiben dagegen durchgängig unzureichend; selbst als er zum Medium einer prophetischen Traumbotschaft wird, ist er unfähig, daraus adäquate Handlungsschlüsse für sich zu ziehen. Gelungene Zukunftsmodellierung wird dementsprechend im *König Rother* nicht lediglich als eine epistemologische, sondern auch als eine herrscherliche Herausforderung und Qualität dargestellt.

Mit den Ansätzen der Risikotheorie ließe sich der Beginn des *König Rother* als ein Fall von ausgeprägtem, wenn nicht übertrieben starkem Risikobewusstsein beschreiben (vgl. Heise); die Figuren fokussieren im ersten Teil vor allem das, was nicht wissbar und nicht kontrollierbar ist, antizipieren mögliche zukünftige Konsequenzen dieser Variablen und versuchen, diese wahrgenommene Kontingenz durch intensive Zukunftsmodellierung zu kompensieren. Aus dieser theoretischen Perspektive bearbeitet der *König Rother* zentrale Fragen, die Niklas Luhmann in seiner *Soziologie des Risikos* formuliert:

Wie kommt die Gesellschaft im Normalvollzug ihrer Operationen mit einer Zukunft zurecht, über die sich nichts Gewisses, sondern nur noch mehr oder weniger Wahrscheinliches bzw. Unwahrscheinliches ausmachen läßt? Und weiter: Wie läßt sich sozialer Konsens (oder auch nur vorläufige kommunikative Verständigung) erreichen, wenn dies im Horizont einer Zukunft zu geschehen hat, von der, wie jeder weiß, auch der andere nur in der Form des Wahrscheinlichen/Unwahrscheinlichen sprechen kann? (Luhmann 3)¹²

12. Vgl. für eine ausführliche Diskussion der Eignung von Luhmanns Risikoverständnis für die mittelalterliche Literatur Reichlin.

Die Antwort des *König Rother*s hätte Luhmann als sehr mittelalterlich eingeschätzt: Die im ersten Teil entworfene Ungewissheit ist ein vorübergehender Mangel, der durch die Stabilisierung von Herrschaft und der vertrauensvollen Hinwendung zur göttlichen Providenz beseitigt wird. Kompensatorische Bemühungen der Antizipation und Zukunftsmodellierung verlieren hierdurch ihre drängende Notwendigkeit. Dennoch bleibt die narrative Entfaltung von existentiellen Ungewissheiten und zukünftigen Bedrohungen ein erzählerisches Experiment, das komplexe Fragen nach dem Verhältnis des Einzelnen und der Gemeinschaft, nach den Möglichkeiten und Grenzen menschlicher *agency* und nach den Wechselwirkungen eigenen Handelns mit der umgebenden Welt stellt.

Scheller betont in seiner Einführung zum Sammelband „Kulturen des Risikos,” der Kern des im mittelalterlichen Seehandel entwickelten Risikospositivs sei “die Zurechnung kontingenter Schäden auf Entscheidungen. Sie drohen nicht einfach von außen, sondern können nur eintreten, weil sich Akteure durch Entscheidungen aktiv dieser Möglichkeit aussetzen” (Scheller 3). Die ab dem 12. Jahrhundert entwickelten Semantiken und Techniken der Risikoabschätzung zielten entsprechend darauf, “mögliche Schäden zurechenbar und berechenbar zu machen” (Scheller 5; vgl. auch Patzold). Diese Semantiken werden zu Beginn des *König Rother* als Herrschaftskompetenz vorgeführt, aber auch rückgebunden an Bewältigungsstrategien und –techniken, die als spezifische Kompetenzen des Erzählens dargestellt werden. Der narrative Modus des als-ob wird hier als Instrument präsentiert, mit dessen Hilfe Ungewissheiten und Bedrohungen konstruktiv bearbeitet und Zukunft, Gegenwart und Vergangenheit komplex ins Verhältnis miteinander gesetzt werden können. Zukunftsmodellierung wird sowohl als narrative Technik als auch Erzählinteresse im Text verankert. Erzählen in der Zeit, von Zeit, und Reflektion über Zeit sind untrennbar verknüpft.

Die auffällige Veränderung dieses Aspekts im Laufe der Erzählung wirft nicht nur ein Licht auf das vieldiskutierte Verhältnis von erstem und zweitem Teil und zeigt über das Brautwerbungsschema hinausgehende komplexe Kompositionsprinzipien des Werkes auf, sie verdeutlicht auch, wie die temporale Verfasstheit des Textes die Entfaltung spezifischer Themen (Herrschaft, Minne, Religion) modelliert. Die In-Verhältnissetzung der Figuren zu ihrer eigenen Vergangenheit und Zukunft, die gleichzeitig als eine historische Rückschreibung des Karolingergeschlechts fungiert und an die heilsgeschichtliche Verheißung einer sicheren Zukunft erinnert, erzeugt

eine komplexe temporale Struktur, die den Text unabhängig von seiner literaturhistorischen Position auszeichnet.

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Sequence and Simultaneity in Wace and Chrétien de Troyes

Abstract

This essay considers the forms and temporal structures of twelfth-century romance and historiography, focusing on Wace's *Roman de Brut* and Chrétien de Troyes' *Yvain* and *Lancelot*. It argues, drawing upon theoretical perspectives from Reinhart Koselleck and François Hartog, that Wace's poem can be understood in terms of a twelfth-century "regime of historicity" (Hartog) that seeks to produce an ordered, "synchronous" (Koselleck) historical time. Chrétien, taken here as writing against Wace in a close, dialectical repudiation of his predecessor's narrative forms, adopts a temporal structure that is incommensurable with Wace's, and in doing so expands the space of possibility for the narrative representation of the past.¹

1. I am deeply grateful to all of the organizers and participants in the working group which generated this special issue, and also to Laura Ashe and Heather Blurton, who read earlier drafts and offered useful suggestions.

2. See also Kelly, *Art of Romance* 144–45, Uitti; "*Le Chevalier au Lion*" 230; Frappier 185–86; examples could be multiplied. Peter Haidu warns, in a useful review of some early positions, that readings of this kind tend to understate the "central fact of disjunctiveness" (656) in episodic form.

In the course of his foundational reading of Chrétien de Troyes' *Yvain*, Erich Auerbach describes the narrative structure of chivalric romance as one "in which fantastic encounters and perils present themselves to the knight as if from the end of an assembly-line" (135). These events (*aventures*) "crop up without any rational connection, one after another, in a long series," and are united, Auerbach claims, not in content but in purpose: to test and demonstrate "the very essence of the knight's ideal of manhood" (135). Auerbach is not alone in suggesting that romance is marked by an apparently contingent seriality. A similar idea is legible in Mikhail Bakhtin's chronotope of "unexpectedness," for him the distinctive spatio-temporal feature of chivalric romance: in such texts, narrative time is fragmentary, "organized abstractly and technically" (151), its elements connected only through the "category of miraculous and unexpected chance" (152). And a common extension of this perspective, as given for example by Norris J. Lacy, would argue that romance narrates an apparently contingent, fragmentary series of events which take on a meaningful unity only retrospectively, through the clerical poet's conjunctive art (115).² These accounts of romance's narrative structure remain persuasive and valuable. But in this essay I will make something like the oppo-

3. Uitti's word (*Chrétien de Troyes Revisited* 59–66); see also Uitti, "Le Chevalier au Lion" 186–87.

4. For some of the extensive work on the relationships between these two categories (defined in various ways), see for instance Ashe, *Fiction and History*; Field; Fleischman; Green; Stein; and Whitman.

5. Orlemanski (148–52) distinguishes two major approaches to theorizing fiction: the 'universalist,' which treats fiction non-historically as (for example) a philosophical concept or a property of language; and the 'modernist,' which understands fiction as emerging at a specific point in historical time.

6. The question of political affiliation is debated, especially in the case of Geoffrey of Monmouth. I follow Ingledew in considering Geoffrey's text as part of a "Norman and Anglo-Norman territorial and genealogical enterprise" (669), "deeply embedded in the long-term Norman project" (688). For a summary of the basic positions, see Gillingham.

site claim: that the distinctive formal quality of romance lies not in its contingent seriality, but rather in its latent potential for simultaneity; a potential which, in the case of Chrétien's *Yvain*, becomes actual through this poem's intertextual connection with its chronologically-interlaced "twin" narrative, *Lancelot*.³ Further, and more polemically, I argue that this potential for simultaneity is precisely what distinguishes twelfth-century romance on a formal level from the kinds of medieval writing – closely and intricately related to it – that we recognize as history.⁴ My framing is prompted here by Julie Orlemanski's recent and persuasive theorization of fictionality as a "demarcational phenomenon" (147), generated from the dynamic, historically situated interactions of referential convention, rather than as a transhistorical category, or a phenomenon that emerges at some historically situated point of origin.⁵ Romance's capacity for simultaneity, in contrast with the linear forms of twelfth-century dynastic historiography, is an important part of what prompts us to describe it as fiction. And so I will suggest below that in these mutually constitutive acts of demarcation, twelfth-century fiction emerges conceptually as something quite unexpected: not a relation to truth, but a relation to time.

These claims depend in turn upon a particular account of the formal characteristics of twelfth-century insular historiography. Accordingly, in the first part of this essay I describe the forms and mimetic protocols of several related works of history-writing, focusing in particular on Wace's *Roman de Brut* (c. 1155), which inhabits and develops the historiographical forms of its Latin predecessors, William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum Anglorum* (c. 1125) and Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae* (mid-1130s). I argue that the form of Wace's poem is marked above all by an insistent, singular linearity, one distinct from that described by Auerbach and Bakhtin as operating in romance.

In examining these widely-circulated texts, which were produced close to and in some degree of complicity with the centers of twelfth-century insular political power,⁶ I attempt to mark out what François Hartog would describe as a "regime of historicity:" an established cultural order that shapes the experience of time in a particular historical moment (15–17). A related set of theoretical tools, just as important to the work of this essay, are provided by Reinhart Koselleck, and most of all his concept of *Gleichzeitigkeit* (synchronicity). Koselleck's theory of the "synchronicity of the non-synchronous" (*die Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen*) describes a process by which a set of multi-layered, heterogeneous temporalities – always present at

7. See Koselleck 93–104, esp. 95 and 103–04. In this essay I translate *Gleichzeitigkeit* as “synchronicity” rather than “simultaneity” in order to preserve a distinction between the simultaneity of romance (which, I will argue, is something much closer to *Ungleichzeitigkeit*) and the synchronicity (*Gleichzeitigkeit*) of linear-dynastic historiography.

8. The term *die Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen* has a long history in German cultural studies, most importantly in the work of Ernst Bloch, who understands capitalism as a synchronizing force which produces contradictions and tensions in its continual attempts to sublimate incompatible, resistant temporal modes. Bloch’s thought, in turn, emerges from a Marxist tradition of thought regarding time and capitalism (see Tomba). Koselleck does not acknowledge this tradition directly, but his use of the term is nevertheless marked by it (Olsen 152).

9. There is a long tradition of thinking of romance, especially on the continent, as a form of writing more or less disengaged from history and politics (one of its roots is in Auerbach’s famous reading of *Yvain*). See Whitman 3–7 for discussion and bibliography.

any given moment – are brought into synchronicity by and in historical discourse.⁷ In Helge Jordheim’s generative reading of Koselleck, this synchronicity is “never a given, but always a product of [...] a complex set of linguistic, conceptual and technological practices of synchronization” (505), key dynamics in the operation of cultural power in any given historical period.⁸

So, I understand the linear time-regime of the twelfth-century historiographical texts discussed here as part of this work of synchronization: an ideologically charged ordering of time which attempts to delimit temporal experience, naturalizing linearity and along with it those political structures – namely, agnatic descent and royal-imperial governance – which are most legible within it. I describe this temporal order below as a kind of historical infrastructure: a set of mostly-invisible edifices that shape an experience of the historically represented world, simplifying certain kinds of movement and perception while constraining others.

If the historiographical texts considered here are understood as part of a linear time-regime, then the ‘twin’ romances of Chrétien de Troyes (both *ante* 1181), discussed in the second part of this essay, can be thought of as inhabiting a set of temporalities incompatible with this historical linearity, and as such marking what Hartog would describe as a “crisis of time,” in which an established articulation of temporal categories “no longer seems self-evident” (16). Read in this way, *Lancelot* and *Yvain* participate actively in the discourse of history; they are texts deeply engaged with questions of historical representation, rather than disinterested narrative experiments.⁹ The historiographical interests of *Yvain* in particular have been noted before (Stein 125–50, Patterson 207–09), but previous discussions have not considered the role of form. By contrast, I claim that Chrétien’s formal choices mark his poems as something distinct from, and incommensurable with, the linear structures of twelfth-century Arthurian historiography. In this argument, romance’s act of formal demarcation works not only to produce a fictive temporal space, isolated from historical time, but also to complicate and destabilize a set of naturalized associations between historiographical narrative forms and the past as such.

I. Synchronicity

Twelfth-century England was a time and place of resurgent, ambitious historiographical activity (Southern 246–56; Otter 22–23; Pat-

10. See *Gesta* v. 445. 5 (l: 797), where William describes himself as the first person since Bede to have “set in order the unbroken course of English history” (“continuum Anglorum historiam ordinauerim”), and Otter 108 for discussion.

11. On the *series* (or *cursus*) *temporum*, a common term of art in medieval historiography, see Otter 80–110; Kempshall 113–14; Spiegel, “Structures of Time” 25–26; Chenu 167–71; and Auerbach 75.

12. Stein suggests (161) that Geoffrey’s prologue is a deliberate echo of William’s; in Patterson’s view, Geoffrey’s adoption of the linear forms found in William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon constitutes a “mockingly brilliant response” which places these forms “in the service of an elaborate and excessive counterfeit” (206).

13. On the circulation and influence of the histories of William and Geoffrey (as well as Henry of Huntingdon), see Tahkokallio. On the popularity and authority of Geoffrey’s *Historia*, especially as a source for vernacular writing, see Ingledew 700–03.

14. This does not exclude the possibility of digression: see Otter 103 for the point that William’s departures from the *series temporum* are explicitly marked, with the effect of preserving the structural importance of the regnal sequence.

15. Turner gives a useful summary: “secular and vernacular historiography emerges in Western Europe at the same time as the social system of genealogy” (85), and “genealogy has a profound impact on the developing historiographical tradition” (86).

16. See also, conversely, Henry of Huntingdon’s praise for Geoffrey’s *Historia* on the grounds that it fills a gap which Henry was unable to find narrated elsewhere. See *Historia Anglorum* VIII. 3. 1 (558), and Dalton 706 for discussion.

erson 157–58; Chenu 162–201). An early key text is William of Malmesbury’s *Gesta regum Anglorum*, a continuous narrative of English royal history up to William’s own time. William presents his text as having an authority and weight comparable to Bede’s foundational *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*.¹⁰ His prologue laments the incompleteness of insular historiography in the centuries after Bede, and so proposes to “repair the series of time” (“temporum seriem sarcire,” i. Prolog. 2 [1:2]).¹¹ Although Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia regum Britanniae / De gestis Britonum*, written in the decade after William’s *Gesta*, is usually described as pseudo-historical on account of its apparently invented source, his prologue nevertheless offers a justification identical to that found in William’s text: there is a gap in the historical record, located in this case before the period treated by Bede, which Geoffrey proposes to repair with his continuous (“continue”), chronologically ordered (“ex ordine”) narrative of the deeds of the kings of Britain (i. Prolog. 2 [5]).¹²

The forms adopted by these twelfth-century insular historiographers are then, in some important respects, distinctive and consistent.¹³ William of Malmesbury and Geoffrey of Monmouth both fashion their histories in accordance with the same formal principle: that events must be arranged in a single unbroken chronological series, in order that no gaps remain and all time is covered.¹⁴ These linear forms, plausibly connected by Gabrielle Spiegel, R. Howard Bloch and others to ongoing shifts in aristocratic family structure, emphasize ideas of genealogy, descent, inheritance, and dynastic continuity in service of a set of related ideological purposes: “to exalt a line and legitimize its power” (Spiegel, “Genealogy” 47), to assert “ownership of time” (Ingledew 669), and to effect a secular-typological transfer of prestige from past to present (Patterson 160).¹⁵ Later in the century, the historiographer William of Newburgh bases his scathing critique of Geoffrey’s *Historia* on an accusation of “overstuffing the gap” (Otter 97), suggesting that he too understood the historian’s task along similar formal lines (*Historia rerum Anglicarum* i. Prolog. 3–6 [28–31]). This critique of Geoffrey is not primarily addressed to the truth-value of his text, but rather to its spatiotemporal placement, which intrudes upon established chronology. The mere existence of false narrative truth-claims is not as troubling as the placement of such truth-claims in historical sequence.¹⁶ The *series temporum* is thus necessarily singular: “only one body can occupy any given space at any given time” (Otter 97).

