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Oral Tradition seeks to provide a comparative and interdisciplinary focus for studies in oral literature and related fields by publishing research and scholarship on the creation, transmission, and interpretation of all forms of oral traditional expression. As well as essays treating certifiably oral traditions, *OT* presents investigations of the relationships between oral and written traditions, as well as brief accounts of important fieldwork, a Symposium section (in which scholars may reply at some length to prior essays), review articles, occasional transcriptions and translations of oral texts, a digest of work in progress, and a regular column for notices of conferences and other matters of interest. In addition, occasional issues will include an ongoing annotated bibliography of relevant research and the annual Albert Lord and Milman Parry Lectures on Oral Tradition. *OT* welcomes contributions on all oral literatures, on all literatures directly influenced by oral traditions, and on non-literary oral traditions. Submissions must follow the list-of reference format (style sheet available on request) and must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope for return or for mailing of proofs; all quotations of primary materials must be made in the original language(s) with following English translations. Authors should submit two copies of all manuscripts. Most contributions will be reviewed by at least one specialist reader and one member of the editorial board before a final decision is reached. Review essays, announcements, and contributions to the Symposium section will be evaluated by the editor in consultation with the board.

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Editor's Column

With the present issue *Oral Tradition* returns to its more common—and in many ways most fundamental—format: a digest of articles on a wide variety of traditions and expressive forms. The rationale for this diversity stems from our editorial commitment to study oral tradition comparatively, to learn more about our "home fields" by juxtaposing verbal arts from all over the world and throughout history.

Ulrich Marzolph begins the collective discussion by bringing before us a fascinating character from Persian popular romance, Ḥosein the Kurd. What Marzolph offers is a kind of morphology of the story, with attention to its recurrent formulaic elements, as derived from extant medieval manuscripts. Michael Saenger's essay on Old English and Black English then bridges the gap between medieval and modern, focusing as it does on the seventh-century Bede's story of the oral singer Cædmon as compared with John Pearson, a prominent character in Zora Neale Hurston's novel, *Jonah's Gourd Vine*. From Anglo-Saxon England and the modern rural South in the United States, we then journey back to ancient Greece and the orally based poems of Homer. Françoise Létoublon tackles the longstanding crux of what Homer (and his tradition) mean by the phrase "winged words," while Elizabeth Minchin analyzes the "poetics of talk" with special reference to a prolonged exchange between Odysseus and Eumaios in Book 14 of the *Odyssey*.

With Leslie MacCoull's essay on Coptic hymnography and oral-formulaic approaches, our journal enters an area it has not touched upon in the past. As always, we at *Oral Tradition* welcome the opportunity to offer our readership a fresh perspective on widely ramifying phenomena. In this spirit, the final three essays form a small cluster on medieval texts that derive from oral traditions. Lea Olsan examines the multilingual charms found in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, concentrating on the mixture of performance, ritual, and actual paleographical context. Christine Neufeld looks at the portrayal of women's oral discourse and its ambiguous ghettoizing and empowerment as stemming from the interaction of oral and written traditions in the Middle Ages. Finally, Lisa Robeson turns to the Old French *La Queste del Saint Graal* for a study of inscriptions, oral interpretations, and the authenticity of relics.

Upcoming issues of *Oral Tradition* will feature essays on Native American, Japanese, Celtic, African American, Finnish, South African,

ancient Greek, Norse, and Scottish oral traditions, as well as innovative articles on the Nobelist Dario Fo and the Balto-Finnic myth of the World Egg. Further in our future lies a special issue on the minority oral traditions of China, a project undertaken in partnership with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing.

We continue to welcome your best ideas about our shared field of oral tradition. Whatever your specialty—geographically, ethnically, chronologically, or medially—our journal stands ready to present your perspective to a broad, interested audience.

Similarly, we are in the process of launching a subscription drive, and we hope that those of you who are not yet subscribers will take steps to do so. *Oral Tradition* is priced at $25 annually for individuals, certainly one of the "best bargains" in academic publishing, and the rate for institutions is a similarly inexpensive annual rate of $40. Most back issues from the inaugural issue (1986) onward are still available.

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Oral Tradition, 14/2 (1999): 279-303

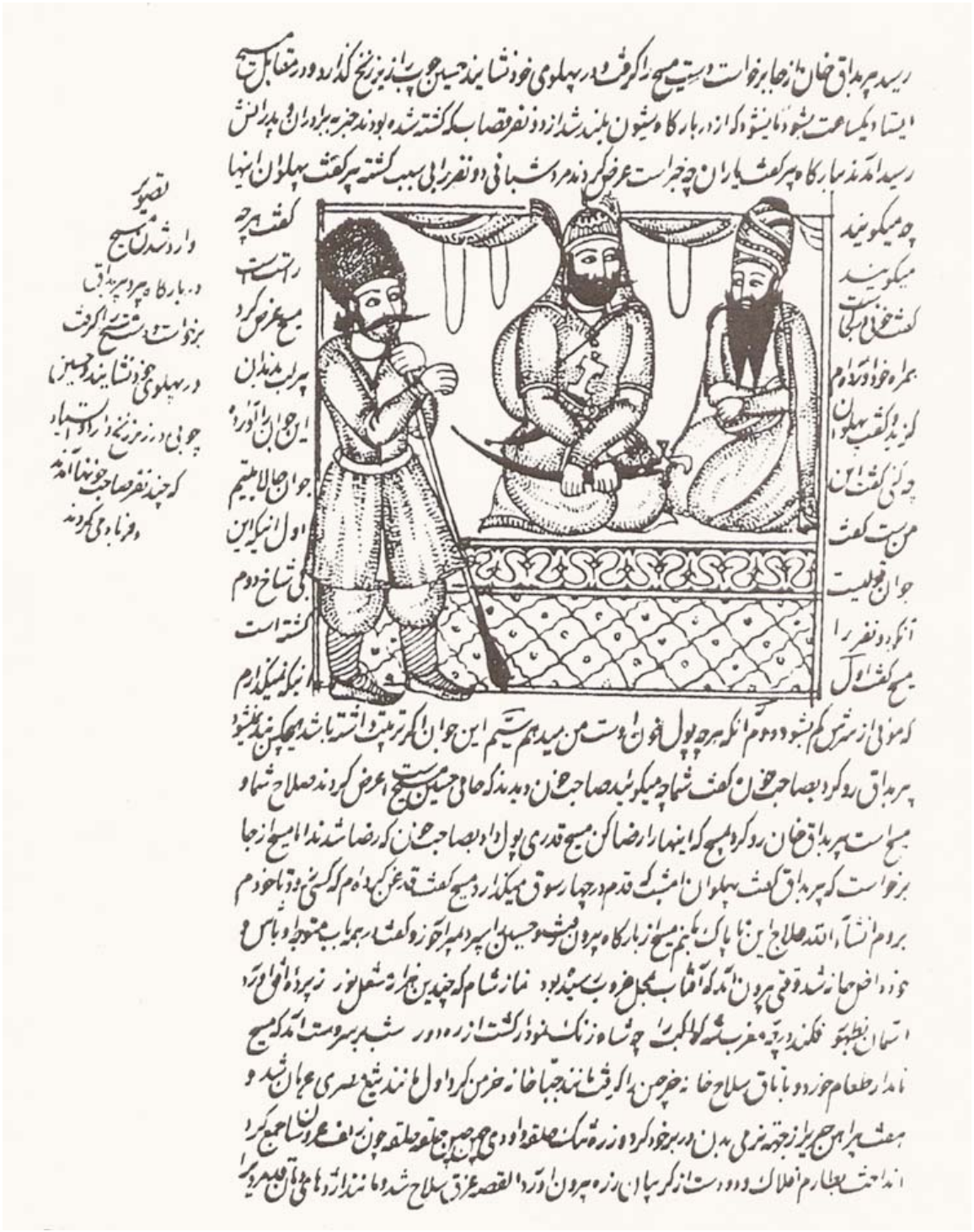
A Treasury of Formulaic Narrative: The Persian Popular Romance *Ḥosein-e Kord*