Another type of related singularity is at work in these texts: the

unity of the realm. William of Malmesbury's work, as Rees Davies has argued, turns on a process of unification, with England developing into a territory inhabited by a single people, who then come to be ruled by a single monarch (14–15). Likewise, Geoffrey's *Historia* begins by narrating a territory in constant danger of fragmentation which is gradually stabilized through the successive efforts of its rulers, culminating, as Robert Stein shows, in a celebration of Arthur's power that closely engages the concept of unitary imperial sovereignty (108–09). Relatedly, it has been argued many times that the *Historia* was written "to promote unity and peace during a time of civil war," as Paul Dalton notes in a useful review of previous work (690).

These texts, for their wide circulation, authoritative status, and formal consistency, are well described using François Hartog's terminology as part of a twelfth-century regime of historicity. In representing the insular past by means of textual forms structured on the regnal sequence, these works encourage and condition a particular way of seeing the past (along with their twelfth-century present, the notional result of this past). By adopting what Spiegel describes as the "perceptual grid" of genealogical sequence ("Genealogy" 47), they make certain aspects of the past more legible than others, naturalizing a particular, ideologically charged mode of representation. In the regime of historicity within which these texts operate, "certain types of history are possible and others are not" (Hartog 17).

Similar claims can be made for Wace's *Roman de Brut*, the first vernacular translation of Geoffrey's *Historia*, and an important text in the history of twelfth-century history writing, as well as for the much-discussed transition from Arthurian historiography to Arthurian romance (Sargent-Baur; Green 168–87; Burrichter 147). Wace inherits both structure and content from his principal source: both texts make use of the British regnal *series temporum* as a basic formal principle. But there are significant differences, as previous work has shown.¹⁷ In some cases at least, then, Wace's departures can be taken as evidence of his interests and compositional priorities. Geoffrey of Monmouth is generally recognized today as a pseudo-historical writer; in other words, as a writer who presses historical form into the service of fabrication (Green 169; Rollo 38–40). But as Jean Blacker and R. William Leckie have shown, Wace takes Geoffrey's pseudo-historical chronology as material worthy of serious treatment, even attempting to reconcile the competing chronologies he finds in the Vulgate and First Variant versions of the *Historia* (Blacker, "Arthur and Gormund" 261–62; Leckie 102–19). On the other

17. See Le Saux 89–94 for discussion of the poem's sources. A comprehensive recent study of Wace's work of adaptation is given in Paradisi 93–285. The important early work of Houck and Pelan has been rendered partly obsolete, since neither was aware of Wace's use of the First Variant Version of the *Historia* alongside, and often in preference to, the Vulgate (Le Saux 90).

hand, Wace approaches other kinds of narrative material, such as descriptions of battles and speeches, with a much greater willingness to add and adapt (Le Saux 95), suggesting that he observes a strong distinction between the events of the regnal *series temporum*, which must be taken seriously, and the intervening narrative material, which is not historically consequential and can therefore be subject to poetic license, but which nevertheless serves the important function of connecting key events with plausibility and elegance.

This distinction – between the rhetorical categories of *historia* and *argumentum* – is one that most, if not all, historiographers from this period would have recognized and adhered to.¹⁸ More unusual is the degree to which Wace thematizes his poem’s ordered structural principle, significantly intensifying his text’s reliance on the linearity that he finds in Geoffrey and may also know from other widely-circulated works of twelfth-century Latin historiography. Linear sequence becomes more than a framework here (see Zara): as I argue below, it exerts a strong determinative force on what can be included in Wace’s text, and what must be left aside. Wace establishes a homology between textual and political form in his poem, with significant consequences for its horizons of mimetic possibility. In some respects, as Jean Blacker has argued, Wace depoliticizes his text, avoiding the strong assertions of historical exemplarity found in Geoffrey’s *Historia* (“Transformations of a Theme” 59–60).¹⁹ But on the other hand, the poem’s form instigates a more pervasive ideological work. In what follows, I explore the consequences of Wace’s formal choices, both in their successes and at their self-identified limits.

Wace lays out his approach in the poem’s opening lines, which perform important aesthetic and form-establishing functions.

Ki vult oir e vult saveir
 De rei en rei e d’eir en eir
 Ki cil furent e dunt il vindrent
 Ki Engleterre primes tindrent
 Quels reis i ad en ordre eü,
 E qui anceis e ki puis fu,
 Maistre Wace l’ad translaté
 Ki en conte la verité. (*Roman de Brut* lines 1–8)

(Whoever wishes to hear and know, from king to king and from heir to heir, who they were and where they came from, those who first held England – which kings there were, in

18. For the common rhetorical division of narrated events into *historia* (things which happened), *argumentum* (things which could plausibly have happened), and *fabula* (things which did not and could not have happened), see Kempshall 315–16, and for the historian’s use of invention, Green 150–51.

19. See also Urbanski 35–36 for discussion and additional bibliography.

20. All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated. I have benefited a great deal from Weiss's translation of the *Roman de Brut*, and Kibler's translation of *Yvain*.

21. See also Damian-Grint 193 ("history is organized according to the framework of succession"); Turner 88 ("these lines expose both the matter and the structure of Wace's undertaking"); and Stein 122 for similar points.

22. On Wace's "fondness for wordplay," see Weiss xxiv, and for discussion of a homophonic pun, see Orr 277–78.

23. Le Saux (101–02) notes that Wace maintains a more or less strict division between these units at the level of the couplet; unlike Geoffrey, whose individual reign-narratives occasionally blur into one another, Wace invariably ends each structural unit with a concluding formula, and begins the new one with a fresh couplet and a phrase that gestures at the succession. See also James-Raoul 3 on the substantially lower incidence of *couplets brisés* (couplets which go across syntactic breaks) in Wace's *Brut* in comparison to Chrétien. Le Saux also notes (102) that Wace is stricter than Geoffrey in preserving a chronological order of events. Green's discussion of medieval classifications of narrative order (*ordo naturalis* and *ordo artificialis*) in the context of fiction is relevant here (96–102).

24. On narrative order (*ordo narrationis*), see Green 96–97 and Kempshall 299–302. Note also the use of a lexicon of order in the prologues of William of Malmesbury, *Gesta* I. Prol. 4 [1:14], "ut res ordinatius procedat" ("so that events might proceed in a more orderly way"); and Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Historia* I. Prol. 11 [5], "continue et ex ordine" ("a continuous and well-ordered [narrative]").

order, both who came earlier and who came after – master Wace, who tells the truth about it, has translated it.)²⁰

Previous readers of this passage have noted its intense qualities of lexical repetition, a typical feature of Wace's style (Di Lella 123, Le Saux 104–05). For Nancy Vine Durling, the "hypotaxis of these lines [...] suggests the genealogical format of the subsequent narrative; a conflation of form and content is indicated" (19).²¹ In line 2, a stylized procession of monosyllabic words constructed from a very limited palette of vowel-sounds (and in fact only the five letters *d-e-i-n-r*) evokes and presents Wace's chosen form: repetitive, successive, and formally constrained. It would not have escaped Wace, a poet attentive to the sounds and shapes of words, that *rei* and *eir* are anagrams, a relationship that suggests a distanced, synthetic perspective: as one king takes another's place ("rei en rei"), the next heir comes into view ("eir en eir"), already recognizable as the successor, and awaiting only the operation of narrative time to be transformed, through positional rearrangement, not alteration of substance, from *eir* into *rei*.²²

Wace here gestures at the historian's privileged position outside the chronology he describes: all of the kings and heirs are visible from his vantage point. In other words, the poem depicts an order which is not only a matter of sequence (the relationship between elements, who comes first and who comes after), but also of structure (the overall division of time into regnal units, and the structure of uninterrupted succession).²³ All of this works to suggest an aesthetics of sameness, regularity, and predictability: what Jean Blacker describes as a "vast, comprehensive network of 'facts'" ("Transformations of a Theme" 65), and what Wace might in his own words name as *ordre*. The word *ordre* in line 5 retains much of the conceptual richness that its cognate word *order* has in present-day English. And although line 6 makes it clear that the primary meaning of *ordre* here is "sequential arrangement" (who came earlier, and who after), part of the broader work of Wace's introduction is to emphasize not only the individual relationships of succession, but also a wider logic of arrangement, selection and structure.²⁴

The poem stands, I suggest, as a monument to order in several senses: a celebration of the newly invigorated culture of twelfth-century history writing that Wace finds himself able to draw upon, in which a continuous history of Britain without any gaps appears possible; relatedly, an assertion of the cultural authority that allows for a convincing act of *translatio imperii* from the Trojan diaspora to the Saxons (and from there, by implication, to the Normans); and an ide-

25. See *Historia* IV. 60. 124–28 (74–75, translation Wright’s): “Caesar igitur, cum sese deuictum inspexisset, cum paucis ad naues diffugit et tutamen maris ex uoto nactus est. Tempestiuus etiam uentis instantibus, erexit uela sua et Morianorum litus petiuit. Ingressus est deinde quandam turrim quam in loco qui Odnea uocatur construxerat antequam Britanniam hac uice aduisset” (“Caesar saw that he was beaten, fled with a few companions to his ships and reached the safety of open water as he had hoped. The winds were favourable, so he set sail for the coast of Flanders. He landed at a tower which he had built in a place called Odnea, before embarking on his present invasion”). The First Variant Version gives a similar level of detail (*First Variant Version* §61 [53]): “Ibi prope litus turrim ingressus, quam antea sibi preparauerat propter dubios belli eventus, tuto se collocavit loco. Turri illi Odnea nomen erat, ubi exercitum misere dilaceratum longa admodum quiete refecit et proceres terre ad se collocutum venire fecit” (“There, near the shore, he [Caesar] entered a tower, which he had previously prepared for himself on account of the uncertainties of war. The tower was called Odnea, where he reinforced his much-depleted army very quietly and gradually, and caused the lords of that land to come and confer with him”).

alization of governance forms that the Angevin court may have seen themselves reflected in. A little-discussed episode from the first third of the poem helps make some of these connections clearer. During the poem’s narrative of Cassibellan’s reign and the British conflict with Caesar, Wace substantially expands upon a detail mentioned only in passing in the *Historia*.²⁵ The Romans have been temporarily repelled from Britain, and Caesar retreats to France where he has a tower built:

Quant Cesar les out apaiez,
 Et tuz les out asuagiez,
 A un mult bon enginneür
 Fist sur la mer faire une tur,
 En Beluine siet, Odre ad nun,
 Ne sai nule de tel façun,
 Faite fu d’estrance compas
 Lee fu desuz el plus bas
 Puis alad tut tens estreinnant
 Si cume l’en l’ala halçant;
 Une pierre tant sulement
 Covri le plus halt mandement
 Maint estage i out e maint estre
 E en chescun mainte fenestre
 Illuec fist ses tresors garder
 E ses chiers aveirs aüner;
 Il meïsmes dedenz giseit
 Quant de traïsun se cremeit.
 Douz ans en France demura,
 Odre sa tur apareilla,
 Si ad par les citez assist
 E par les terres ses baillis
 Ki as treüz receivre seient
 E ki en Odre les enveient. (*Roman de Brut* lines 4201–24)

(When Caesar had appeased them and fully placated them [*i.e.* the French], he had a tower built beside the sea by a very skilled engineer. It is in Boulogne, it has the name Odre; I do not know another one like it. It was made in an unusual shape: broad below, in the lower part, and then it became continually narrower as it went up. A single stone covered the uppermost room. It had many storeys and many halls, and in

26. This detail is not included in most of the surviving manuscripts: see *Roman de Brut* 106n5.

27. For discussion of the historical Tour d'Ordre (now destroyed), see Houck 215–17. Egger combines earlier descriptions of the tower to suggest that its form was “une sorte de pyramide octogone à douze étages, dont chacun était en retrait d'un pied et demi sur l'étage inférieur” (417, “a kind of octagonal pyramid with twelve storeys, each of which was set back by one and a half feet from the lower one”). Wace's account is recognizable as an exaggeration of this description of the historical tower's narrowing form.

28. We might note the ways in which this scene reflects twelfth-century developments in English bureaucratic governance: see Clanchy 64–70; and Hollister and Baldwin.

29. Although not a variant of it, at least according to the *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* and Godefroy's *Dictionnaire*, neither of which record *odre* as an attested spelling of *ordre*.

30. On Arnold's editorial practice, see Weiss xxv–xxvii. I have not consulted all surviving manuscripts of this poem, but I know of at least two in which the spelling *ordre* is used (see lines 4205, 4220, 4224, 4305 and 4550): Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (BNF), fr. 1450, f. 124r, 124v, 125r; and Paris, BNF, fr. 794, f. 302r, 303r.

31. See also Le Saux 114: “Wace subtly promotes Caesar as a civilizational figure.” On Geoffrey's “astonishing” attribution of a “persistently imperial history” to Britain see Ingledeu 677; Wace can be plausibly read as reproducing this aspect of his source.

32. This passage also offers a useful example of Wace's interest in maintaining a chronological *ordo naturalis* in his narrative, noted for example by Le Saux 101 and Green 176. As Houck notes, Geoffrey's brief mention of the tower is retrospective, but in a “characteristic anticipation of a later event,” Wace “tells of the construction of this tower at the time in the story when Geoffrey says it occurred” (216).

each one there were many windows. There Caesar had his treasure guarded and his valuables gathered. He himself stayed inside when he feared treason. He stayed two years in France, equipped his tower Odre, and also installed his officials in the towns and throughout the countryside, who would receive payments of tribute and send them to Odre.)

This tower is a symbol of Caesar's effective imperial authority, as well as the center of a vast bureaucratic and infrastructural network that allows for the extraction of tributary wealth from the towns and countryside, and for the transportation of this wealth to what I will for the moment continue to describe as “Odre,” the temporary center of Caesar's imperial power. The narrowing form of the tower suggests a crude visualization of hierarchical order, with the single stone standing atop all the rest.²⁶ Although Wace has not invented this tower (either in its name or its shape),²⁷ the scene of bureaucratic wealth extraction he narrates appears to be original to him, and ties the tower's various features together into a scene which quite neatly represents and idealizes a particular order of governance.²⁸ The scene suggests structure, organization, and dominion: in other words, order. And its name is, of course, very close to the actual word *ordre*.²⁹ In fact, at least some manuscripts of Wace's poem use the spelling *ordre* (a fact obscured in Arnold's edition, which silently regularizes large numbers of variant spellings).³⁰ Readers of at least some of the surviving manuscripts would, then, have understood this tower as being literally named “the Tower of Order.” The tower's image of imperial governance – a singular emanation of power that produces spatial homogeneity, regularity, and predictability – marks, I suggest, the apex of Wace's ordered historical vision, in which charismatic lordship and bureaucratic structure are united into a single system as Caesar's personal commands (*fist faire, fist garder, fist aüner, assist*) produce a wide-ranging administrative governance.³¹ The spatial *ordre* produced by Caesar, and encapsulated in the tower at O(r)dre, is another dimension of Wace's formal principle, closely related to the temporal *ordre* of structure and sequence.³²

The tower at O(r)dre suggests Wace's vision of well-ordered space, and elsewhere in the poem we find regular indications of Wace's interest in the connection between effective royal governance and infrastructural or bureaucratic networks. Earlier in the text, Belin's accession to unchallenged rule over Britain coincides with a concentrated project of infrastructural development, linked in turn to the establishment of a lawful peace. Belin surveys his land, and no-

33. The *First Variant Version* (§44 [39]) does not describe Belin as a builder of roads, and does not connect his other building projects (including the city of Kaerusch and London's Billingsgate, both also mentioned by Wace) to his restoration of British law: "Leges quoque paternas in regno renouavit et firmas teneri precepit constanti iusticie indulgens" ("He also renewed the old laws in the kingdom and ordered them to be kept firmly, inclining firmly towards justice"). The *Historia's* more detailed account describes the building of roads including the Fosse Way, but unlike in Wace, the roads are built to resolve disputes concerning the extent of the king's law (*Historia* III. 39 [51–52], translation Wright's): "Maxime autem indixit ut ciuitates et uiae quae ad ciuitates ducebant eandem pacem quam Dunuallo statuerat haberent; sed de uisio orta fuerat discordia, quia nesciebatur quibus terminis definitae essent. [...] Deinde sanciuuit eas omni honore omnique dignitate iurisque sui esse praecepit quod de illata super eas uiolentia uindicta sumeretur" ("Above all, he [Belin] proclaimed that the cities and the roads leading to them should continue to enjoy the peace established by Dunuallo; but disputes had arisen about the roads because nobody knew their prescribed boundaries. [...] Having thus built roads,] he inaugurated them with all honor and dignity, proclaiming that it would be his own responsibility to take retribution for any act of violence committed upon them").