Ulrich Marzolph

Background

The theory of oral poetry in the field of Near Eastern literatures has mostly been applied to those areas in which fieldwork within the living tradition is possible. At the end of the twentieth century, the Arabian tradition of *sīra* (popular epic) still appears to be thriving (Lyons 1995; Reynolds 1995; Heath 1997). However, in other areas oral poetry and verbal art in general are under heavy pressure from modern developments. The Turkish bard, the *âshiq*, has in many cases been reduced to an element of folklorism, a picturesque embellishment of folklore meetings. The Persian art of *naqqâlî* (Page 1979; Omidsalar and Omidsalar 1999), which denotes the recitation of the popular romances, not necessarily the Iranian national epic, the *Shâh-nâma* ("Book of Kings"), is to all our present knowledge almost extinct. On the other hand, an analysis of the written material preserved often permits a fairly detailed assessment of the role and function of oral composition in nowadays obsolete oral poetry (see Zwettler 1978), and especially in oral narrative traditions.

It is the aim of the present essay to contribute a sample from the Persian tradition area illustrating the techniques of oral composition and some of its implications. In order to achieve this, I present a detailed documentation and analysis of the formulaic inventory in one specific representative of Persian oral narrative tradition of the early nineteenth century. While keeping in mind the general approach of the theory of oral composition (Foley 1988), in the present context the term formula is used in a comparatively loose sense. Formulas here are understood to denote repeatedly employed verbal phrases evoking a specific meaning that is not necessarily obvious from the phrase's wording. In this sense, as will be documented below, simple formulas may constitute structural devices incorporating a relatively clearly defined function, such as separating time or space. Complex formulas tend to diminish in size, yet expand in implicit



Editio princeps of 1265/1849, fol. 11 a: Ḥosein makes his first appearance. He still wears his original rural clothing and a felt hat. He leans on his wooden club, serving both as a weapon and a rest.

meaning: even a single word, if employed as a formula, may evoke an elaborate background of composite culturally defined notions.

The Story of Ḥosein the Kurd

The text to be analyzed is the Persian narrative known as *Dâstân-e Ḥosein-e Kord* ("The Story of Ḥosein the Kurd"—henceforth quoted as *HK*, in contrast to its protagonist Ḥosein). *HK* belongs to the Persian literary genre of popular romance (*dâstân-e 'âmmiyâne*), which is rooted in pre-Islamic times, but remained popular well into the twentieth century (Hanaway 1970, 1971, 1974, 1978). Persian popular romances form a specific amalgamate of constituents originating from the Greek, Indo-Persian, and Arabic narrative traditions. When Iran was conquered by Alexander the Great at the end of the third century BCE, the area had long been dominated by cultures of Indo-Iranian origin. Then it became part of the Hellenistic sphere of influence, and a number of Persian parallels to classical Greek narratives might date from this period (see Rundgren 1970-71). Arabic influence dates from the seventh century onwards, when Persia was islamicized, and Persian culture, as well as language, were for some time close to extinction. Any attempt to delineate the exact proportion contributed by each of those traditions is presumptuous, and certainly there is a large amount of overlap between the different categories of narrative elements. In broad terms, there is some probability that a portion of the Greek contribution consisted of romance and fantasy, while the Persian tradition stressed the tragic, and the Arabian tradition the chivalric (though chivalry formed an important constituent of the pre-Islamic Persian ideal of *javânmardi*; see Zakeri 1995). Besides numerous other representatives of various length, famous prose examples of the genre of popular romance include the Persian version of the so-called *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, the *Eskandar-nâme* ("Book of Alexander"; see Southgate 1978). The *Ḥamze-nâme* ("Book of Ḥamza"), which in many respects might be regarded as an islamicized match of the Alexander-romance, focuses on the prophet Mohammed's paternal uncle Ḥamza ibn 'Abdalmuṭṭalib (Pritchett 1991). Most of the romances of this genre tell of Persian heroes, such as the trickster Samak (*Samak-e 'ayyâr*; see Gaillard 1987), or of pre-Islamic Persian kings, such as in the *Dârab-nâme* or the *Bahrâm-nâme*. The genre of popular romance was thriving in Ṣafavid times (1501-1732), and Moghul rulers such as the famous emperor Akbar (ruled 1556-1605) are known to have had a special liking for this kind of literature. The genre celebrated a vigorous revival in

the Qajar period (1779-1924), when the introduction of printing contributed to the preservation and spread of a number of romances previously restricted to oral tradition.

The earliest known copy of the popular romance *HK* is a manuscript—in fact its unique manuscript—dating from the Islamic year 1255 (March 17, 1839 to March 4, 1840). It is preserved in the Institute of Asian languages at the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow (see Shcheglova 1975, no. 1635). Though the analysis of the manuscript might contribute important further details, it appears safe to assume on linguistic and compositional grounds that the transposition of the narrative from oral to written has not taken place much earlier than the compilation of the Moscow manuscript. Two arguments serve to strengthen this hypothesis. First, no other manuscript of *HK*, whether previous or posterior, is documented (see Monzavi 1972: 3678, no. 39976). Second, *HK* shows an unusually large, in fact overwhelming density of narrative formulas acting in various functions. In this way, as is argued below, the phrasing of the text itself mirrors the contextual circumstances and needs of oral performance such as organizing a plot, constructing powerful images, and, most intricately, condensing complex associations into the nutshell of a single term.

The reign of the Qâjâr dynasty in Iran corresponds to the introduction of printing to Iran, both in lithography and in movable type (Floor 1991; Shcheglova 1979). Soon after the compilation of the Moscow manuscript, a rich tradition in the publication of popular narratives begins. Some of those narratives, such as the popular romance *Salim-e Javâheri*, "The Jeweler Salim" (Marzolph 1994b), are comparatively faithful renderings of original texts that can be traced as far back as the Ṣafavid dynasty. Others appear to be modeled or invented according to contemporary taste, which obviously had a fondness for fantastic, chivalrous, and romantic narrative. *HK* belongs to the chivalrous category. It contains only a negligible amount of fantastic elements, and the few romantic or erotic episodes tend to stay in the background. A first lithographed edition, including a total of 120 illustrations, was published in 1265/1848-49. This is comparatively early considering the fact that the first-ever Persian lithographed book containing illustrations (Marzolph 2000:235), a rendering of the famous Oriental love story of Leilâ and Majnun (Pellat e.a. 1986), had been published only a few years earlier. Since then, various editions of *HK* have been issued, molding the romance into one of the most successful evergreens of the "chapbook" genre (Marzolph 1994a, no. XXVI). Episodes from *HK* have been documented from mid-twentieth century oral tradition (Amini 1960:206-9, no. 30), and

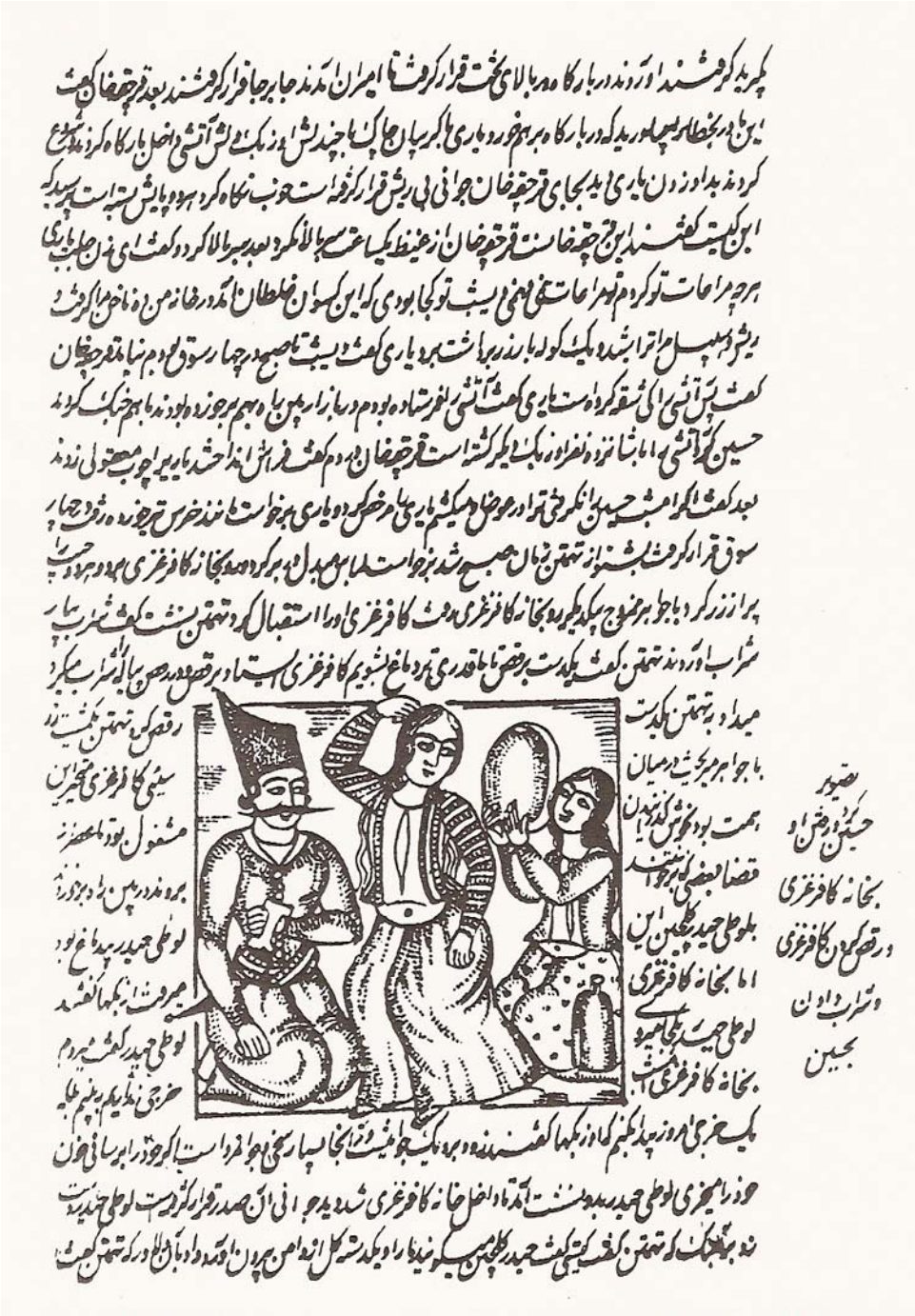
until the late 1970s booklet versions were still present in the repertoire of small book stalls, itinerant booksellers, and sidewalk peddlers in Iran. Whether or not its recent disappearance from the book market is related to the many changes in moral guidelines resulting from the Iranian revolution of 1979 remains to be discussed in a wider context (see Marzolph 1994d). Besides obvious ideological implications, one would have to consider many other aspects in the development of contemporary societal values. Thus, even though the official Iranian policy aims at warding off what is conceived as the detrimental influence of Western culture, modern reading habits and modes of communication in general have not been left unaffected. Yet still, towards the very end of the twentieth century, *HK* in an (albeit marginal) publication is hailed as an entertaining and pleasant, indeed a charming narrative, one that is said to preserve the liveliness of oral performance from its original rural context (‘Anâṣori 1993, 1995).