34. See *Roman de Brut* lines 84–88: "Creüsa out esté sa mere / Ki fille fu Priant le rei, / Mais al tomulte e al desrei / Kant Eneas de Troie eissi, / En la grant presse la perdi" ("Creusa, who was the daughter of King Priam, had been his [Ascanius's] mother, but during the tumult and disorder in which Aeneas escaped, he lost her in the huge crowd"). By my count, there are thirty-three examples of *rei* or *reis* being used as rhyme-words in Wace's poem; the two sole instances of the *rei* / *desrei* rhyme (lines 85–86, 289–90) are also the first two examples of *rei* being used as a rhyme-word. On Wace's interest in "anarchy versus social order" see Sturm-Maddox 41.

35. For example, *Roman de Brut* lines 2305–06: "Cist mist les lagues e les leis / Que encor tienent li Engleis." ("He [Dumwallo] set down the laws and customs which the English still keep").

tices that "l'on ne poeit prod passer / Ne de cited a l'altre aler" (lines 2607–08, "one could not in any way travel or go from one city to another"). He therefore has roads and bridges built, most notably the Fosse Way, which is described as running from Totnes in Cornwall to Caithness in Scotland (lines 2617–20). Belin then commands that peace should be kept on these roads, which now traverse the entire realm (lines 2629–34).³³ This motif of the peace of the roads is common in medieval romance and historiography, and functions, as Robert Rouse has shown, as an assertion of strong and effective kingship (126). We might consider here what the establishment of an infrastructural network of roads and laws suggests about ruled space. The physical infrastructure of roads, constructed as part of Belin's effort to establish peace, has the effect of producing consistent, homogeneous conditions across the realm. These conditions produce, in turn, something like the baseline possibility of national law, and indeed something like (proto-)national identity, with the same laws and customs prevailing everywhere. Further, Wace shows these structures as emerging directly from strong royal governance. To put it in terms of an ironic rhyme used twice in the early parts of Wace's poem in its narration of the chaos of the Trojan diaspora, the king, *rei*, stands against *desrei*, disorder; disorder, in turn, is understood as the state of *des-rei* – punningly, the absence of a king.³⁴

It is important that what I am describing as Wace's 'historical infrastructure' produces homogeneity across not only space, but also time. He emphasizes at various points the present endurance of laws established in the distant past, connecting the British past to his English/Angevin present.³⁵ This refusal of historical distance can also be observed in Wace's regular practice of naming Britain proleptically as England (Leckie 110), and his much-noted interest in the etymologies and origins of place-names (Warren 153–58). All of these choices work to produce a synchronized (*gleichzeitige*) historical temporality, reducing the long span of the insular past to a flat space of self-similarity. I use the word "infrastructure" deliberately here, in the sense developed by Paul N. Edwards: an "artificial environment" which nonetheless "simultaneously constitute[s] our experience of the natural environment" (189). Wace's historical infrastructure becomes a kind of "naturalized background" (Edwards 185), receding into near-invisibility. But the effect of these choices is considerable: the spatial unity and historical continuity of the British islands becomes an unquestioned background to the specific narratives of rise and fall which shape the poem's temporal motion. Wace naturalizes

unitary kingship and British/English regnal space through his poem's consistently ordered form.

I describe all this, reversing Mikhail Bakhtin's description of romance (151–52), as a narrative chronotope of expectedness. Wace's historical infrastructure, extending across space and time as well as through the poetic fabric of his work, guarantees the predictable endurance of the conditions and parameters described above. We might consider the specific ideological and political resonances of Wace's work, as others have before (Schmolke-Hasselmann; Zatta; Urbanski; Blacker, "Transformations of a Theme"), but what interests me more here is Wace's intense formalism, which in many ways overshadows the poem's imputed political affiliations.³⁶ Whatever Wace's reasons for writing this poem in this particular way, his ordered historical infrastructure, with its insistent focus on the singular chronology of regnal sequence, suggests that Wace prioritizes form over content, and indeed that he may think of historical truth as being something like a formal property, with his ordered work revealing the hidden structures of the chaotic past.

Such a procedure necessarily relies on the capacity of the raw narrative material to be satisfactorily ordered. Accordingly, at this point, I turn to a section of the *Roman de Brut* which poses a considerable challenge to Wace's chosen form: the famous twelve years of peace that follow Arthur's decisive conquest of all Britain, and precede his final campaign of hubristic imperial conquest, his betrayal, and uncertain death. I will argue that Wace's much-discussed refusal to narrate the fabulous events of the twelve-year *pax Arthuriana* proceeds from an anxiety that is precisely formal.³⁷ Wace recognizes that his chosen form is incommensurable with the narrative material that he encounters here, and so avoids recounting them in detail, despite their notable content that would make them potentially worthy of inclusion in historical narrative:

Que pur amur de sa largesce,
 Que pur poür de sa prüesce,
 En cele grant pais ke jo di,
 Ne sai si vus l'avez oï,
 Furent les merveilles pruvees
 E les aventures truvees
 Ki d'Artur sunt tant recuntees
 Ke a fable sunt aturnees:
 Ne tut mençunge, ne tut veir,

36. The poem's lack of specificity (in, for instance, describing its purpose or giving a dedication) could very well have been part of Wace's patronage strategy, since he may have written the poem in the hope of securing some future benefit (Le Saux 7–9; Damian-Grint 54–55, 132–33).

37. This passage appears to be original to Wace: compare *Historia* IX. 153 (204–05) and *First Variant Version* §153 (145).

Ne tut folie ne tut saveir.
 Tant unt li cunteür cunté
 E li fableur tant flablé
 Pur lur cuntés enbeleter,
 Que tut unt fait fable sembler. (*Roman de Brut* lines 9785–98)

(Whether from love of his generosity, or from fear of his prowess, in this great peace which I speak of – I don't know if you've heard of it – marvels were revealed and adventures discovered, those which are so often recounted about Arthur that they have turned into fables: not entirely lies, not entirely true, neither total folly nor total wisdom. The tellers have told so many tales, and the fabulators so many fables, in order to embellish their tales, that they have made it all seem like a fable.)

The proliferation of multiple accounts of Arthur's exploits during this period of peace, emblemized by the passage's insistent repetition of *tant* to emphasize ideas of extent, variation and totality (“so often,” “not entirely,” “so many,” “it all”), poses a challenge to Wace's historiographical procedure. Although the phenomena of narrative embellishment and creative retelling suggest potential difficulties of selecting an authoritative version of events, it is equally significant that these are narratives which formally resist the ordered, sequential arrangement which has been Wace's consistent practice elsewhere in the poem. In a sense, the events of the twelve-year peace all take place at the same time, since they cannot be arranged sequentially. They are not concerned with marking the movements of historical time, taking place as they do in a period of extended peace, during which the conflicts and genealogical motion of regnal history temporarily ebb away. They cannot be meaningfully placed in ordered sequence; in this important sense, they are simultaneous, and so cannot be, at least for Wace, synchronous (*gleichzeitig*). Wace has promised to narrate a linear historical *ordre*, but the situation that he encounters in the *pax Arthuriana* is order's opposite, characterized not by a traceable linearity, with one sequence of events privileged above all others, but by a tangled simultaneity from which no single narrative series can be unpicked. And as Ad Putter and Rosemary Morris have shown, this period of peace is precisely the period in which early Arthurian romance places itself. One well-explored approach, then, would be to say that romance inaugurates a space of fiction which operates differently from history because it is located out-

side history, or within it (Auerbach 133; Putter 4). The following section will make a different claim: that the knotted textuality of the *pax Arthuriana* offers romance – here understood as part of historical time, not as a retreat from it – the opportunity to reconsider what history itself can be.

II. Simultaneity

If twelfth-century romance can be described as a part of twelfth-century history, then space is opened up to think of it as a transformative intervention in that history's governing forms and logics: the following section will make this argument with reference to *Yvain* and *Lancelot*, the 'twin' romances of Chrétien de Troyes, arguing for their engagement not only with the language of historiography, but also with the forms and topoi of the historiographical works with which Chrétien was likely familiar. In claiming that the forms of these texts position them as repudiations of twelfth-century dynastic historiography, I depend upon an admittedly speculative claim regarding Chrétien's familiarity with the texts considered above. Several factors work to buttress this speculation: first, that my argument relies in its minimal form only upon Chrétien's general acquaintance with twelfth-century linear dynastic historiography, which seems plausible given Chrétien's acknowledged Latin literacy and the wide circulation of some of the key works (Duggan 27; Tahkokallio, Crick); second, that Chrétien's demonstrable close knowledge of Wace's *Roman de Rou* (Wolf; Green 180; Pickens 220) makes it at least somewhat more likely that he would also have known the earlier and much more widely-circulated *Roman de Brut* (Dean 2–4; Le Saux 85–88), especially given its Arthurian content; and third, the proliferation of arguments for Chrétien's knowledge and use of Wace's *Brut* across his surviving works.³⁸

38. Pelan 62; Pickens 220–21; Sturm-Maddox 32; Köhler 11; Putter; Morris; but for disagreement see Duggan 31–32 and 201.

One of Chrétien's most brilliant rejoinders to the historiographical method of his near-contemporaries lies, I suggest below, in the intertextual relationship of *Yvain* and *Lancelot*, two sequences of memorable deeds which are carefully described as taking place simultaneously. But despite their apparent congruency, *Yvain* and *Lancelot* also "stand in utter – in systematic – contrast to one another," as Karl Uitti has shown ("*Le Chevalier au Lion*" 186). So, I will argue that Chrétien's poems expand historical temporality through the structural conceit of chronological simultaneity alongside a set of funda-

39. On the regulative force of a singular ‘now,’ see Bloch (who also uses the term *die Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen*) on the synchronizing work of capitalist temporality.

40. For *Lancelot’s* use of chronology (at various points both vague and precise) see Bruckner, *Shaping Romance* 151.

41. See for instance Kempshall 187, on William’s weighing of eyewitness testimony using the tools of judicial rhetoric; and *Gesta* II. 204. 1 (1: 377).

mental divergences that show – in what we might read as a strong implicit rejection of history at the regnal scale – that even an apparently peaceful realm, brought into the same ‘now’ by Arthur’s royal-imperial governance, nevertheless contains a vast diversity of experience, custom, and situation.³⁹ In other words, these poems put the lie to any history which would attempt to present the realm, or the reign, as the only possible historically meaningful frameworks. In these poems, Chrétien emerges as a strongly ‘anti-infrastructure’ poet, concerned with narrating at scales and in simultaneous relations that are more or less illegible within Wace’s understanding of the past, and which, in their tangled, disordered simultaneity, refuse the synchronicity of *Gleichzeitigkeit*. Chrétien’s refusal of the temporal infrastructure available to him in existing Arthurian historiography has the effect of denaturalizing the regnal scale: Wace’s “chronotope of expectedness” is replaced in Chrétien by a “chronotope of unexpectedness” (Bakhtin 151), creating new possibilities for the narrative representation of the past. In what follows, I develop this claim with reference first to time, and then to space.

The importance of time to Chrétien’s *Yvain*, in particular, has been widely acknowledged (Uitti, “*Le Chevalier au Lion*” 185–86; Rikhardsdottir 145).⁴⁰ The poem begins with a gesture of temporal suspension, with the knight Calogrenant recounting an adventure which Yvain then repeats, step for step: “In the seven years between Calogrenant’s adventure at the spring and the time of his narration, nothing seems to have happened [...] the seven years have passed without leaving a trace, just as time usually does in a fairy tale” (Auerbach 130). This suspension, understood by Auerbach as a signal of romance’s broader retreat from a directly politicized depiction of social reality (133), can also be described as a repudiation of historical time. After all, history narrates change, and nothing has changed in the seven years that pass between Calogrenant’s journey and Yvain’s repetition of it. And yet, as Dennis Green has noted, Calogrenant’s promise to speak “ne [...] de songe / Ne de fable, ne de menchange” (lines 171–72, “neither of a dream, fable or lie”) when telling his story marks a specific appropriation of the “terms with which historians conventionally established their reliability” (180; also Patterson 208). Calogrenant is speaking, we might say, as a historian here; specifically, as the kind of reliable eyewitness whose testimony is privileged in the writings of twelfth-century historiographers such as William of Malmesbury.⁴¹ But there is a strong irony in this performance of historiographical precision: Calogrenant’s honest and accurate

testimony, confirmed in all its details by Yvain's subsequent journey, is essentially irrelevant to history (lines 768–801). History narrates past events which would otherwise be lost, but the events recounted by Calogrenant remain continually available to *Yvain's* present: Calogrenant tells his audience nothing that would otherwise be unknowable. History should also narrate events that are “worthy of memory” (Kempshall 123, 137, quoting Isidore and Cicero respectively), a standard which Calogrenant's journey, recounted “non de s'annor, mes de sa honte” (line 60, “not to his glory, but to his shame”), surely fails to meet. The passage thus exhibits a thoroughly misdirected precision, one which is further indicated by Calogrenant's self-pitying conclusion to his story, a close verbal echo of the *Roman de Rou's* account of Wace's journey to the forest of Brocéliande in fruitless search of the magic spring described in Arthurian fables.⁴² Wace's failure to act as eyewitness to the legendary marvels of Brocéliande, his failure to make fable into history, is juxtaposed with Calogrenant's failure to create his own knightly history.

Calogrenant's story, which provides the first major section of the poem with its narrative impetus, can thus be read as a close engagement with the language and expectations of historiography, presenting a sequence of events which pointedly fail to become historically pertinent.⁴³ Yvain's repetition of Calogrenant's journey, on the other hand, at least opens the possibility of being constituted historically: Yvain kills the knight who defends the spring, proceeds to marry his widow Laudine, and becomes the new lord of Landuc, thus producing a dynastic change with potentially historical force, especially given Yvain's identity in Arthurian tradition as the son of Urien, king of Moray (*Roman de Brut* lines 10251–52; *Yvain* line 1822).⁴⁴ But Yvain's marriage proves unstable: his failure to return as promised to Laudine after a year of tourneying causes her to reject him, an act which in turn propels the poem's story onward towards a resolution which, when it finally arrives, makes no gesture towards generational change, describing instead the “pez sanz fin” (line 6817, “endless peace”) that prevailed between Yvain and Laudine from that point onwards. *Yvain* thus resists the pull of a linear form “in which the most significant structural divisions of history are supplied by generational change” (Spiegel, “Genealogy” 50); instead, it structures itself according to the particular set of problems developed by and in the text. Chrétien is surely aware of the strong conclusive force of aristocratic marriage in narrative, but uses it here instead to inaugurate a beginning: as Robert Stein has argued, the first third of *Yvain*

42. *Yvain*, lines 575–76: “Ainsi alai, ainsi reving, / Au revenir pour fol me ting” (“Thus I went there, thus I came back; On the way back I took myself for a fool”); and Wace, *Roman de Rou*, lines 6394, 6397–98: “La alai jo merveilles querre / [...] fol i alai, fol m'en revinc, / folie quis, por fol me tinc” (“I went there in search of marvels [...] I went there as a fool, I came back as a fool; I searched for folly, I took myself for a fool”). For discussion, see Wolf.

43. Patterson suggests that, by “calling into question the historiographical mode of verification per se,” Chrétien shows it to be “irrelevant to the deeper meanings at which his romance is aiming” (208); it will be apparent that I disagree that Chrétien's rejection of a specific kind of historicity suggests that he regards history *tout court* as irrelevant to these texts.

44. The events of this section of the poem take place between lines 692 and 2165. See also lines 2474–76, where Yvain's marriage is linked directly to the acquisition of land.

functions effectively as an extended prologue, with the poem's core preoccupations emerging from what has been set up in the section that culminates in Yvain's marriage (132–33).

Yvain refuses dynastic temporality in a further centrally important sense, pertinent also to *Lancelot*. If, as Ad Putter and Rosemary Morris have argued, Chrétien understands his romances as being placed within the specific twelve-year peace mentioned by Geoffrey and Wace, then we might notice the presence of a distinct irony. At this point in established Arthurian chronology, Arthur is at the height of his power, having united all of Britain under his rule, and will soon begin a larger process of imperial expansion as he attempts to subjugate all of Europe, to be defeated only by internal treachery. And yet, the romances depict him not as a reigning conqueror, but as a weak *roi fainéant*, outstripped by the vigor of his knights, and even unable to prevent Guenevere's abduction towards the beginning of *Lancelot* (Peters 170–209; Sargent-Baur; Maddox 2–3).⁴⁵ The related shift of focus in romance from king to knights has often been read in political terms; for instance, by Robert Hanning as a signal of the new genre's interest in exploring political realities and tensions related to the relationship between established lords and ambitious, itinerant *juvenes*, "armed young men on the make" (54, see also Duby 112–22), or by Donald Maddox as an expression of a tension between royal "anterior order" and a new chivalric elite (14–34). We might equally consider this shift in terms of literary form and temporality. In Chrétien's romances, Arthur is not shown as being in a process of temporal motion or development: he is more or less static, existing outside the ennobling structure of historical time. Dynastic historiography produces, on a basic formal level, an impression of royal power from the simple act of asserting the king's centrality; Arthur's weakness in these poems might suggest, then, the falsity or incompleteness of such accounts – that his reign is not a simple narrative of rise and fall, and the twelve years of peace are not a simple period of unchallenged dominion.