It is a contradiction characteristic of popular tradition that *HK*, while its text was codified in a published version at a comparatively recent date, at the same time constitutes virtually the only popular romance whose plot is not linked to the realm of fantasy. On the contrary, Ḥosein’s adventures are unambiguously localized in terms of period and region. The editor of a children’s edition of part of the tale (Ḥaṣuri 1965) even went so far as to state that, in terms of historical fidelity, *HK* did not contain the slightest mistake. The action takes place at the time of the Ṣafavid ruler Shâh ‘Abbâs, who ascended to the throne at the age of thirty in 1587 and reigned until 1628. The beginning of Shâh ‘Abbâs’s reign supplies the *terminus post quem* for the narrative’s plot; the *terminus ante quem* is constituted by the second monarch mentioned, the Moghul emperor Jalâladdin Akbar, who ruled between 1556 and 1605. Since Ḥosein meets both rulers within a comparatively short period of time, the action obviously is meant to take place within the two decades framed by the years 1587 and 1605. Though the story starts by relating an incident that takes place in the Central Asian town of Balkh, the main localities mentioned in the further course of action are situated in either Iran or India: the northwestern Iranian town of Tabriz, where Ḥosein enters the plot shortly after the introductory passages; Mashhad in the eastern Persian province of Khorâsân; the Ṣafavid capital of Eṣfahân in the southwest of Iran; the Indian city of Ḥeidarâbâd; and Jahânâbâd, the capital of Akbar’s empire.

In order to appreciate the function of formulas in *HK*, at least a short introduction to the content of the popular romance is necessary. *HK*’s plot is simple, yet in many ways highly revealing. The tale begins by recalling the fact that the governor of Tabriz, a subject of the Ṣafavid Shâh ‘Abbâs, had attacked and devastated Balkh. The governor of Balkh then

turns for help to the emperor (named Khân-e jahân, "The Master of the world") in Khaṭâ, "Mongolia." The Mongol emperor sends two warriors, each with a small number of troops, in order to kindle unrest in Tabriz and Eṣfahân, eventually aiming to overthrow Shâh Abbâs. Babrâz-Khân, one of the two Mongol warriors, travels to Tabriz, where he robs the mint, kills a number of innocent people, and starts to terrorize the town. While the governor and his warriors prove unable to counter his activities, Ḥosein suddenly arrives and offers his service. Ḥosein possesses an almost superhuman strength, yet is completely uneducated in warfare as well as in social behavior. From his introduction into the plot, Ḥosein dominates the action. He defeats Babrâz-Khân after a series of single combats, goes on to take revenge for one of his friends who had been treated cruelly by the governor of Mashhad, and finally travels to the capital of Eṣfahân. There he saves the uncautious ruler (who walks about the city at night in disguise) from being taken prisoner by the second band of Mongol warriors. After a series of battles Ḥosein kills them and enjoys a few moments of relaxation and leisure admiring a young male dancer and, shortly after, practicing sexual love with a female singer. When Shâh 'Abbâs aims at recruiting Ḥosein for his own troops, the latter refuses. In order to prove his independence, he instead proposes to acquire seven years' financial tribute from the Moghul emperor Akbar. He travels to India and after a large number of adventures, challenges, and misfortunes finally gains Akbar's acceptance and, in fact, admiration. After a whole year in Akbar's service, Ḥosein travels home. The story comes to an open end shortly after his successful arrival back in Eṣfahân.

The basic plot is rooted in and mirrors the historical rivalry between the Central Asian Özbeks and the Persian Kïzïlbash, who belonged to different ethnic and religious fractions (sunnite Özbeks, shi'ite Persians). As for composition, the plot is embellished with a substantial array of repetitions, counteractions, digressions, and other details. While the action at times appears highly repetitive, Ḥosein undergoes a certain process of maturation. He is strong, fearless, and valiant from the very beginning when, in an uncontrolled outburst of anger, he kills several butchers who tried to take the sheep he intended to offer to the governor. Yet on the other hand Ḥosein at various instances is unaware of danger, captured, overcome, and close to being killed—only to resurface later, stronger than ever before. Ḥosein matures in terms of martial training, yet in terms of social sensitivity he stays unrefined throughout his life. His sole true concern is his own independence, and only when forced by inevitable necessity does he acknowledge the superiority of his masters. His education in the martial arts eventually molds him into an almost invincible hero. Yet



Editio princeps, fol. 28 b: Ḥosein, now dressed up as a warrior, enjoys drinking while watching the performance of a female dancer.

his pursuit of predominantly individual welfare also makes him vulnerable, and his few emotional encounters with females, one of them ending in the utmost dramatics, constitute no more than distracting side-episodes that do not lead to strengthening his social ties.

In accordance with the plot, *HK* is full of trickery and fighting, threats and boasting, attacks and defeats, cruelty and cursing. However, it is difficult to discern individual characters within the highly repetitive action. It may be noted that, in addition to other important characteristics, one essential ingredient of other Persian popular romances is almost completely lacking. Often, as in the widely known *Hamze-nâme*, the hero character is split in two: the pure and indisputably positive hero goes for outright confrontation. He does the fighting, he falls in love, he is the one who is captured and tortured. Yet he often possesses an alter ego, the *'ayyâr*, who within the romance is a character both tricky and nasty. The *'ayyâr* is meant to and actually compelled to do all those things the hero is not allowed to perform: he dresses up in female clothes in order to deceive the enemy, drugs, kidnaps, and blackmails the enemy, and in general perpetrates all kinds of acts that even under the conditions of warfare may be regarded as morally questionable. Yet he does so only in order to assist the hero in reaching their common ultimate goal, which is to vanquish the enemy, the equivalent of subduing the evil.

In *HK*, though the hero often has a helper, in most instances he himself acts as the *'ayyâr*. This becomes most obvious when the hero is depicted as using a typical *'ayyâr*'s equipment (all of which are denoted by the adjective *'ayyâri*), such as the *parde* (cloth), *sham'che* (candle), *panche* (a small cup-like instrument used while intoxicating the enemy), *kolâh* (hat), and so on. Moreover, quite the contrary of stereotyping the hero as exclusively "good", warriors of both sides—the "good" and the "bad" guys—curse grossly, both introduce themselves by preposterous bragging, both subsequently rob the mint of the towns they terrorize, both humiliate their victims, and both enjoy leisure by getting drunk immediately after their retreat from action. And while it may be generally acknowledged that protagonists and other characters in popular literature tend to be leveled, their psychological shallowness in *HK* is emphasized by the use of formulaic characterization. Psychological depth in terms of an individual characterization is clearly not the romance's aim; even though the romance is localized in a discernible historical context, its role does not lie in presenting and immortalizing any specific hero. Although individualized by name, Ḥosein remains a stereotype framed by the expectations a warrior must confront. Moreover, via this course of action Ḥosein is developed as a formulaic stereotype, a personified formula moving within the contextual

web of all kinds of formulas that pervade the tale, organizing its structure and evoking meaning beyond the verbatim message of the word.

Formulaic Phraseology

Several distinct types of formulas within *HK* can be discerned: (1) general formulas structuring the flow of the narrative, (2) formulaic expressions of certain facts, actions, emotions, or qualities, and (3) formulaic condensations of complex backgrounds into single terms. The following is a sorted analytical survey of the most common formulas employed in *HK*. For reasons of availability the referenced edition is not the *editio princeps*, but a popular print published in the late 1950s in Teheran by the *Sherkat-e nesbi-ye kânun-e ketâb* (see Marzolph 1994a:no. 52). This particular version, which compared to the *editio princeps* is slightly shortened at the end, contains some 43,000 words. References to the text include both page and line numbers. If it has proved more convenient, I have counted lineation from the bottom: thus, 18/-3 designates the third line from the bottom on page 18. The original Persian text is accompanied by a translation and, if necessary, explanatory notes.

1. General formulas

1.1. Introductory formula

ammâ râviyân-e akhbâr va nâqelân-e âs̲âr va ṭuṭiyân-e shekar-shekan shirin goftâr [. . .] bedin gune revâyat namude'and ke . . . ("The tellers of tales and the transmitters of stories and the sugar-breaking sweet-talking parrots [. . .] have narrated in this way that . . ."; 2/-9). This formula is a common introduction to popular romance and is in fact employed in many other manuscript and printed texts. It is composed in *saj'*, a simple rhymed prose (relying on the rhyme of *akhbâr, âs̲âr, goftâr*). The parrot (*ṭuṭi*) in Persian texts is commonly alluded to as an animal capable of human speach. It figures most prominently in the *Ṭuṭi-nâme* ("Book of the Parrot"), the Persian version of the Indian *Śukasaptati* ("Seventy Tales of a Parrot"; see Marzolph 1979).

1.2. Formulas within the narrative

Interior formulas reveal their oral origin by addressing the audience directly. Except for the very common and unspecific *al-qeṣṣe* . . . ("In short, . . ."; 9/17, 10/14, 18/13, 20/8, 24/7, etc.; altogether 24 occurrences), these formulas most often refer to a change of perspective and thus of protagonist, action, and scenery. Persian narrators prefer to close a specific

scene before starting to portray other scenes, so they rarely work with several folders of parallel scenes at a time: when person X's action has been exhausted, he or she is literally left (the formula says: *dâshte bâsh*, "leave him"), the relevant narrative folder is closed, and person Y's folder is opened (*az . . . be-shnou,* "hear about . . ."). Narrative flashbacks, analytical remarks, and interrelated parallel descriptions rarely occur. The relevant formulas documented by *HK* comprise the following:

ammâ chand kaleme az ... be-shnou ("now you will hear some words about ..."; 2/-1, 12/14, 14/1, 16/14, 18/6, 18/18, 21/13, etc.; 22 occurrences total)

tâ be dâstân-e u be-resim chand kaleme az ... be-shnou ("until we shall eventually reach his story, you will hear some words about ..."; 7/15, 8/4)

inhâ-râ dâshte bâsh, chand kaleme az ... be-shnou ("leave them [here], and hear some words about ..."; 40/17)

chand kaleme 'arż konam az ...("I will mention some words about ..."; 41/9)

inhâ-râ dâste bâsh, ammâ ...("leave them [there], but as for ..."; 44/2, 43/19, 56/14, 73/11, 88/3, 93/8, etc.; 25 occurrences total)

ammâ az ... be-shnou ("as for ..., hear [the following]"; 60/20, 61/13, 86/5, 90/3, 91/7; 12 occurrences total)

This type of interior formula has also been richly documented from the oral performance of Mashdi Galin Khânom, the only (female) Persian storyteller whose repertoire has been collected with some degree of comprehensiveness. Collections from faithfully documented Persian oral narrative tradition are scarce (see Marzolph 1993:cols. 256-59), and thus Mashdi Galin's tales, comprising some 117 texts narrated in a consistent style, constitute a valuable corpus of comparative data. When her tales were recorded (in writing) by the British Persianist L. P. Elwell-Sutton in the mid-twentieth century in an induced setting, the narrator was in her seventies (Elwell-Sutton 1980). In the collector's presentation, she is portrayed as a gifted narrator and said to command a large repertoire of tales, so supposedly her narration relied on lifelong experience and practice. In the published tales preserved from her repertoire, the most common formula has been analyzed (see Marzolph 1994c:ii, 25f.) as variations of the abstract type *X dâshte bâsh/bez̲âr, biâ/borou (berim/berid) sar-e Y (az Y beshnou/begir)* ("Leave [sg.] X, come/go [sg. and pl.] to Y [hear about Y]"). When comparing the overall size of *HK* to the published repertoire of Mashdi Galin's tales, parallel formulas occur relatively more often in *HK*. Within a total of about 180,000 words of her published narratives, there are

Editio princeps, fol. 36 b: Ḥosein, during his passage to India, shoots some monsters.

fewer than 40 occurrences of the formula. *HK*, on the other hand, within its roughly 43,000 words, counts a total of more than 60 occurrences, raising the density of the formula's occurrence to more than six times that of Mashdi Galin's tales. This phenomenon does not cast the proposed oral origin of *HK* into doubt by comparison to the reliably documented orality of Mashdi Galin's tales. It is rather to be pointed out that a lengthy narration such as *HK* possesses a comparatively complicated structure. That is, it mentions a large number of protagonists and various strands of action that at times run separately or parallel, merging at specific moments. This relative complexity requires switching between different scenes of action more often than do the short and simply structured folktales Mashdi Galin narrated. From this perspective, the various degrees of formulaic density are linked to different narrative genres rather than to a hypothetical contrast between oral and written traditions.