In these respects, Chrétien's romances can be described as retreating not from historical time in general, but from the specific form of linearity in which a privileged sequence of events are selected for inclusion in order to construct a single biographical series. Still, *Yvain* and *Lancelot* are very clearly episodic, and are thus in that specific sense linear. I suggest, then, that Chrétien's structural conceit of chronological simultaneity, described in detail below, substantially qualifies the sequential forms of these romances, prompting a

45. Note in particular Arthur's weary resignation when he is informed that a number of his subjects have been abducted: "Li rois respont qu'il li estuet / sofrir s'amander ne le puet, mes molt l'an poise durement" (*Lancelot*, lines 61–63: "The king replied that he must endure this if he could not resolve it, but that it pained him greatly").

reconsideration of the force of their episodic structure. Three references in *Yvain* to the events of *Lancelot* form the basis of Chrétien's intertext: in lines 3700–17, where Lunete says that she is unable to seek help from Gauvain because he is rescuing Queen Guenevere; in lines 3914–41, where Yvain encounters a lord tormented by the giant Harpin, who is unable to seek help from Gauvain (his brother-in-law), still engaged in rescuing the queen; and in lines 4742–47, where the younger daughter of the lord of Noire Espine arrives at court three days after the queen's return from captivity, with Lancelot still locked in Meleagant's tower. This last reference also connects itself chronologically to Yvain's adventures by noting that the daughter of Noire Espine arrives on the same day that the court receives news of Harpin's defeat by the Knight with the Lion (lines 4748–53). Other, less specific points of contact have been noted in the *Lancelot* (Fourrier 69–88; Frappier, *Etude* 15; Uitti, "Le Chevalier au Lion" 183; Bruckner, *Shaping Romance* 91), but the basic structure of the intertext is unidirectional and turns notably on the presence or absence of Gauvain (Frappier, *Chrétien* 148; Brandsma 134–35).

Douglas Kelly has suggested that *Yvain*'s cross-references are "a device borrowed from the historians" (*Art of Romance* 137), and while this is a likely point of origin, Chrétien uses them in a quite different way. In historiography, cross-references are provided in order to more precisely locate the core narrative series in relation to other timelines, providing it with additional substance and authority, as, for instance, when Wace describes the reign of Guendolien as contemporary with the careers of Homer and Samuel: "Dunc esteit Samuel prophetes / E Homer ert preizez poëtes" (*Roman de Brut*, lines 1451–52, "at this time Samuel was a prophet and Homer a famous poet"). External references of this kind, which appeal to established, authoritative, and often geographically distant historical sequences, are distinct from *Yvain*'s references to the events of *Lancelot*, a poem whose setting fades into that of *Yvain*, and which was in all likelihood Chrétien's own invention, composed alongside its twin (*Shirt*). Moreover, as Roberta Krueger has shown, the relative chronology of these two texts is far from clear: readers must perform their own "interpretative ordering" through a process of comparison (175).

In fact, the presence of an intertextual connection between these two romances, not to mention their many indirect points of similarity and contrast (Uitti, "Le Chevalier au Lion" 185–90), works to invite a broader procedure of comparison, well beyond the establishment of a comparative chronology. *Yvain* and *Lancelot* are, in many

respects, positioned as companion pieces; this implicit comparative positioning functions, in part, literally to decenter the romance hero, showing that his story is only one part of a much larger world, and that the priority he enjoys within his own text is merely temporary, or local to the specific work. Further, if *Yvain* and *Lancelot* are understood not as individual texts, but as a connected, composite romance (see Uitti, “*Le Chevalier au Lion*” 189; and Kelly, “Narrative Poetics” 61–62), then we can no longer even firmly identify a singular protagonist or sequence of events. The presence of Gauvain as an important secondary character in both texts, whose activities are not fully recounted in either (Bruckner, *Shaping Romance* 92), further suggests the presence of a set of narrative possibilities beyond what is actually written in the two romances. And at times, as Jill Mann has noted, a character enters a scene to find only the “residue of narrative;” the real action “all seems to be happening somewhere else” (297). Time expands horizontally here, producing something close to the narrative multiplicity gestured at by Wace’s emphatic repeated use of the word *tant* in his description of the *pax Arthuriana*: these texts embody a temporality that cannot be expressed in linear historiographical form.

The temporal expansion observed here in the *Yvain-Lancelot* intertext also encourages a corresponding account of Arthurian space. The example of roads, discussed above, provides a useful point of comparison. For Wace, the establishment of an infrastructural network is an important precondition for a unitary space, uniformly subject to the same laws, whose establishment he describes approvingly. In Chrétien’s romances, by contrast, roads are a space of unexpectedness: they form a connective network which does not produce homogeneity within the space thus connected, but which rather provides access to *aventure*. I am suggesting, then, that there is a sharp implicit point in Chrétien’s choice to imagine roads as producing not predictable, homogeneous peace across the realm, but an effectively infinite variety of strange and violent incident.

As Robert Rouse has shown in his useful study, the ‘peace of the roads’ motif, found in Wace and discussed above, is part of a broader complex of motifs found in historiography and insular romance which work to assert the strength of a peacemaking king’s authority. Closely related is the “hanging royal gold” motif, in which a king displays gold rings at crossroads, or equips remote springs with valuable metal drinking cups, in order to show the reach of his legal authority when they invariably remain in place, undisturbed by thieves. These motifs, involving as they do the “exposure of precious goods”

whose disturbance would break the peace (Rouse 119), have intriguing similarities to *Yvain's* much-discussed magic spring, which acts as a site of insistent return throughout the poem (Grimbert 69–70). The spring first appears in Calogrenant's story: he recounts meeting a strange and ugly herdsman, who directs him to a spring which will provide the adventure that he seeks:

d'aventure ne sai je rien,
 n'onques mes n'en oï parler.
 Mes se tu voloies aler
 ci pres jusqu'a une fontaine,
 n'en revandroies sanz painne,
 se tu li randoies son droit. (*Yvain* lines 368–73)

(I don't know anything about adventure, nor have I ever heard anything said about it. But if you want to go to a spring near here, you will not return from it without a challenge, if you do it justice.)

As Donald Maddox has noted (56), the phrase “randre son droit” is at this stage opaque: we do not yet know what it means to do a spring justice. The herdsman elaborates, describing the path that Calogrenant must follow (line 376) in order to reach the spring, which he describes as being equipped with a hanging “bacins de fer / a une si longue chaainne / qui dure jusq'an la fontaine” (“an iron basin, on a chain long enough to reach the spring”). Using this basin to douse a nearby stone with water gathered from the spring will produce a ferocious storm, which the herdsman says Calogrenant will be lucky to escape (lines 404–07). Calogrenant arrives at the spring, finds what turns out to be a basin of purest gold (lines 419–20), and douses the stone as instructed. The storm happens just as the herdsman described, but an unexpected further consequence ensues, with the arrival of a knight who rebukes Calogrenant for having caused him “honte et let” (line 492, “shame and injury”). The spring-knight's complaint takes on a distinctly legal register, adopting the language of tort, complaint and evidence, as Maddox and Stein have both shown (Maddox 56; Stein 127–28). Calogrenant's interference with the hanging basin has broken the knight's peace and caused damage for which he is now responsible: as the knight says, “desormés / n'avrois de moi trives ne pes” (lines 515–16, “henceforth you will have no truce or peace from me”). But this transgression is also, paradoxically, the true custom of the spring: the space appears to have been designed precisely to produce

a break in the peace, and “doing it justice,” following its custom, necessitates breaking the spring-knight’s law.

Both objects – *Yvain*’s golden basin and the rings, or cups, of the ‘hanging royal gold’ motif – are thus closely connected to notions of law, peace, and custom. In both cases, the presence of a valuable object, displayed unguarded in a remote location, challenges those who pass to interfere with it and face the consequences of a broken peace. But the situations differ significantly on the question of what constitutes interference. For hanging royal gold, the prohibition is clear: rings must not be disturbed, and cups may not be removed but can be used in the intended way as amenities; however, it is much less obvious what constitutes misuse of *Yvain*’s golden basin. The basin seems to be provided in order to facilitate the transfer of water from spring to rock – in other words, as an amenity. But using it for its designed purpose produces at least two simultaneous results, both related to the violent storm: *aventure* and legal transgression. Conversely, to misuse the basin according to the terms of the ‘hanging gold’ prohibition – to remove it from its chain and take it away – could potentially bring a lasting peace to Landuc, a place deeply vulnerable to attack on account of its proximity to the storm-producing magic spring (see lines 6555–61), but would from another perspective constitute theft. What, then, could it mean to ‘do the spring justice’? I suggest that the contradictions of this question gesture towards the paradoxes of romance knighthood, indicating that good chivalric *aventure* unavoidably necessitates a breaking of the peace, and further implying, as Stein argues from a different perspective, the scandalous nature of *Yvain*’s killing of the spring’s defender (132). I have argued above that Wace places law, spatial connectedness and physical infrastructure in the service of a historiographical method which works hard to produce a synchronized (*gleichzeitig*) chronotope; by contrast, then, the magic spring’s complex amenities signal the *ungleichzeitige* nature of Arthurian time and space, since they cannot be ordered or comprehended with reference to a single law.⁴⁶

This conceptual expansion of Arthurian space in *Yvain* is matched by a physically expanded space of possibility. In the encounter discussed above, the herdsman warns Calogrenant to take only the path straight ahead (line 376, “Tote la droite voie va”), for there are many other paths (line 379, “il i a d’autres voies mout”). Calogrenant had begun his journey by taking a road described, strangely, as leading off to the right (line 180, “un chemin a destre”); his path to the magic spring results, then, literally from a detour. Auerbach suggested an

46. Scholarship on Chrétien has thoroughly explored his treatment of the contradictions of vassalage and love-service, an analogous space of incommensurability; see Ashe, *Conquest and Transformation* 260–63; Morgan; and relatedly Bruckner, “Interpreter’s Dilemma.”

ethical interpretation of this line (128–29), but we might equally point out that Calogrenant’s refusal of the straight path resonates with Chrétien’s broader exploration of a space of unexpectedness and variability. Roads in *Yvain* lead in all directions, and to unexpected places and situations. Unlike in *Lancelot*, where the distinction between the poem’s two settings (Logres and Gorre, ruled by Arthur and Bademagu respectively) is more or less clear, *Yvain*’s locations are much less clearly demarcated. As Auerbach has noted (129), *Yvain*’s journey to the spring begins at court in Carduel (Carlisle, described here as in Wales), and ends three days later near the forest of Brocéliande, notionally located across the sea in Brittany. Auerbach and Knapp both suggest that this geographical inexactitude creates the impression of a fairy-tale setting (Knapp 3–4, 9), but it will be instructive to tease out the paradoxes a little further. The text deliberately furnishes us, via an initial toponym (“Carduel en Gales,” line 7) and its description of *Yvain*’s journey as taking place “over mountains and through valleys, through large, deep forests, through strange and savage places [...], many treacherous passes, and many perils and tight spots” (lines 763–67, “par montaignes et par valees / et par forez longues et lees, / par leus estranges et salvages, / [...] mainz felons passages / et maint peril et maint destroit”), with a strong impression that we have not passed beyond the geographical borders of the British Isles.⁴⁷ And yet, the recollection of a further toponym (“Brocéliande,” lines 189, 697) produces an equally strong sense of ambiguity. At this point in Wace’s chronology, Arthur is the unchallenged ruler of all Britain; evoking this role, he takes an interest in the marvellous spring and decides to visit it, in the manner of a peacetime king surveying his realm: “[Arthur swore] that he would go to see the spring [...] and take lodging there for the night, and said that all those who wished to go there should come with him” (lines 665, 670–72, “qu’il iroit veoir la fontaine [...] et s’i panra la nuit son giste, / et dit que avoec lui iroient / tuit cil qui aler i voldroient”). And yet the seneschal of Landuc, anticipating Arthur’s arrival, imagines that he comes like a conqueror to “lay waste to [their] lands” (line 2088, “noz terres gaster”). Further, when seeking permission from his wife to go off tourneying, *Yvain* specifically asks to be allowed to “return to Britain” (line 2550, “retorner an la Bretagne”), implying that Landuc lies outside of its borders. But Britain is, quite unavoidably, an archipelago, and so the text’s omission of any description of sea travel continues to trouble any final determination.

Landuc might be understood, then, as occupying an indetermi-

47. The word “destit” in line 767 should be taken as a lexical amplification of earlier lines – in other words, as meaning “tight spots” – rather than as referring to aquatic straits (see Godefroy s. v. *destit* n.).

nate position with respect to Arthurian Britain – either within it, beyond its borders, or even both simultaneously. This self-contradictory quality can be taken as having a certain political force. The word ‘Britain’ is itself ambiguous: it can be used in purely geographical terms to describe a landmass, as in Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *descriptio insulae* (*Historia Desc.* 5 [6–7]), or in reference to a space of political dominion – Arthur is still the king of Britain even before he has conquered the entire geographical space describable as Britain. Landuc, then, could be within Britain in a strict geographical sense, but beyond the immediate reach of Arthur’s authority, and hence outside Britain in another sense. In this context, we might notice that Yvain’s episodic adventures in the poem’s second phase nearly all relate in some respect to failures of royal governance: in Stein’s words, “the landscape through which [Yvain] travels is riddled with the violence of continual private war” (139). Recovering from his madness, Yvain defends the town of Noroison from the marauding count Alhier (lines 3147–317), in a situation reminiscent of the kind of baronial infighting that never troubles Wace’s narrative of Arthur’s reign – indeed, Wace’s famous description of the Round Table may imply the political docility of the British barons under Arthur (*Roman de Brut* lines 9747–54; Schmolke-Hasselmann). Later in *Yvain*, the town assailed by the giant Harpin cannot depend upon the Arthurian court for assistance against aggressors. Yvain, who is at this point travelling incognito as the Knight of the Lion, and is therefore not identifiable as a knight of Arthur’s court, comes across the town only by chance while seeking lodging (lines 3772–77). And when he later encounters the town of Pesme Aventure, he finds that it is subject to a completely different authority from Arthur’s: the town’s two half-demonic lords extract their demanded human tax through an assertion of customary privilege (lines 5260–97). Arthur may ostensibly be the ruler of this space, but there is no evidence that his royal authority has any weight in the places that Yvain encounters on his journeys.

All of this works to suggest an Arthurian space which is not in fact effectively subject to an overarching set of laws or cultural conditions. The chaotic variety of incident – emerging from a situation of apparently widespread political instability – that Yvain encounters on his travels marks a distinct contrast to Wace’s narrative in terms of both form and content. But importantly, Chrétien does not even allow this endless variability to attain the force of poetic law. Where in *Yvain* motion through Arthurian space is often characterized by its purposeless divagation – Calogrenant’s aforementioned

sharp rightwards turn, Yvain's eventless year of tourneying, glossed over in just ten lines (2674–84), and his descent into madness after Laudine's rejection (lines 2808–32) – in *Lancelot*, emphasis is placed instead on its protagonist's literal single-mindedness and the commensurately singular path that he takes on his initial journey towards Gorre to rescue the imprisoned queen, his love. The poem describes Lancelot's extreme focus on his absent beloved at several points (lines 720–22, 1225–33, 1332–43), and the space through which he moves resonates with this psychological state; for instance, when he comes face-to-face with another knight on a track which is too tight for them to pass or turn their horses (lines 1500–09), or when he must cross the sharp edge of the Sword Bridge, a concrete manifestation of his painful and single-minded journey (lines 3005–117). Even the text's key moment of choice – between entering Gorre via the Underwater Bridge or the Sword Bridge – is made by Gauvain rather than Lancelot (lines 683–88); this decision itself, made between two near-identically “perilous and difficult” crossings, is barely meaningful (“perilleus et grevains,” line 691). On a metanarrative level, it is significant that the poem notes in its opening lines that the way forward has been decided in advance by its patron, Marie (lines 1–28). Chrétien, just like Lancelot, has no choice but to move forward with “pain and diligence” in the service of a noble lady (line 28, “sa painne et s'antacion”). This sense of obligation is later significantly qualified by Chrétien's abandonment of his compositional task, echoed as before in the protagonist's situation: the continuator Godefroi de Leigni informs us that Chrétien stopped working on the poem at the moment when Lancelot is imprisoned, helpless, in Meleageant's tower (lines 7102–10, referring to lines 6132–46). *Lancelot* adopts a linear form, but under duress.