1.2.1. Formulas structuring time

For the sake of completeness, mention must be made of the conventional formulas structuring time, above all those announcing the beginning of the night (9/17, 17/3, 22/12, 26/7, 31/11, 39/20, 58/9, 65/7, 86/11, 96/12) or the break of day (12/15, 16/14, 21/43, 28/18, 43/10, 45/12, 54/13, 55/8, 58/1, 85/13, 111/15, 116/8). These formulas, however, are not related to the focus of the present analysis. They rely on a long tradition in the narration of prose and poetry and originate mainly from literary conventions.

1.3. Final formula

HK's final formula *tâ bar-ham zanande-ye lezzât bar ishân be-tâkht* ("Until the one who destroys all pleasures came upon them"; 152/15), reminiscent of romantic tales of the *Arabian Nights* genre, represents the Islamic version of the "happily ever after" ending of many a European folktale. Yet, in contrast to fantasizing about eternal happiness—or at least happiness that goes beyond the limitations of narrated time—the Persian formula, in accordance with Islamic morality recalls the finiteness of human life and the vanity of wordly pleasures by pointing out God's supreme command and the inevitable subordination (the prime meaning of the Arabic word *islâm*) of humanity to God's will.

1.4. Proverbs

The use of proverbs (see Marzolph 1999:167-69) is not necessarily indicative of orality, but rather a matter of personal style. Again comparing *HK* with Mashdi Galin's tales, we find that the latter storyteller was well

versed in contemporary proverb lore (Marzolph 1994c:ii, 29f.). In contrast, the narrator of *HK* employs proverbs only very infrequently. The three items extracted from the narration are:

> *shab qal'e-ye mard ast* ("Night is a man's castle"; 27/14)
> *al-va'de vafâ* ("Promises must be kept"; 143/19)
> *shotor didi*? - *jâ-ye pâyash-râ ham nadidam*! ("Did you see the camel?— I did not even see the place where it put its feet!"; 30/16)

While the first two proverbs are self-explanatory, the third one requires an exegesis. It relates to the internationally documented tale-type classified as AaTh 655 A: *The Strayed Camel and the Clever Deductions* (Aarne/Thompson 1973:231; Enjavi 1978:219-24; Ranke 1979; Marzolph 1992:ii, no. 416): While traveling on the road, several brothers deduce the exact characteristics of a certain stray camel from the signs they observe on their way; when they disclose their knowledge to the camel's owner who is looking for his property, he accuses them of having stolen the animal. In a figurative sense, the negation of having seen any of the proverbial camel's traces indicates the speaker's intention to avoid commitment in order not to get himself into trouble (cf. Haïm 1956:275f.).

2. Content formulas (formulaic expressions of certain facts, actions, emotions, or qualities)

A large variety of phrases in *HK* is related to specific aspects of content or action. The formulaic character of these phrases is revealed not only by their repetitiveness. Moreover, they are most often quoted in condensed or shortened versions that imply the repertoire of allusions to the complete versions mentioned previously in the text.

2.1. Facts and actions

2.1.1. Destruction

HK is a narrative about war, combat, and conquest and thus, to some extent, about destruction. Its ultimate formula for destruction is *âtesh roushan namudan* ("to light a fire"). It occurs in short and lengthy versions, the most elaborate of which is *chenân âteshi roushan namud ke dudash cheshme-ye khorshid-râ tire-o târ namud* ("He lit such a fire that its smoke darkened the light of the sun"; 2/-4, 3/3, 3/6, 3/15, 3/21, 4/9, 13/13, 18/15, 36/4, 36/12, 42/19, 43/7, 55/5, etc.; altogether 27 occurrences). The hero himself is characterized as *âtesh-pâre* "spark," implying his capacity for kindling unrest and (alluding to the darkening of the sun's light) overthrowing existing systems of order. There is no discernible difference

between the mention of the formula as the description of a fact (such as in 18/15) or its use as a threat (such as in 13/13). Sometimes, and especially in several instances towards the end of the narrative, the formula is expanded by bragging . . . *ke dar dâstânhâ bâz guyand* (". . . so that it will be recounted in tales"; 13/14, 102/20, 122/9, 128/18, 139/5, 151/13). It may be suggested that this additional allegation was appended not to increase the original formula's meaning, but rather because the original formula had been employed so often that its power had faded and needed to be reinvigorated.

2.1.2. Humiliation

Both enemy and hero humiliate their opponents in peculiar ways when they have captured and tied them up (sometimes against a tree). The milder form is *sar tarâshi* (literally, "shaving of one's head"; 5/13, 16/1, 83/19, 93/6), implying the forced loss of the opponent's physical signs of reputation and dignity. The humiliation is made more explicit by variations of the formula *rish-o sabil tarâshidan* ("to shave [the opponent's] beard and mustache"; 2/-3, 3/6, 16/20, 18/9, 97/16, etc.; altogether 15 occurrences). Ultimate humiliation is expressed through expanding the action to *nâkhon gereftan* ("to extract [the opponent's] fingernails/toenails"; 14/21, 17/18, 57/14, 97/7, 98/11, 99/17, 122/17, 139/15, 145/21). For a modern reader of *HK*, this act of aggression most often appears as an unmotivated demonstration of power, such as when the protagonist states *bâyad rish-o sabil-e to-râ be-tarâsham* ("I *must* shave your beard and mustache"; 59/8), even after his opponent has confessed and divulged the hiding-place of his treasures. Less common is the brutal amputation of irreplaceable parts of the head, explicitly of the ear or nose (52/18, 95/8), a form of aggression that permanently stigmatizes the victim as a culprit. In a singular case, the opponent is further humiliated by dressing him up as a woman (*yek dast-e lebâs-e zanâne be-u pushânid*; 97/16). The latter is all the more fascinating, since in a different scene the hero's helper disguises himself by dressing up as a woman, even to the point of deliberately shaving off his beard and mustache (131/13).