This sense of poetic resistance to the demands of singularity can be seen too in the relationship between the three principal strands of the *Yvain-Lancelot* intertext. *Lancelot*'s externally determined linear structure pulls, despite itself, in the direction of parallel simultaneity when Gauvain departs on his own largely unwritten adventures. Chrétien keeps to his predetermined subject but leaves open the possibility of simultaneous narrative proliferation. *Lancelot*, appropriate to its more constrained form, makes no direct intertextual reference to the events of *Yvain*, but knowledgeable readers might notice veiled references such as those pointed out by Fourrier and Frappier. In a further complication, the unidirectional structure of the *Yvain-Lancelot* intertext is thoroughly ironized by a key metapo-

etic statement in the closing lines of *Yvain*, in which Chrétien describes the poem as a complete work to which only “lies” can be added (“mançonge,” line 6824), a statement which rings hollow given the poem’s multiple gestures towards the connected stories of Lancelot and Gauvain. The temporal simultaneity and spatial expansiveness of Chrétien’s twin romances produce a tangled web in which no single principle of organization – perhaps most of all linearity – can attain precedence. As such, they decisively reject the possibility of a synchronous Arthurian past.

III. Conclusion

Recent extensions of Reinhart Koselleck’s theory of historical times have focused on the conflicts and crises implicit in his influential – but elliptical – concept of the synchronicity of the non-synchronous (*die Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen*). Helge Jordheim has called for further investigation to be undertaken “in terms of a dialectics between non-synchronicities [...] and the work to adjust, adapt, and control, in other words, to synchronize them” (506); Dan Edelstein, Stefanos Geroulanos, and Natasha Wheatley propose, in a development of Koselleck’s thought, a new concept of “chronocenosis,” which “offers a sense that multiple temporal regimes are not merely concurrent but at once competitive, conflictual, cooperative, unstable, and sometimes even anarchic [...] inhabit[ing] a complex temporal ecosystem with intricate patterns of reliance, adaptation, and violence.” (27). And the recent work of François Hartog, also indebted to Koselleck, emphasizes the instability of regimes of historicity, whose characteristics are both “revealed and disturbed” through the interruptive force of temporal crisis (40).

I suggest that this structure of dialectical motion between established regimes of historicity – with their synchronizing, regulative force – and other modes of historical representation is present in the relationship between Wace’s *Roman de Brut* and Chrétien’s twin romances. I have argued that Wace’s anxious description of the *pax Arthuriana* emerges from his sense that his chosen form is, in its rigid linearity, thoroughly incompatible with the tangled simultaneity of Arthurian peace: he perceives, in other words, a crisis of time in the making, in which an ordered linear-dynastic mode of historical representation is no longer comprehensively possible. Chrétien, in turn, embraces the crisis, developing a structure of complex temporal sim-

ultaneity which firmly resists the synchronizing force of linearity. The simultaneous structures of Chrétien's twin romances assert that Wace's attempt to make a well-ordered total account of British regional history is based on an impossible premise: the chaotic structures of the deep past cannot be resolved into an overarching meaning; there are always more stories worth telling.

It will be apparent by this point that I am thinking of Chrétien here not primarily as a maker of fictions – although this perspective, of course, remains continually available for the study of his poetic art – but as something closer to a historical writer. Three considerations enable this perspective; first, the recurrent medieval description of historical writing as simply *res gestae*, or “things done” (Kempshall 145), suggesting the deeds of romance heroes as being potentially available for inclusion under this capacious heading; and second, the reception of Arthurian narrative matter after the end of the twelfth century. As Christopher Dean has noted (11), the broad outlines of Arthurian history – including the presence of a vigorous knightly retinue at his court – become firmly established in historical writing after 1200; detailed stories of the deeds of these knights could then plausibly have been understood as part of this history. Third and most importantly, the survival of later material contexts which suggest that the narrative poems of Wace and Chrétien were not necessarily regarded by their thirteenth-century transmitters as fundamentally incompatible kinds of writing, despite the stark formal differences argued for above, and despite a widespread critical tendency to think of the former as historiography and the latter as fiction. It has been regularly noted that at least one thirteenth-century manuscript interpolates Chrétien's five surviving romances into Wace's *Roman de Brut* at the precise point when Wace finds himself defeated by the chaotic narrative space of the *pax Arthuriana* (BNF fr. 1450, f. 139v; Putter, Walter, Weaver). In doing this, the compiler of this manuscript has incorporated Chrétien's poems into a long, compendious narrative structure that is best described as cycle rather than sequence — formally heterogeneous, and decidedly non-synchronous. The later tendency in Arthurian literature towards the baggy, compendious forms of the French prose cycles and, later still, Malory's *Morte Darthur* suggests that the compilatory strategy seen in this manuscript is part of a broader development. Time is no longer in crisis in these texts; the emergence of cyclicity implies an understanding of the narrative space of the Arthurian past as something fundamentally non-synchronous, as incorporating a wide variety of

different narratives that operate at different scales and with different objectives. As these compendious forms accumulate, the narrative space of Arthurian literature comes to resemble more and more the tangled, contradictory space gestured at with such anxiety by Wace. We might think of Chrétien's narrative forms, opening up as they do a wider space of simultaneity for the narrative representation of the Arthurian past, as prefiguring this wider shift. Chrétien's romances have been described many times as a birth of fiction; they might, from another perspective, be described as a rebirth of history.

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Columns of Time: Imagined *Spolia* and Historical Meaning in the *Kaiserchronik*

Abstract

The Middle High German *Kaiserchronik*, written by an anonymous author in the middle of the twelfth century, focuses at strategic moments of its historiographical narrative on columns in the city of Rome. Drawing on critical literature relating to columns and *spolia*, this article presents a reading of the columns in the *Kaiserchronik* as markers of continuity, connected to what Mikhail Bakhtin called chronotopes: mutually semanticising combinations of space and time. In the case of the *Kaiserchronik*, these chronotopes are the pagan Roman past on the one hand – as a sphere of reference valued for its *auctoritas*, and as a source of political prestige and legitimacy – and on the other hand the Christian medieval present of the twelfth century: a sphere of reception, interested in benefitting from this prestige and legitimacy, and retrospectively confirming and constructing it in turn. The article uses the concept of *allelopoiesis* to describe this process as one of reciprocal transformation, and uses Bakhtin's concepts of the chronotope to illustrate the complex relationship between the shifting semantic charges of the Roman Empire. As a result, it becomes apparent how – connected through time by columns as meaningful *spolia* – antiquity and the Middle Ages emerge as two chronotopes: intertwined as mutually semanticising spheres that, for all their differences (above all in religion), can infuse each other with new meaning.

1. Originally published as “Eternidad de la columna” in *La Prensa* on 26 July 1970. Translated by Eco, who called the poem “a collection of exceedingly obvious reflections upon the rhetorical theme of the column, an inventory of banalities with pseudo-poetical intentions” but also “an inventory of the current tradition of thought about the column” and an “astonishing record of an imaginary survey that collects from a sample of everyday users of architecture all the meanings that they associate with the unit ‘column.’”

Around it blow the winds of time. The winds embrace the uplifted, time-defying shaft. Centuries have passed without touching its slim body, and towering among the ruins, the column affirms its timeless destiny. [...] For time is a sharp-keeled ship that leaves in its wake all that is transient. And the column that spans the centuries appears as the mast of this mighty vessel.

Dora Isella Russell, *The Eternity of the Column*¹

This article is concerned with the relationship between time and columns in the twelfth-century Middle High German *Kaiserchronik*. Of particular interest is a set of three atectonic columns (meaning that

they support no other architectonic element). The only thing they carry is meaning: the first column serves as an epitaph of Caesar and a tomb for his mortal remains, the second column is a testament to the justice of Emperor Titus, and the third column (which features in the story of Astrolabe) is connected to a pagan idol of the goddess Venus. The latter's reintegration into a Christian church serves to mark the conclusion of the transition from pagan to Christian Rome under the auspices of Emperor Theodosius.

The columns of the *Kaiserchronik* are of special interest as they relate to time for several reasons. First, two of these columns – the ones associated with Titus and Astrolabe – are fictitious: they neither correspond to any existing monuments, nor are they rooted in the various sources of the *Kaiserchronik*. Not only did the author of the *Kaiserchronik* invent them, then, but he must also have found something in the semantic potential of the columns that prompted him to use them – and not any other urban feature of Rome familiar to the *Kaiserchronik* (for instance the Coliseum). Second, the columns are presented as *spolia*: deliberately transplanted artefacts from the past that, embedded into a new context, help to create new meanings for the present.

In the case of the *Kaiserchronik*, the process of spoliation – *i.e.* of removing an artefact from its (defunct) original context, and inserting it into a new context in order to create new meaning – is temporal and not spatial. This form of spoliation can be observed when, in the context of twelfth-century reception, it is emphasised that the columns are still present, visible, and accessible – despite the times having shifted from one chronotope (that of pagan ancient Rome) into another (that of the Christian medieval present). While the columns remain *in situ*, anchored in the city of Rome, their meaning changes because the time around them changes. In the process, the space is re-semanticised.

As such, the *Kaiserchronik's* columns straddle a temporal gulf, connecting the ancient pagan past with the medieval Christian present. This temporal movement, made visible by the columns' position between two epochs, produces new meaning. To describe this process, in what follows, I shall use the language associated with the concept of *allelpoiesis* (Böhme 8–10; Helmuth 141–51). At the core of this framework, setting it apart from considerations of mere reception, is the analysis of a reciprocal process of transformation, entailing on the one hand the modification of the reception sphere (here the twelfth-century context) and on the other hand the construction of the reference sphere (ancient Rome):

This close connection between modification and construction is an essential characteristic of transformation processes, which can occur both diachronically and synchronically. Such processes therefore lead to something “new” in two senses, namely to mutually dependent, novel configurations in both the reference culture and the reception culture. (Helmrath 141)

Examining these three columns, within their context, through this lens as *spolia*, I will ask how they work as signifiers of time: what do they signify, and how does their function as signifier relate to the chronicle’s conception of history and time in the twelfth century? By following these questions, this article aims to shed light on one of the various narrative strategies the *Kaiserchronik* utilises to negotiate time, one which forms a small but intriguing thread of its greater historiographical tapestry: the insertion of columns as imagined and temporal *spolia*, all situated in the city of Rome, and usually referred to in relation to the unfolding of historical time.

1.1 Time as chronotopos in the *Kaiserchronik*

The Middle High German *Kaiserchronik* is the first German vernacular chronicle, written by an anonymous, well-connected and well-read ecclesiastical author, perhaps in Regensburg but certainly in the southeastern reaches of the Empire, in the middle decades of the twelfth century (Chinca and Young 1). The chronicle’s content is mainly informed by legendary, apocryphal, hagiographical, and mythological sources.²

Starting with the foundation of the Roman Empire, the *Kaiserchronik* quickly establishes an episodic structure, with each episode dedicated to the name and rule of an emperor. Beginning with Caesar, the text traces the history of the Roman Empire from its beginnings all the way through Constantine and Charlemagne, down to Conrad III and the events of the year 1147 (where it stops). The episodes are consistently demarcated by introductory and concluding phrases. This establishes a formal linear axis in which a narration of continuous imperial rule can unfold, in turn maintaining a qualitative equivalence in the content of the episodes. No matter at which place in its linear paradigm a given event is narrated, all events partake in the imperial *romanitas* inscribed in the very form of the chronicle.

But there are two crucial developments, over time, that push against this effect of the episodic framework: the religious shift from ancient Roman paganism to Latin Christianity, and the political shift

2. Identifying these sources and traditions, and discussing their use in the *Kaiserchronik*, is the great achievement of Ernst Friedrich Ohly’s seminal study of myth and legend in the chronicle, which shapes and underpins research on the *Kaiserchronik* even today. More recent studies on the historiography of the *Kaiserchronik* – informed by Ohly – include, but are not limited to, those by Stock, Matthews and Herweg. Among the widening recent research on the *Kaiserchronik*, of particular interest for this article is Mierke’s essay, in which she examines not columns, but rather edifices and building processes. As I will show below, her results run fairly parallel to my observations here.

from a Mediterranean empire centred on the city of Rome and its emperors to a transalpine empire ruled by German kings and princes. I propose to understand these qualitative developments as movements between what Mikhail Bakhtin calls *chronotopes*:

We will give the name chronotope (literally, ‘time space’) to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature. [...] it expresses the inseparability of space and time (time as the fourth dimension of space). [...] In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible, likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. (Bakhtin 84)

3. The reigns of Diocletian and Maximian (twenty years, six weeks), Severus (six years, six months), Heliuss Pertinax (seven months, five days), Heliuss Adrianus (eleven months), Lucius Accommodus (not specified), Alaric (four years, six months), Achilleus (nine months), Galienus (four years), Constantinus (seventeen years, five months), and Constantine (thirty years, six months) add up to eighty-five years, three months, and two weeks. The final total is obscured by the unspecified duration of Lucius Accommodus’s rule before he is slain and succeeded by Alaric, and complicated by the duration of the rule of Silvester (twenty-four years, six months, five days), where it remains unclear how much overlap has to be assumed with the duration of Constantine’s rule. Adding the entire rule of Silvester brings the final sum to 109 years, nine months, two weeks, and five days (assuming for simplicity’s sake that one month breaks down into four weeks).

4. Decius died in 251 CE, and Theodosius came into power in 379 CE. As the Theodosius of the *Kaiserchronik* seems to be an amalgamation of the historical Theodosius I and II, the time would increase to 151 years, as Theodosius II came to power in 402 CE.

The Empire as a spatial structure changes over time, and this temporal change in turn renders its spatial dimension unrecognisable. If, according to Bakhtin, time is to be understood as the fourth dimension of the three-dimensional coordinate system of the Empire’s situation in space, the Empire has now been inexorably altered by the qualitative, temporal change in its religious composition: the shift over time from paganism to Christianity. The territory occupied by the Empire is now no longer semanticised by its spatial permanence, but has been ‘charged’ by the altered time. With the temporal dimension now charged differently, the spatial dimensions alone (which remain semantically stable) seem no longer able to hold the charge: as the following example will show, space responds to the temporal change by rendering itself unrecognisable.

An example for the functioning of the two chronotopes of the *Kaiserchronik* is the striking conception of time and space in the Seven Sleepers passage, which concludes the Theodosius episode. In it, seven Christian princes from Ephesus go into hiding to escape Emperor Decius’s persecution of the Christians (*Kaiserchronik* 6421–42), only to be found again under the reign of the exemplary Christian Emperor Theodosius (*Kaiserchronik* 13 496–503). At that point, they have slept through not only 248 years but also through several thousand lines of narrative. The 248 years the author claims they have been sleeping (*Kaiserchronik* 6425–27) does not correspond to the *Kaiserchronik*’s own reckoning of time passed between Decius and Theodosius (around 110 years),³ or the actual historical distance between the two (128 years).⁴ When Serapion, the first of the sleepers to

awake, realises that he – after going to sleep to evade persecution by the pagan Roman authorities – is now surrounded by Christians, his confusion is registered not in temporal but in spatial terms (*Kaiserchronik* 13 550–51). Serapion has just come down from the mountain – where he believes he has spent only four days – to get food, and now expects to be martyred for it (*Kaiserchronik* 13 508–20). The spatial environment of Ephesus and Mount Celeon, which should be immediately familiar to him, loses all meaning when he realises that times have changed and he has come back to a Christian world (*Kaiserchronik* 13 552–57). His confusion about historical change over time is expressed as a total loss of spatial orientation. He no longer knows where he is, what the country he is in is called, or how he got there (*Kaiserchronik* 13 564–65). He does remember Ephesus and the mountain to which he and his companions fled, but with the times having changed so dramatically, he is no longer capable of reconciling the topography he remembers with the spatially unchanged but religiously differently semanticised topography he finds now: he has to ask whether the mountain to which he fled is anywhere nearby, and whether anyone knows the way there (*Kaiserchronik* 13 566–68).

Extrapolating from this example, within the overall structure of the chronicle, produces two chronotopes: the ancient pagan cisalpine chronotope in the narrative past of the chronicle, and the medieval Christian transalpine chronotope in the present day (of the chronicle's composition). Using these terms, the *Kaiserchronik*'s core mission can be described as narrating the transformation of a political entity – the Roman Empire – over time, as it moves from the first chronotope to the second. In order to discuss these changes as a process of reception and transformation between antiquity and the Middle Ages, the two chronotopes will be synchronised with the two spheres of the allelopoetic model presented above: the ancient pagan chronotope serves as the sphere of reference, and the medieval Christian chronotope serves as the sphere of reception.

As the *Kaiserchronik* moves through its episodes, the passage of time is mainly registered quantitatively, but there are instances where these two chronotopes clash, or where the qualitative discrepancies become all too apparent. In such cases, the chronicle can deploy a range of strategies to mitigate the clashes, and to negotiate the anticipated irritation of its audience. One of them is the use of columns as *spolia* that connect the two chronotopes and allow the mutual creation of meaning in both directions along their axis. In this, they begin to function like *spolia*.

I.2 Spoliation and citation

5. A helpful overview of the research on *spolia* up to 2000 can be found in Kinney, “Concept” 239–49.

6. Esch’s five motivations are (1) Convenience and availability; (2) Profanation and exorcism of demonic forces; (3) *Interpretatio Christiana*; (4) Retro-dating or political legitimization; (5) Aesthetic wonderment or admiration. Here I am following Kinney’s paraphrase of Esch for an English translation (Kinney, “Concept” 244). In the original German, Esch call his motives for spoliation: “materielle Verwertbarkeit [...], Profanierung und Exorzismus [...], *interpretatio Christiana* [...], politische Legitimation [...], ästhetische Wertschätzung” (Esch 1).

7. “[...] die Spolie lag eben herum, sie war einigermaßen ansehnlich, sie hatte gerade Kanten, also verwendete man sie eben” (Esch 42–43).

8. Michael Greenhalgh, in particular, emphasises that many analyses of *spolia* are marred by “baggage and prejudices,” connecting them all too easily to ideas of “memory, power, prestige, self-image, civic pride [...] and other generalized, over-inflated and frequently nebulous claims which the subject generates” (Greenhalgh 76–78). As with Esch, he focusses on the practical and economical motivations for using *spolia*.

9. For a collection of examples of this tendency, see the contributions in Poeschke.

The study of *spolia* was, originally, mostly bound up with discussions of the medieval reception of classical antiquity.⁵ This changed when the historian Arnold Esch recognised *spolia* as a “distinctive cultural practice” and brought together five crucial motors behind spoliation and *spolia* (Kinney, “Concept” 244), to be analysed and understood independently from processes of reception and classical survival (Esch 1–64).⁶ Only the first motive is concerned with practical issues, while the others are concerned with the semantics of *spolia* – their capacity to imbue, to transpose, and to carry meaning from place to place or from object to place, or, as Hansen puts it, to “turn time into a theme” (Hansen 245). But Esch gives the practical motive priority over the others, arguing that the vast majority of *spolia* were probably used for pragmatic reasons.⁷ These reuses are “ecological,” meaning the process of spoliation feeds the material back into the life cycle of a building. The price for this new or extended lease of life is the loss of their memory, their semantic charge; “[t]he condition for their reincarnation, their second life, is a forgetting of the first life” (Nagel and Wood 180). Because of this, Kinney and Greenhalgh have argued for caution when interpreting physical *spolia*.⁸ Owing to this caution, art historians and archaeologists are often more concerned with materiality and physicality: the process of spoliation; the scarcity and irreproducibility of *spolia*; the logistics of transportation and reuse in a new location; the formal and aesthetic fit in their new surroundings; the new semantic dimensions derived from the synergies with their new architectural surroundings; and the way in which *spolia* relate to the (empty or shaped) space surrounding them.⁹

If we accept that the main factor in spoliation is a limitation of technology and resources (Kinney, “Concept” 233), the question arises as to how useful the *spolia*/spoliation terminology is for *spolia* featuring in literature, in the absence of any material, physical, or practical restrictions. Writers composing texts are not limited by these factors. What Nagel and Wood call “[t]otal meaningfulness” (Nagel and Wood 178) can certainly also be applied to literature. The idea of total meaningfulness refers to the fact that when analysing paintings – as opposed to architecture – it can be assumed that every element has been purposefully composed to carry meaning, without any necessary practical considerations. In literature, too, it can be reasonably assumed that everything has been put in place with some deliberation and, whether consciously or not, serves as a carrier of meaning.

10. What kind of meaning was intended by the author is of course a different question altogether, but of no importance for this article.

11. Dale Kinney has provided a very helpful overview of different semiotic approaches to reading columns as signifiers. See Kinney, “Bearers.”

12. In contrast to the column-as-tree type, prevalent through most of antiquity but no longer understood as such during the Middle Ages (Bandmann 74–75).

13. All Latin Bible quotes are from the Vulgate; all English translations are from the King James Bible. For a more comprehensive look at relevant passages from the Bible see Kinney, “Spolia.”

This means that the recourse to *spolia*, and to columns in particular, must be a deliberate strategy through which the authors were hoping to create additional meaning.¹⁰ By understanding the use of columns in the *Kaiserchronik* as spoliation, we can get to the core of this meaning-making process. A seam between *spolium* (or citation) and new context, the contained and the container, the artefact and the shrine, becomes visible in conceptual relief. This enables a comparison between old and new, then and now, here and there, and thus establishes “figural or typological relationship[s]” between the two (Nagel and Wood 179, 181).

1.3 Columns as bearers of historical meaning

Among *spolia*, columns are the most prolific. There have been several attempts to define theoretically the way in which columns operate as signifiers, Eco’s componential analysis being one of the first and most influential. Eco showed “that certain architectural objects, either out of context or in context [...] can be the bearers of meaning, and are thus considered as the pertinent units of an architectural semantics – the sememes that culture recognizes and organizes in a structured system” (Eco 117). Most of these theories are concerned with physical and atectonic columns, and it will have to be discussed to what extent these also apply to columns depicted in literature.¹¹ Given the great quantity of literature on the possible semantics of columns, I will focus on one concept from this wider framework which is particularly relevant for the columns of the *Kaiserchronik*: Bandmann’s column-as-figure-type. The free-standing, atectonic columns of the *Kaiserchronik*, standing “in isolation, rather than as a meaningless component in a tectonic assemblage” (Bandmann 75), correspond to what Bandmann in his influential study on meaning in early Christian architecture calls the column-as-figure type of columnar morphology and semiotics.¹²

The notion of columns as figures comes easily to Christians because Scripture itself makes this connection: [...] *Jacobus, et Cephas, et Joannes, qui videbantur columnæ esse* [...] (“James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars,” Galatians 2:9), and *Et murus civitatis habens fundamenta duodecim, et in ipsis duodecim nomina duodecim apostolorum Agni* (“And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb,” Revelation 21:14).¹³ This sense was expounded in the early fourth century by Eusebius – church historian, scholar, biographer and pan-

egyrist of Emperor Constantine and Bishop of Caesarea – who, in his oration for the dedication of the cathedral of Tyre, which he included in chapter 10 of his *Ecclesiastical History*, compares the members of the Christian Church to architectural elements such as columns, which in combination form a metaphorical edifice (Eusebius 10.4.63–64). The most prominent medieval articulation of the idea of columns-as-figures was written by Suger, abbot of St Denis, burial church of the French kings, in his *De Consecratione* (a decade or two before the *Kaiserchronik*). In his description of the architecture and programme of the new abbey church, whose reconstruction he oversaw as patron, he likens the columns holding aloft the midst of the edifice to the twelve apostles, and sets Christ above them as the chief keystone.¹⁴ Other medieval writers such as Hrabanus Maurus and Sicard of Cremona interpreted columns as the doctors of the Church in apostolic succession, or as bishops in general (Bandmann 75). While these are all tectonic columns, and while they indeed derive much of their semantic potential from their capacity as bearers of something, the symbolism can also be transferred onto atectonic columns. As Kinney states, “[t]he signified of the verbal signifier ‘column’ was not fixed, although the range of possibilities was restricted by the consistent overriding idea” (Kinney, “Signifiers” 162). The author of the *Kaiserchronik* would certainly have been familiar with this exegetical tradition and, as the following will show, was very adept in using it as a rich quarry for his own invention.

Bandmann also devises an important modification of this type, relevant for the columns in the *Kaiserchronik*: a combination of the column-as-figure type with the column-as-marker type, to form a memorial “not endowed with anthropomorphic ideas but [to] indicate the place where the divinity or the dead one dwells,” best embodied in “the fully developed cult image or later in the honorific column carrying a statue of the person being honored” (Bandmann 77). All three columns of the *Kaiserchronik*’s account fall neatly into this category. The column (or obelisk, or pyramid) with Caesar’s remains on top of it indicates the “place where the divinity of the dead one dwells;” the column of Titus clearly works as a “honorific column carrying a statue of the person being honored;” and the column from the Astrolabe episode figures in a many-layered state of tension with the idol of Venus, which co-inhabits its space as a “fully developed cult image” (Bandmann 77).

14. “Medium quippe duodecim Apostolorum exponentes numerum, secundario vero totidem alarum columnae Prophetarum numerum significantes, altum repente subrigebant aedificium, juxta Apostolum, spiritualiter aedificantem: Jam non estis, inquit, hospites et advenae; sed estis cives sanctorum et domestici Dei, superaeificati [sic] super fundamentum Apostolorum et Prophetarum, ipso summo angulari lapide Christo Jesu, qui utrumque conjugit parietem, in quo omnis aedificatio, sive spiritualis, sive materialis, crescit in templum sanctum in Domino.” Suger 104–05.

15. Unless otherwise noted, all English translations of the *Kaiserchronik* are taken from the unpublished translation by Mark Chinca and Christopher Young.

16. At the time, however, situated to the south of Old St Peter's Basilica as the only standing remnant of the so-called Circus of Nero. The obelisk was moved from there in 1586 by Pope Sixtus V, who had it erected in its present location to mark the centre of the newly created oval St Peter's square. For a short overview of the history and meaning of the obelisk see Alföldy 15–17. He later discusses how many present assumptions about the obelisk are far from certain and how many intriguing puzzles still remain, and offers insightful thoughts on how to approach these puzzles (Alföldy 82–94).

17. Translation is my own. Unless stated otherwise, all translations are my own.

18. Valentini and Zucchetti 44 (in the following: *Mirabilia*). This poem is also used by William of Malmesbury for the beginning of his rendition of the epitaph inscription for Heinrich III (William of Malmesbury, Cap. 194.2.346). In the *Poetae* series of the MGH the text is recorded as a *planctus* – a song of lamentation – but for Lothar I; see Strecker 1072–75. It has – of course! – been a major point of discussion between late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century historians whether the poem refers to the ninth-century Carolingian or to the eleventh-century Salian ruler. Ludwig Traube and Feodor Schneider argued for Lothar, contending, based mostly on formal points of genre and meter, that the text could not be younger than the ninth century. Building on Ernst Dümmler's first rejection of this identification, Bernhard Bischoff showed, more convincingly referring to the manuscript transmission and the content of the text, that the poem must indeed refer to Heinrich III. Bischoff's approach also has the advantage that we can take William of Malmesbury at his word. Only later in the twelfth century were the first lines of the poem then combined with the Caesar tradition, where they resonated long after the impact of the death of Heinrich III had faded. See Schneider 169, and especially Bischoff 247–53.

19. Probably directly via the *Mirabilia*. The first to make this connection was Massmann in his early edition of the text, 424–30; 433–60. Also see Miedema 468 and Mierke 46, who sees

II. The columns in context

The usual lexeme used for columns in Middle High German is *siule* (sometimes phonetically shifted to *sûl*). In the *Kaiserchronik* some of them are further qualified as *irmensûl*, which indicates a particularly grand column (BMZ, “irmensûl” 726a). This is the case with the first column presented here, the one associated with the mortal remains of Julius Casear.

After his treacherous murder by the Romans, Caesar's mortal remains are buried *ûf ain irmensûl* (“on top of a great column,” *Kaiserchronik* 602).¹⁵ This *sûl* is deeply rooted in the dense tapestry of Roman legends, many connected to the urban features of Roman antiquity, which would have been available to the author of the *Kaiserchronik* in the middle of the twelfth century. The idea that Caesar's mortal remains were buried atop a monument is tied to the Egyptian obelisk that is now situated in front of St Peter's Basilica,¹⁶ probably due to a misinterpretation of an inscription on the monolith's base:

DIVO . CAESARI . DIVI . IVLII . F . AVGVSTO | TI .
CAESARI . DIVI . AVGVSTI . F . AVGVSTO | SACRVM
(Bormann and Henzen 156)

(Dedicated to the divine Caesar Augusts, son of the divine Julius, [and] to Tiberius Caesar Augustus, son of the divine Augustus)¹⁷

The anonymous author of the twelfth-century *Mirabilia Urbis Romae* seems to have been the first to set down in writing the popular identification of this obelisk as Caesar's tomb. According to the *Mirabilia*, this fact is documented by an inscription on the obelisk, which reads: *Caesar tantus eras quantus et orbis, Sed nunc in modico clauderis antro* (“Caesar, you were as great as the orb of the world, but now you lie enclosed in a small cavity”).¹⁸ The monument itself is described as a *memoria* for Caesar (*Mirabilia*, Cap. 19, 43–44) or as a *agulia*, which is a Middle Latin version of the classical Latin *acus*, meaning needle (Ziltener 147). After the *Mirabilia*, this tradition found its way not only into the *Kaiserchronik*,¹⁹ but also into the early thirteenth-century *Narracio de Mirabilibus Urbis Romae*, written by the otherwise unknown Magister Gregorius, who was probably an ecclesiastic from England on diplomatic mission in Rome (*Narracio*, Cap. 29, 28–29).

There are two more monuments identified as *irmensûl* in the *Kai-*

serchronik. At the beginning of the chronicle – where it embarks on a survey of the seven days of the pagan week, the pagan deities to whom these days are dedicated, and the festivals and ceremonies attached to them (*Kaiserchronik* 63–208) – it is stated that the Romans *worhten* [...] *abgot sibeniu* (“created seven idols,” *Kaiserchronik* 63–65). One of these *abgot* is placed on the top of an *irmensiule* (“great column,” *Kaiserchronik* 129). Later in the Nero episode, Peter and Paul face off with Simon Magus, and the heretic sorcerer climbs up an *irmensûl* (*Kaiserchronik* 4213) to demonstrate his ability to fly. He falls to his death, and Peter and Paul are subsequently martyred by Nero. The two ‘lesser’ *irmensûlen* mentioned in the chronicle are not discussed here, but will become important again in the final part of this study.

A second remarkable tale of a column can be found in the Titus episode (*Kaiserchronik* 5365–556). It centres on a fictitious column situated in the city of Rome, which was imagined still to be visible to the *Kaiserchronik*’s twelfth-century contemporaries. Unlike the Caesar column, this monument is not connected to any source material. It is described as a memorial, but is framed like an aetiology: it sets out to explain, to a present-day audience, a monument that remains *in situ*. It uses the trans-temporal structure of aetiological narratives to intertwine the example of the column with a moral and didactic example: after Emperor Titus has thwarted a plot against his life through personal cunning, in a display of great civic justice, he has the twelve conspirators executed (*Kaiserchronik* 5377–530). In order to memorialise this event, the emperor orders a *sûl êrîn* (“iron column,” *Kaiserchronik* 5533) to be cast in commemoration of his just verdict (*Kaiserchronik* 5531–46).

The text claims that this column would be visible (*anscîn*) in the Rome of today (*hiute*, *Kaiserchronik* 5534) – although it corresponds to no actual topographical landmark in the city and is not part of a broader legendary tradition connected to Titus. Instead, its introduction is owed to the *Kaiserchronik*’s author. It cannot, however, be ascertained if he thought of the column as a real monument, or if he intentionally fabricated it.

In either case, within the *Kaiserchronik*, the monument’s purpose is decidedly public and civic: the statue on top of the column shows Titus as a just ruler and judge, with the sword as the sign of his *imperium*, conferring the judicial authority to condemn perpetrators to death. Not only is the column which memorialises Titus’ verdict still present in temporal terms, but it is also visible over a wide spatial distance, as it *scînet verre in di lant* (“shines widely into the land,” *Kaiser-*

chronik 5542). Indeed, it is assumed still to be visible, as the present tense of *scinet* suggests. The column is imagined, then, as permanent in time and space – and still accessible, at least theoretically, for the audience of the text to verify the *Kaiserchronik*'s claim.

A third example of a column, a *sûle* – this one also introduced by the author of the *Kaiserchronik*, and not part of a broader source tradition – can be found at the end of the Astrolabe legend, which is one of the three main parts of the episode centred on the rule of Emperor Theodosius (*Kaiserchronik* 13 086–376). Like Titus's column, this *sûle* is also connected to the present by the word *hiute* ("today," *Kaiserchronik* 13 364).