2.1.3. Burglary and combat by duel

Burglary and combat by duel constitute the two most frequent activities of both hero and enemy. These activities start with highly codified preparations and consist of a number of stereotyped ingredients, such as donning armor, climbing over the city wall, and drugging the enemy in the case of burglary. Preparations for a duel likewise include donning armor and climbing over the city wall. The action then proceeds

by beating the drum in order to attract the guardian's attention and announce one's arrival. Normally, the guardian would address the attacking warrior, and the warriors would greet each other and introduce themselves, invite each other to begin combat, brag about their audacity, and then proceed to fight. The end of fighting (of armies) is likewise signaled in a formal way by the beating of the drum of retreat (*ṭabl-e bâz-gasht/morâje'at*; 111/11, 112/12, 112/14). The chain of stereotypical incidents comprises the following steps:

donning armor (10/1, 22/19, 26/9, 27/8, 40/6, etc.; 35 occurrences total)
climbing (over the city wall, onto a roof; 10/18, 14/15, 17/6, 22/21, 27/11, etc.; 24 occurrences total)
drugging (11/21, 17/9, 57/11, 58/16, 58/19, 89/10, 96/22, 122/12, 132/3)
beating the drum (14/10, 22/15, 27/4, 29/1, 33/8 etc.; 27 occurrences total)
mutual address (175/3, 27/21, 29/15, 39/2, 40/3, etc.; 18 occurrences total)
introduction (15/18, 17/16, 23/-3, 28/1, 39/3, etc.; 12 occurrences total)
bragging (16/1, 50/10, 103/13, 128/12, 131/3)
combat by duel/armed clash (16/3, 24/1, 28/8, 32/5, 39/4, etc.; 20 occurrences total)

Single constituents within this chain may also occur alone. They tend to be initially mentioned in elaborate versions, while later on they often shrink to a condensed image of only a few words. The working of this kind of formulaic expression can best be demonstrated by contrasting the different elaborate and formulaic versions of how the warriors don their armor. The first mention (10/1-12) comprises 12 lines of text, and in addition to several individualized descriptions comprises the full range of detailed stereotyped elements that later occur in shorter versions. When the bag of arms is emptied, the place looks "like an arms dealer's shop" (*mânande dokkân-e semsârí)*; the hero first undresses "stark naked like an Egyptian sword-blade" (*mânande tigh-e meṣri*); he then puts on seven silk shirts (the number seven is a formulaic indicator of perfection) and proceeds to don the various pieces of armor, culminating in "a hidden dagger and a visible sword" (*khanjari makhfi va shamshiri âshkâr*). Later mentions of similar scenes vary in their details, and often give no more than a condensed allusion: *mostaghraq-e daryâ-ye âhan-o fulâd shodand* ("they got submerged in a sea of iron and steel"; 14/13); *gharq-e selâḥ shode* ("he drowned in arms"; 17/4); *az sar tâ pâ gharq-e âhan-o fulâd* ("from head to toe drowned in iron and steel"; 85/6). Yet the full range of details—and thus meaning—is available to the listeners by recalling the initially narrated illustrative version.

2.1.5. Disguise

Disguise is a frequently occuring action exercised by hero, helper, and enemy in order to investigate the state of affairs without being recognized; *bâ/be lebâs-e mobaddal/ʻavaż* (literally, "in changed clothes"; 8/10, 14/3, 16/15, 18/12, 20/1, etc.; 23 occurrences total). The exact nature of disguise is rarely mentioned, but female clothing is a possibility (see 88/4, 118/2, 131/13, 133/13).

2.2. Emotions

2.2.1. Cursing

Both hero and enemy in *HK* employ a wide range of denigrating verbal expressions. In accordance with the usual range of verbal aggression in the Persian language (see Noland and Warren 1981; Sprachman 1982, 1995), these expressions allude predominantly to illegitimate offspring (actual or figurative), filthiness, and lack of masculinity. The following list contains items employed by the narrative's characters as well as those employed by the narrator himself when characterizing the enemies:

gostavân (meaning [and language] unclear; 3/1, 10/1, 15/1, 16/1, 34/2, etc.; 14 occurrences total)
harâmzâde (literally, "born from illegitimate intercourse"; 16/3, 17/16, 53/11, 59/14, 81/13, etc.; 13 occurrences total)
valadoz-zenâ/zenâ-zâde (literally, "child of/born from adultery"; 30/9, 58/22, 84/21)
nâ-pâk ("unclean"; 11/20, 15/16, 18/15, 32/6, 38/16, 90/12, 93/2, 99/11)
sag ("dog"; 40/6)
khabiṣ ("dirty"; 41/22)
bad-jens ("of bad character, mean"; 42/1, 63/4)
namak be-ḥarâm (literally, "untrue to salt [eaten together]," thus "faithless, evil"; 51/1)
nâ-mard ("unmasculine man" [implying cowardice and impotence]; 68/14, 125/4, 139/11, 151/12)
zan-ṣefat ("of female attitude"; 139/19)

2.2.2. Anger

Again in accordance with the predominant action, the main emotion expressed by all characters in *HK* is anger and wrath, whether originating from humiliation or aggressiveness. Anger finds expression in two hyperbolic phrases: *donyâ dar naẓaresh tire(-o târ) shode (gashte)* ("the world got dark before his view"; 4/5, 17/3, 18/9, 20/3, 93/15; the use of the adjective construction *tire(-o târ)* might be regarded as an allusion to the most frequent threat [see 2.1.1]). Contrary to Western imagery, biting one's lips does not signal astonishment (which in Persian is expressed by the

Edition of 1276/1860, fol. 1 a: cover page, illustrating Ḥosein as a shepherd in his original surroundings; the writing in the upper part of the picture characterizes him as *tahamtan-e dourān*, the "Hero of all ages."

symbol known as *angosht-e taḥayyor*, literally "the finger of bewilderment," namely the putting of the index finger to one's lips) but wrath:

> *labrâ be-dandân javid* ("he chewed his lips with his teeth"; 21/4, 33/9, 50/5, 52/22, 56/19, 58/6)
> *labrâ be-dandân gazide* ("he bit his lips with his teeth"; 25/19, 37/13, 41/18, 67/14, 95/4, 102/14, 110/3)

Sometimes, the degree of anger is intensified to a self-destructive degree:

> *... be-nou'i ke khun az u jâri shod* ("... in such a way that blood burst forth"; 4/6)
> *... ke khunâbe az dahanesh sarâzir shod* ("so that blood poured down from his mouth"; 9/21, 20/4, 20/18, 40/12, 54/21, 92/12)

2.2.3. Grief and mourning

Grief and mourning over the death of a beloved one are expressed by the tearing of one's shirt (*geribânhâ châk kard*: 6/1, 12/20, 58/2, 60/17, 101/13, etc.; 10 occurrences total).