At the beginning of the Theodosius episode, the youth Astrolabe is introduced as an obdurate pagan in an increasingly majority-Christian world under the rule of the pious emperor. In an abandoned pagan temple, he happens upon an idol of the goddess Venus, which casts a spell on him – causing him to fall hopelessly in love with it and, consequently, his condition to deteriorate. With the help of the wily priest Eusebius, the spell of the idol is finally lifted from the boy. As a result, Emperor Theodosius decrees the erection of *in der gottes minne | ain ander hûs* ("in the love of God | a different house," *Kaiserchronik* 13 351–52) at the site of the abandoned pagan temple and its idol. The legend up to this point is linked to a parallel tradition, also transmitted in William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum Anglorum*, which predates the *Kaiserchronik*'s version by a couple of decades and shares key elements with it – such as the obdurate pagan youth, the ring, the betrothal to a pagan statue, and the priest adept in the dark arts as a helper (William of Malmesbury Cap. 205, 380–84).²⁰ Moreover, the basic constellation – an idol of a female goddess of such beauty that men fall for her – seems to have held sufficient force that even Master Gregorius, the author of the thirteenth-century *Narracio* and an observant visitor of Rome, feels compelled to profess his love for a particularly beautiful example in that city:

Hec autem imago ex Pario marmore tam miro et inexplicabili perfecta est artificio, ut magis viva creatura videatur quam statua: erubescenti etenim nuditatem suam similis, faciem purpureo colore perfusam gerit. [...] Hanc autem propter mirandam speciem et nescio quam magicam persuasionem ter coactus sum revisere, cum ab hospicio meo duobus stadiis distaret. (*Narracio*, Cap. 12. 20)

20. For a comparison of the probably unrelated accounts of the *Kaiserchronik* and of the *Gesta*, see Ohly 204–09.

21. Parian marble is quarried on the Aegean island of Paros. It is white in colour, close-grained, and peculiarly suitable for sculpture (Darvill 161).

22. Translation after Osborne, *Marvels*, Cap. 12. 20.

(This image is made from Parian marble²¹ which such wonderful and intricate skill, that she seems more like a living creature than a statue, indeed she seems to blush in her nakedness, a reddish tinge colouring her face [...] Because of this wonderful image and perhaps some magic spell I'm unaware of, I was drawn back three times to look at it despite the fact that it was two stades distant from my inn.)²²

Towards the end of the episode, shortly before the curse is lifted, a heretofore unmentioned *sûl* appears (*Kaiserchronik* 13 354), which seems to be connected to the idol. Theodosius decrees that it is to be moved only one foot, presumably to allow the demonic presence to escape from under it. This leads to the prompt restoration and subsequent conversion of the youth Astrolabe (*Kaiserchronik* 13 356–58). The emperor then orders that a new church, which is intended to replace the abandoned temple and idol, should be built around the column, which is re-dedicated to St Michael. The chronicle expands that the new church *ubertriffet ze Rôme alle di stat, | also man hiute wol kiesen mach* (“surpasses in Rome all the rest of the city | as one can certainly decide for oneself today,” *Kaiserchronik* 13 363–64).

The text remains vague as to what exactly the *sûl* is supposed to be. The idol had previously been introduced as a *pilde lussam* (“majestic idol,” *Kaiserchronik* 13 109) and has since usually been referred to as *pilde* (“image/idol” *Kaiserchronik* 13 116, 13 122, 13 123, 13 128, 13 152, 13 344) or as *statua* [...] (*Kaiserchronik* 13 336). It is sometimes further qualified as *in honore Veneris* (“in honour of Venus,” *Kaiserchronik* 13 124, 13 337). It is, however, never described as a *sûl*. Perhaps the text assumes some sort of column on which the *pilde* stood and which is now, after the idol's removal, being repurposed. But this also could be considered a representation of the medieval concept of the column-as-figure, meaning that the column is not just a base on which the image rests, but rather that the column is one with the image (Bandmann 74–75). I will proceed to explore this possibility in the final section of this article.

Examined alongside one another, the three columns of the *Kaiserchronik* share certain features that will point the way for further enquiry. Some similarities are obvious, but nevertheless significant: all three columns are free-standing and not part of a greater architectural context — meaning that they do not serve to carry weight or (re-)direct forces to the ground, but are rather atectonic. Instead of being part of a greater edifice, they serve only as the carrier for a statue, or for any other receptacles placed on top of them, that can be

charged with meaning (e.g. the container with the mortal remains of Julius Caesar, the statue and inscriptions memorialising the just verdict of Titus, or the pagan idol of Venus that is later removed). In particular, the two columns associated with Titus and with Astrolabe/Theodosius share certain intriguing features: both are said to still be present in Rome, towering over the rest of the city – as anyone who goes there today is supposed to be able to see for themselves. Both columns are primarily memorial in purpose, and both introduce a topographical element that ensures the visual commemoration of an apparently important event from the past to the present.

The Caesar column stands apart due to its fairly cursory consideration in the text, and because it is firmly anchored in the literary tradition of the twelfth century. But it still shares, with the other two columns, a connection to the memorialisation of imperial authority: the first column is a tomb and epitaph of Caesar, the second column is a testament to the justice of Titus, and the third column is a marker that, under the rule of Emperor Theodosius, the transition from pagan to Christian Rome is now complete. All three columns, therefore, straddle a temporal gulf – connecting a past sphere, to which they make reference, to a present sphere, and thereby producing some form of meaning. In the sphere of reception of the twelfth century, it is underscored that the columns (and particularly the two fictitious columns) remain present, visible, and accessible. The truth of their existence, the chronicle contends, can easily be verified by going to Rome and seeing for oneself.

It is this peculiar position in the text that turns the columns into *spolia*. They are all imagined as physical remnants of the past, still present *in situ* to project their meaning into the present day. Unlike conventional *spolia*, they are not moved out of their original (ruined) context and re-used in a new one. Rather, spoliation happens by the progress of time around them: altering their environment to such an extent that it appears as though the columns have in fact been moved. This is most obvious with the column from the Astrolabe episode, which only really appears once the idol of Venus (on which the episode has focussed thus far) is rendered powerless and subsequently removed. Afterwards, it is reintegrated into the new church which Theodosius orders to be built at the site – albeit, as the text stresses, without moving the column. With the Caesar column, it is mainly the extradiegetic context that suggests consideration as a *spolium*. The column is, in fact, an Egyptian obelisk – the Latin parallel tradition characterises it not as a column, but rather as a pyramid – and

the *Kaiserchronik*, too, seems to attempt to mark it as different, or as more than the other columns, by calling it not just *sûl*, but *irmensûl*.

III. Reading the columns

As shown above, the process of spoliation in the *Kaiserchronik* happens through the movement of time, and not through the physical movement of the *spolium*. The columns remain stable, but the chronotope around them is sufficiently recoded to make them stand out as *spolia*. While unchanged in location, they are entirely refigured in time, and therefore still meaningful to the present.

In the case of the Caesar column, the initial spoliation occurs mostly through citation from the legendary tradition surrounding Caesar's tomb (as elucidated above). Reference to this tradition stands out visibly in the *Kaiserchronik*, as something that is only present because of its recourse to an external source. As such, it jars with the rest of the episode – which makes little effort to smoothen its abrupt insertion, or to connect it to what came before or what will come after. This tendency highlights once again the parallel between citation and *spolium*. The Italian art historian Salvatore Settis views the use of *spolia*, in both material culture and text, as the leitmotif of the Middle Ages as “the period of continuity” (Kinney, “Concept” 244). Settis draws a continuous line from the perception of the ancient raw material to the selection of choice fragments, and thence to their re-insertion in new contexts (Settis 398). For him, crucially, it does not matter if these raw materials are physical remains or classical texts. Spoliation, the drawing from the physical remains of antiquity, and citation, the drawing from the classical texts of antiquity, work similarly: excerpted from their original context, both *spolia* and citation assume and transport the authority of their original whole, which is now defunct or dismembered. As Settis expresses it:

The ancient fragment, enclosed within a new system of values, immediately tends to occupy the center; but its imperfect, mutilated state invites you [...] to complete it, beginning an exegetical process [...] of conjecture. It is an almost empty center, and to fill it is not enough to squeeze from that single fragment all of the norms that it contains; it lets you make out that there are other [norms], and challenges you to find them.²³

23. Using Dale Kinney's translation: Kinney, “Concept” 244–45. For the original Italian see Settis 421–22.

Importantly, there is a production of new meaning through this process. The use of fragments, and the implied reference to a whole – both the original whole from which the *spolia* stem, and the new whole which is to be created around the *spolia* by the recipient – lead to the reassembly of what Settis calls *auctoritas*. This *auctoritas* comes with a richness and nobility unrivalled in its time, and it effectively underpins the new meanings that *spolia* take on, enriched by their new environment (Settis 385–86). In the specific case of the column as *spolium*, this *auctoritas* is that of the city of Rome, as the capital both of imperial majesty and of Christianity. This is the authority of antiquity which medieval authors were seeking when they turned to the classical texts “in caccia di spolia” (“hunting for *spolia*,” Settis 385) – much like the author of the *Kaiserchronik* when he decided to include the columns in his chronicle.

The *Kaiserchronik* thus shows itself as a parallel case, which through literary means recreates – or creates – *spolia* to bring the authority and prestige of ancient Rome, here that of Julius Caesar, forward to the present of the twelfth century. In so doing, it not only confirms the authority of the Roman *spolia*, but in fact creates it in the first place. What Bandmann and others have referred to as “historical meaning” (Bandmann 36–38)²⁴ becomes apparent here as the main interest of the *Kaiserchronik*’s framing of these columns as *spolia* – when the author of the text treats antiquity, embodied in the ruins of Rome, as “Magazzini di spolia, di frammentate ma efficaci citazioni, di topoi [...]” (“depositories of *spolia*, of fragmented but effective citations, of topoi,” Settis 385).

Situating Caesar’s mortal remains on top of a column – a *spolium* suffused by its absent original context with the *auctoritas* of the Roman past, to mark the dwelling place of the “divinity of the dead” (Bandmann 77) – highlights the conceptual seam between citation and context. This highlighting of the seam triggers Settis’s “exegetical process,” in which citation or *spolium* begin to infuse their new context with the semantic remnants of their original charge. Through the figure of Caesar, the presence of the column imparts the authority of Rome to the Germans, who have featured prominently as Caesar’s allies in the text until just before his death. The aim is not just to memorialise Caesar’s life and his deeds as exemplary elements of the reference sphere, but to reify them, to perpetuate them in stone, and to conserve them for the present-day reception sphere. The column thus functions like a bridge between the two clashing chronotopes, so that meaning generated in the ancient pagan chronotope can be

24. The “purposeful and deliberate act of reception of forms from the past,” which has to be “distinguished from repetition by habit, which lacked meaning” (Kinney, “Bearers” 141).

25. On the complex and many-layered role of Caesar, his valorisation as heroic founding figure, and his general relationship to the Germans and Germanness in the *Kaiserchronik*, see: Ohly 42–51; Thomas; Fiebig; Goerlitz, “(Un-)Wahrheit.”

26. The rich and complicated tradition around the figure of Simon Magus cannot be discussed here in greater detail. It will suffice to say that after its beginnings in the *Acts of the Apostles* (8:5–24), the figure of the Simon the arch-heretic became a prominent feature of early Christian apologetics and historiography. Among others, he featured in Irenaeus’s *Adversum Haereses*, and he plays a crucial role in the apocryphal *Acta Petri* – originally written in Greek in the late second century, but widely circulating in Latin translations throughout the Middle Ages. See Waitz. Most importantly, Simon Magus became a key character in the so-called *Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions*, probably written in Syria in the third century and translated into Latin by Rufinus c. 150 years later. They were identified as the most probable source of the *Kaiserchronik* by Ohly (Ohly 74–81).

gleaned by the *Kaiserchronik*’s German medieval audience.

This is all the more important as the Caesar of the *Kaiserchronik* is not only the first emperor of the Roman Empire, but is also closely associated with the Germans, who play a crucial part in his ascension to imperial power.²⁵ By burying their key figure, Caesar, on top of an *irmensûl*, the German-speaking audience of the *Kaiserchronik* could generate political legitimacy and retro-date their own historical role and relevance within the Empire. By supplementing the reduced ancient nucleus of Caesar with elements of their own Germanness, they not only modify their estimation of their political role, prestige, and authority in the present; they also construct the Roman past as one closely associated with Germans.

This close association of the *irmensûl* with *auctoritas*, as shown above, is underpinned by the other instances in which the text uses this term. Towards the very beginning of the chronicle, when its author surveys the pagan weekdays, the text proclaims: *ûf ainer irmensiuile | stuont ain abgot ungehiure* (“on a great column | stood a monstrous idol,” *Kaiserchronik* 129–30). The *irmensûl* as a literal carrier of divine meaning is thus firmly established. When Caesar is later placed on top of one, the move from pagan idol to the mortal remains of the person whom the chronicle considers the first emperor of the Roman Empire functions as a signal. It signals a translation of the divinity associated with Roman authority from pagan deity to imperial ruler. Later still in the *Kaiserchronik*, a third *irmensûl* features: *Symon der gaukelære kom ouh dar; | ûf ain irmensûl er staich* (“Simon the magician came there too | he climbed on top of a great column,” *Kaiserchronik* 4212–13). In this case, no Roman authority is placed on top of a column, but rather it is Simon Magus – a heretic and, as such, an adversarial figure to the early paragons of Rome’s Christianisation, Peter and Paul (*Kaiserchronik* 4155–253) – who climbs on top of the column.²⁶ He is not placed there by the Romans, as the idol and later Caesar were. Rather, it is a hubristic attempt at self-empowerment by a heretic; Simon will then plunge to his death from this column when trying to demonstrate his powers of flight (*Kaiserchronik* 4243–48). This scene is placed at the very beginning of the process of Christianising the Roman Empire, which forms the backbone of the first half of the *Kaiserchronik*. Following the transformation from a figure of pagan authority to one of imperial Roman authority, this rejection of a claimant to the column – one who embodies, like no other, the pagan antagonism early Christians had to face – signposts two things: firstly, the rejection of paganism and the ultimate triumph of

Christianity – not despite, but *because* of the martyrdom of Peter and Paul at Nero’s command, directly after Simon’s death; and secondly, the unbroken association of the column with ancient Roman authority – which will continue into Christian times not despite, but because of its rejection of paganism and heresy.

In contrast with the Caesar column, the other two columns examined here – the Titus column and the Astrolabe column – are not only literary *spolia*, but are exclusively literary *spolia*: they do not depict any structures that actually exist or existed. The passages where they feature are not descriptions or textual representations of existing physical monuments, but rather stand for themselves and for whatever meaning they can transport, written as literary artifice. The Titus column seems to be entirely without precedent in the source material; and if the author of the *Kaiserchronik*, as Ohly claims (Ohly 208), really took the conversion of the Venus idol into an image of St Michael from Cassiodorus’s *Historia ecclesiastica tripartita*, he would not have found a column there *expressis verbis* either.²⁷ Instead, both columns seem to have been deliberately introduced by the author of the *Kaiserchronik*, who must have found something useful in the imagery of the ancient column. They reverberate, of course, in the rich environment of actual Roman columns, both in Rome and beyond the city, where they were exported as *spolia*, and they benefit from a deeply-rooted cultural association of columns with Romanness (Kinney, “Signifiers” 158–62; Kinney, “Discourse” 182–99).²⁸ And of course, they also benefit from the availability of a rich tradition of legends associated with Roman columns.²⁹ As Dale Kinney points out: “To treat the discourse on columns is therefore to confront, *in nuce*, the medieval discourse of *romanitas* and the problem of determining when notions of ‘Romanness’ point to the ancient capital on the Tiber and when they range farther afield: materially throughout the Roman centres of Europe and Britain or in the realm of mytho-historical imagination” (Kinney, “Discourse” 183). Settis terms this process of productive reception the “two-fold narration” of Rome after its fall: one narration of Rome itself, its destruction and loss, and a different one of its redeployment and relocation in new and varied contexts (Settis 386).

After columns had ceased to be produced in the Carolingian era, Rome was perceived to be the only possible point of origin of all columns. Their connection to foreign geographies, which had made their erection in Rome a veritable map of the Empire, had been all but forgotten (Kinney, “Discourse” 192–93, 198–99). Through their connection to Romanness, *spolia* become vehicles for what Bandmann

27. See Cassiodorus, Cap. 19:

“Insignis itaque locus ex illo tempore claruit peregrinis et urbicis, ubi olim quidem Vesta colebatur, postea vero ecclesia facta est. Qui locus nunc Michahelium nuncupatur in dextra positus parte navigantium a Ponto ad Constantinopolim, distans ab ea navigio quidem stadiis fere triginta et quinque, per terram vero circueuntibus omnem sinum usque ad septuaginta et amplius tenditur.”

28. As Kinney puts it: “Twelfth-century Rome must have been full of columns ‘standing alone’, without capital, supporting nothing, or not standing at all, lying prone or propped up by debris. These columns were themselves morphological markers of the ruinscape, diachronic signifiers of buildings that once had been [...]” (Kinney, “Signifiers” 161).

29. See the examples from the *Mirabilia* and the *Narracio* above, but obviously the *Kaiserchronik* itself too is a rich trove of Roman legends.

calls “historical meaning” (Bandmann 36–38). Historical meaning is underpinned by the “phenomenon of building forms being received over vast spatial and temporal distances, even occasionally from completely alien cultures” (Bandmann 36–37) – though not for aesthetic reasons, but rather “because of the way they had been employed in the past by patrons into whose line of succession certain new patrons now wished to enter by taking up those forms and employing them in new contexts” (Bandmann 37). Moreover, historical meaning is

primarily bound up with the official architecture of those people and groups in society that wish to be considered the heirs of earlier communities. It could not appear in human history until the moment when the consciousness of transience awoke and with that the necessity to overcome it. (Bandmann 38)

A parallel case from architectural history, where physical *spolia* are used to secure the desired historical meaning of the past for the present, can illustrate the strategy used here in the *Kaiserchronik*. Wolfgang Götz explains the re-use of ancient porphyry columns in the choir of the cathedral of Magdeburg (during its reconstruction in the thirteenth century) not as a puzzling interruption of the Gothic elevations of the choir, but rather as “embodiments of the authority of their place of origin.” In the understanding of the time, the re-use of the columns connected the present building and its patron back to both the first cathedral – built in the tenth century by Emperor Otto I – and, moreover, to imperial Rome, from where Otto had first imported the columns (Götz 97–120). The possibility of embedding his medieval chronicle in this sense of Roman continuity is exactly what prompts the author of the *Kaiserchronik* to include these columns, in the same way the architects of the Magdeburg Cathedral did in their building.

The implicit transmission of historical meaning between clashing chronotopes, as we have seen in the Caesar column, is yet more overt in the Titus column, where the word *ienoch*, in the sense of “still” (and not “anyway,” as it is sometimes used), explicitly signals continuity (Lexner, “ie-noch” 1415–16):

er hiez die aitgenôzze vâhen
unt alle di an dem râte mit in wâren,
er hiez si vuoren ûf den hof –
daz urkunde ist ze Rôme ienoh –,
mit rehter urtaile

Rômære algemaine

hiez er in diu houbet abslahen. (*Kaiserchronik* 5521–27)

(He had the conspirators arrested
and all who had been in on the plot.
He had them brought to court –
the record is still in Rome –
[and] by the just verdict
of all the Romans,
had them beheaded.)

The bridge between the medieval Christian chronotope of the present and the ancient pagan chronotope of the past, marked by *ienoch*, is *urkunde* – a word spanning a broad semantic field from “sign,” “record,” or “proof,” via “argument” to “testimony” and even “testament” (Lexer, “ur-künde, -kunde” 2006). Thus the combined column-as-figure and column-as-marker configuration of the Titus column unfolds its full semantic potential. This testimony is drawn from the past justice of the pagan Titus, but the historical meaning, which is built on this source of *auctoritas*, is directed at the present-day German and Christian audience of the *Kaiserchronik*. The key point, conveyed by the testimony from the past to the present, is the way Titus punishes his assailants *mit rechter urtaile* (by just verdict, *Kaiserchronik* 5525).

The fact that the column is an imagined *spolium*, which does not actually exist in the sphere of reference, does not diminish its capacity to affect the sphere of reception. Rather, it allows the exemplarity of the pagan emperor to be more readily appropriated. The chronicle’s author, as agent of *allelopoiesis*, and the audience of the *Kaiserchronik* might well have thought it to be an actual Roman site. However, it becomes clear that the launching-point for this particular enquiry into the Roman past is not puzzlement at the present physical monument – “What kind of column is this?” – but something else. The text constructs it not with an interest in explaining a phenomenon of the chronotopical past, but rather to imbue a historical example with the *auctoritas* of that past, for the benefit of the present. The Roman past as a chronotopical reference sphere is constructed as a repository for templates of *auctoritas*. The differently-coded chronotopical medieval present is modified by the innovation of the agent who inserts an imagined *spolium* for the benefit of the present-day audience. The author or compiler of the *Kaiserchronik* aims to appropriate the enduring historical exemplarity of the event memorialised by the monument: the justice of Titus. As such, it shines through the

centuries not as an actual monument, but as a textual anchor of the absoluteness of Titus's exemplarity. It becomes unchangeable in its validity and formative for both chronotopes:

daz wart umbe daz getân –
 sô wir das buoch hôren sagen –
 swer das zaichen iemer dâ ersæhe,
 daz er bilde der bî næme. (*Kaiserchronik* 5543–46)

(This was done,
 as we hear the book tell,
 so that whoever sees the sign
 will always take it as an example.)

Now the *Kaiserchronik* switches into explanatory mode – not, however, looking back from the present, but as part of a reciprocal movement the other way round: looking forward from the diegetic past towards the present of the author and the audience. Everyone in the future – *wir* (“we”) – should *iemer* (“always”) benefit from the *zaichen* (“sign”) of Titus's justice, from which they might *bilde nemen* (“take an example”). The present finds meaning in the past, and the past derives meaning from the present.

Finally, in order to grasp the curious column appearing at the end of the Astrolabe passage within the Theodosius episode, we must consider the wider context of the passage and the passage's situation within the chronicle as a whole. At the beginning of the episode, Astrolabe was introduced as one of two obdurately pagan brothers who have little regard for their own salvation, actively strive to honour the pagan gods, and are deaf to the emperor's personal pleas to renounce their erroneous faith (*Kaiserchronik* 13 086–100). Now that – thanks to the cunning of the priest Eusebius, who is also well-versed in the dark arts (*Kaiserchronik* 13 218) – Astrolabe has been saved from the devil's entrapment by the idol and its ring (*Kaiserchronik* 13 125–30), the youth becomes Christian, together with all the other pagans who are present (*Kaiserchronik* 13 365–68).

The passage marks a clear shift in the make-up of the world of the *Kaiserchronik*. Over several episodes, the text signposts the transition of the Roman pagan empire into a Christian empire. This happens through a string of escalating encounters between pagan Roman emperors like Tiberius, Faustian, or Decius and missionary Christian figures such as Veronica, St Peter, and Emperor Philip (*Kaiserchronik* 671–1114, 1219–4082, 6097–450). Pivotal in this regard is the Con-

stantine episode (*Kaiserchronik* 7806–10 633), which marks the Christianisation of Emperor Constantine through his encounter with Pope Silvester, followed by a great public disputation between Silvester and twelve pagan wise men. Silvester obviously wins this disputation and thousands of pagans, including the emperor's mother Helena, accept Christianity as their new creed. In an act of coequal legislation, which stretches over seven days and is deliberately modelled to mirror the seven days of the pagan week from the beginning of the *Kaiserchronik*, pope and emperor recode and re-semanticise the religious and political makeup of the Roman Empire. From this point onwards, the Romans – as a political collective – are implied and assumed to be Christians. The religious default of the Roman world has switched to a Christian one, and the lexemes 'Romans' and 'Christians' are now used interchangeably.

By the time of Theodosius (*Kaiserchronik* 13 067–650), several emperor episodes later, only a minority of Romans within the Empire remain pagan. The qualitative shift from a pagan chronotope of the Empire to a Christian chronotope makes for an interesting clash between the chronicle's form and its content: as argued above, while the episodic form of the *Kaiserchronik* allows for temporal distance, it does not account for the qualitative changes that separate the chronicle's present from its narrated time. These happen on the level of content, and have to be overtly signposted to counteract the equalising and quantifying tendencies of the episode framework. The inclusion of columns by the *Kaiserchronik*'s author, in both the Astrolabe and Titus narratives, fulfils this purpose.

To better understand this claim, it is necessary to undertake a closer examination of the circumstances of Astrolabe's salvation through the magical intervention of the priest Eusebius. In order to save Astrolabe from his predicament, Eusebius conjures a devil and follows him into a distant hellscape (*Kaiserchronik* 13 303: *in aines tiefen moses grunt* ["to the bottom of a deep sea"]) where other devils guard Astrolabe's ring. The curse that ravages Astrolabe is tied to the devils' control over this ring, which Astrolabe had given to the statue of Venus in a form of a mock-engagement to seal his unflinching love to the pagan idol. In this distant hellscape, Eusebius extorts from the devils the release of the ring, and of information crucial to redeem Astrolabe (*Kaiserchronik* 13 225–346).

To Eusebius's question *von welhen dingen | daz aller êrist kôme, | daz dem jungelinge missescæhe* ("to reveal who was responsible | for the youth's misfortune | and whether he had s anything to do with

it,” *Kaiserchronik* 13 332–34), the distraught devil – much to his chagrin – has little choice but to answer, as Eusebius is commanding him *in verbo domini* (*Kaiserchronik* 13 314). As the devil admits, Astrolabe’s initial enthrallment was not due to the statue itself having any kind of divine or magical powers, but was solely due to a miraculous root buried beneath it: *di wile di wurze dar under ligent. | swer daz pilde oben an sihet, | der muoz iemer minnen* (“no one who sees the statue above | can avoid loving it forever, | as long as the herbs are underneath it,” *Kaiserchronik* 13 343–45). Everything that later transpired was devised by the devils using Astrolabe’s cursed ring. This admission on the devil’s part reimagines, in a radical euhemeristic reduction, the entire religious service of the pagans as the effect of a root’s bewitching qualities. The text gives no further indication as to whether they are natural or magical, but the result remains the same: paganism is exposed as a fraud, never related to any true gods to begin with. The cosmological forces in the background have always been the same and remain unchanged: God and the devils. In Astrolabe’s case, those devils deployed one of the pagan illusions he was so drawn to in order to corrupt his soul. The clash of the ancient pagan chronotope with the Christian medieval chronotope is thus resolved: the content of the chronicle becomes much more easily reconcilable with the pattern suggested by its form and structure. Everything remains the same: the cosmological powers driving the world in both chronotopes, and moving it along from the first chronotope to the second, have always been the same; only a continuum of countable years separates the present from the past, and no qualitative change actually happens. What has always been true is now only being asserted for the first time, through Christianity; and it is therefore possible to semanticise the emerging new chronotope as explicitly Christian.

But this resolution – exposing the cosmological continuities tying the two chronotopes together – is only half of the passage’s deft narrative negotiation of the apparent clash between the two. The other half is the sudden appearance of the *sûl*, directly after the spell of the idol of Venus is broken. The chronicle cannot allow for a vacuum to appear where the pagan idol used to be, so it introduces a by now well-established and enduring symbol, suffused with ancient Roman *auctoritas*, but also apt for Christian re-signification: a column, which, as a type of figure, still carries the overlapping connotations of the idol placed atop a column at the beginning of the chronicle, of the numinous presence of the ashes of Julius Caesar, and of the trans-temporal exemplarity of Emperor Titus. Here the *Kaiserchro-*

nik uses the *spolium* as a “remedy for discontinuity” (Nagel and Wood 183), as it relies on its capacity to signal two seemingly contradictory circumstances at the same time.

By once more highlighting the seam between *spolium* and new context, the text acknowledges that the Empire as a temporal entity had been unstable in its religious makeup, but has now been fixed and stands stable in its Roman identity, despite its religious re-coding (Nagel and Wood 183). To achieve this, the chronicle resorts for the first time to a semantic potential created by the productive overlap of the column-as-figure and the column as *spolium*, which it has thus far – quite deliberately – avoided: the signification of triumphalist supersession. The many-layered semantic charge of the column, accumulated throughout the chronicle up to this point, is now explicitly extended by dedicating it to St Michael:

Do rewarf der briester Eusêbius,
daz der bâbes Ignâtius
wihete die sûl ze êren
dem guoten sante Michahêle. (*Kaiserchronik* 13 359–62)

(Then the priest Eusebius got
Pope Ignatius
to consecrate the pillar in honour of
good Saint Michael.)

Consequently, the continuous and enduring presence, visibility, and magnificence of the column have to be underscored: *si ubertriffet ze Rôme alle di stat | als man hiute wol kiesen mah* (“It towers over the whole city of Rome, | and can still be clearly seen today,” *Kaiserchronik* 13 363–64).

This leads to the second circumstance signalled by the column as *spolium*: by replacing the idol not with a vacuum, but with a *spolium* – which is then re-dedicated and re-semanticised as a religious artefact – the column again reaches back through time as a bridge, establishing an “effective reverential relationship to much older buildings” (Nagel and Wood 183). It allows Roman prestige, and the *auctoritas* tied to those physical structures, to cross the bridge between the two chronotopes, while at the same time neutralising their pagan connotations. This process is expanded by the encasing of the column within a new church building (*Kaiserchronik* 13 351–52). The column becomes the enshrined relic, and the seam between *spolium* and new environment is again foregrounded to start the process of exegesis. Importantly, its encasement in the new ecclesiastical build-

ing not only serves as the enshrinement for a precious artefact with desirable connotations like *auctoritas*, *romanitas*, and political pedigree, but also serves as an effective containment for its less desirable connotations, like paganism, idolatry, and polytheism.

These findings are supported by the results of Mierke's 2019 study. Mierke examines edifices and buildings in the *Kaiserchronik* and – from a different perspective and with a very different toolkit – comes to similar conclusions. Her focus is on the relationship of architecture and power in the text, and she demonstrates quite convincingly that here, too, the processes of translation and renovation are so configured as to enable the present to benefit from the “alte Herrschaftsgewalt” (“old power of rulership,” Mierke 61) of the past, and to continue the existence of the Roman Empire:

Rom wird nicht abgelöst, sondern unter christlicher Prämisse erneuert. Dies ist an die Idee der Etablierung einer neuen Ordnung gebunden, die ihre Geltung durch die Bindung an die Vergangenheit behauptet. [...] Die magischen Steine und sprechenden Säulen müssen quasi als überwunden abqualifiziert werden, um aus ihrer Substanz etwas Neues zu begründen, das länger anhält. (Mierke 61–62)

(Rome is not replaced, but renewed under Christian conditions. This is tied to the establishment of a new order, which claims its validity through its connection to the past. [...] The magic stones and speaking columns must be dismissed as surmounted, in order to create something new from their material, which will last longer.)

The columns examined here work to the same purpose, but do so in a different way. Because of their *in nuce romanitas*, where the chronicle uses columns, it ultimately emphasises continuity far more strongly than Mierke's examples, which work equally with “Überwindung” (“overcoming”). Only where the association of the columns with ancient paganism becomes too noticeable does a similar strategy of overcoming or surmounting need to be pursued – as is apparent in the Astrolabe example.

Replacing a pagan idol with a column that is subsequently Christianised and encased in a Christian building therefore achieves two things. First, it marks the final and ultimate Christianisation of the Empire, which is now all but concluded within the *Kaiserchronik* and the rule of Emperor Theodosius. Second, it also claims the semantic

potential, and the historical meaning and *auctoritas* of the column, for the new Christian parameters. These parameters organise the very present of the reception sphere of the text, again building a semantic bridge between the two chronotopes of the *Kaiserchronik*. By using the column as a meaningful *spolium*, the *Kaiserchronik* can signify the religious inversion of the Empire, while still maintaining its claim to the imperial *auctoritas* of ancient Rome.

IV. Conclusion

The column provides the author of the *Kaiserchronik* with a potent symbol. It carries the *auctoritas* of both the imperial Rome of antiquity and of the Christian Rome of the martyrs. The author of the *Kaiserchronik* utilises columns like *spolia* to access this *auctoritas*, in order to connect the two sometimes clashing chronotopes of his text: pagan antiquity and the Christian Middle Ages. Within the text, the process of spoliation is not one of physical removal or recovery, followed by transport and re-use or re-insertion, but is rather a process of citation. Much as a citation can be prised from its original text and inserted into a new context to generate new meaning, so the column can be moved through a process of textual spoliation from a chronotopical ancient reference sphere to a chronotopical medieval reception sphere. With this movement between chronotopes, the despoiled column transforms both spheres: by suggesting the faded or defunct symbolism which used to be connected to it – such as *romannitas*, imperial authority, or political legitimacy – the ancient column, reinserted into a medieval context, imbues this symbolism onto the new elements which the *Kaiserchronik* now adds – such as Germanness, imperial continuity, or political prestige. This in turn reinforces and perpetuates the *auctoritas* of the *spolia*, which made them so attractive to the author to begin with. The artistry and innovation of the *Kaiserchronik*'s author is shown in the fact that the most interesting of these columns are not actual citations from a pre-existing tradition, but rather original inventions – used as imagined *spolia* akin to literary citations, benefitting from the same mechanics, drawing from the same pool of semiotic potential, and included at strategic positions within the text. The *Kaiserchronik*'s episodic paradigm, which projects an idea of continuous and unchanging Romanness, capitalises on this special meaning of columns to fortify and assert itself. On the one hand, passages such as the Astrolabe story, which foregrounds

the shift from pagan polytheism to Christianity, actualise the historical qualitative difference between its two chronotopes. On the other hand, passages like the Titus episode explicitly make the historical exemplarity of a pagan Roman available for the twelfth-century Christian present.

Through the adept use of the column as a carrier of meaning from one chronotope into the next, the author of the *Kaiserchronik* builds a rich and coherent image of the ancient Roman past, whilst at the same time providing a vivid and productive space for deliberation about his German audience's twelfth-century present. Connected through time by columns as meaningful *spolia*, antiquity and the Middle Ages emerge intertwined as mutually semanticising chronotopes, which – for all their differences, particularly in religious make-up – can still infuse each other with new meaning.³⁰

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