2.3. Comparisons (employing *chun, mânand, mesl*)

HK is rich in comparisons employed to express certain actions, emotions, or qualities. These comparisons constitute powerful formulaic expressions, alluding to complex phenomena that themselves are not mentioned explicitly but are commonly accepted by and known to the members of the audience. Each of the comparisons is linked to a specific notion and thus usually appears within the relevant formulaic depictions. Examples include:

> speed: *mânand-e bâd-e ṣarṣar* ("like the ice-cold wind"; 3/9, 35/22, 75/10), *mânand-e barq-e lâme'* ("like the bright lightning"; 12/9, 14/1, 33/4, 33/10, 36/7, etc., 13 occurrences total), *mânand-e seilâb* ("like a flood"; 10/15, 99/5, 122/3)
>
> beauty: *qadi dâsht chun chenâr, saresh chu gombad-e dauwâr, chashm chu maq'ad-e kharus* ("his stature was like a cypress tree, his head like a round [literally, revolving] cupola, his eyes like a cock's anus [sharp]"; 4/14, 15/14, 21/9, 59/14, 76/16, 80/21)
>
> equipment: *mânand-e dokkân-e semsâri* ("like an arms dealer's shop"; 10/2, 22/20, 27/9, see above 2.1.3)

nudity: *mânand-e tigh-e meṣri* (“like an Egyptian sword-blade”; 10/3, etc., see above 2.1.3)

agility in climbing: *mânand-e zolf-e ʻarusân* (“like the curls of a newlywed couple”; 10/18, 26/11, 57/7), *mânand-e morgh-e sabokruḥ* (“like a merry bird”; 10/21, 22/22, 54/11), *kabutarvâr* (“like a pigeon”; 15/12, 67/17)

agility in descending: *mânand-e ajal-e moʻallaq* (“like sudden death”; 23/1, 29/8, 38/15, 99/7, 138/13)

wrath: *mânand-e ezhdehâ-ye damân* (“like a powerful dragon”; 14/6, 21/12, 26/12, 41/19, 67/20, 99/5), *mânand-e shir-e gorosne ke dar gale-ye rubâh oftâd* (“like a hungry lion that attacked a crowd of foxes”; 30/12, 34/7, 42/11, 116/21, 120/21), *mânand-e shir-e gorosne* (“like a hungry lion”; 83/15, 93/4, 95/7, 117/12, 130/11, 148/2), *mânand-e shir-e khashmnâk* (“like an angry lion”; 49/10, 60/5, 101/6), *meṣl-e gorâz-e khashm-âlud* (“like an enraged wild boar”; 33/9, 103/14, 107/5), *mânand-e âtesh ke dar neiyestân oftad* (“like a fire that befell the reeds”; 34/7)

steadfastness: *mânand-e sad-e Eskandar* (“like Alexander’s wall”; 27/7, 49/16)

death: *mânand-e qâleb-e panir do nim shod* (“like a piece of cheese he fell [literally, became] two halves”; 42/6, 93/2), *chun khiyâr-e tar be-do nim shod* (“like a pickled cucumber he fell [literally, became] two halves”; 42/6, 63/10, 66/1, 66/6, 103/15, 108/2, etc.)

fright: *mânand-e rubâh faryâd keshidand* (“they shouted for help like foxes”; 60/6)

escape: *mânand-e khers-e tir-khorde* (“like a wounded bear”; 56/18, 61/12)

multitude: *mânand-e mur-o malakh* (“like ants and grasshoppers”; 66/7, 87/4, 117/2, 145/8)

3. Formulaic condensations of complex backgrounds into single words

The most powerful formula in *HK* is at the same time the shortest one; it consists of the single word *tahamtan* (“hero”). This word is applied only once to a person other than Ḥosein, and notably before Ḥosein himself joins the action (4/3). From the moment he enters the scene, the narrative’s one and only *tahamtan* is Ḥosein, and his increasing self-confidence is mirrored by the growingly elaborate descriptive passages of what a *tahamtan* he is. His qualifications, whether mentioned in the course of action or by Ḥosein himself in direct speech, are worded in *saj‘* (rhymed

prose) as a mnemonic device: he is *tahamtan-e zamân/dourân* ("hero of the age"; 41/9), *yeke-tâz-e 'arṣe-ye meidân* ("the unique fighter on the battle-field"; 41/9), *div-e sefid-e Âẕarbâijân* ("the white demon of [the north-eastern province of] Âẕarbâijân"; 55/3). Moreover, Ḥosein's qualification as *tahamtan* links him to Iran's greatest hero, the legendary Rostam who was immortalized in the Persian national epic, Ferdousi's *Shâh-nâme*. Rostam is the ideal *tahamtan* of Persian epic narrative, and any hero qualified by the same term *tahamtan* automatically partakes in the whole network of notions and allusions linked to Rostam (see Soroudi 1980). As if to underline the equation between Rostam and Ḥosein, the latter even is qualified as *javâni meṣl-e Rostam-e dâstân* ("a youth like the Rostam of the stories"; 49/18). Notably, the narrator employs this qualification in a scene where Ḥosein confronts his former master in an act of aggressive disobedience, thus at the same time liberating himself from former allegiance and signaling his individuality by the expression of a martial act. Here Ḥosein at last becomes himself, and at the same time he becomes another incarnation of the ultimate *tahamtan*.

Conclusion

HK is but one representative of the large number of Persian popular romances known to exist, many of which are supposedly composed according to similar outlines. Though some were written down at a comparatively early stage, most Persian romances reflect a high degree of orality. They draw on a common pool of stereotypical characters, plots, and motifs. Above all, they profit from a significant density of formulaic elements that serve a multitude of functions: formulas contain complex references in a comparatively simple form, and in compositional practice serve as mnemonic devices in order to construct powerful images that help the audience understand a variety of underlying notions on a shared cultural platform. Analyzing the formulas of Persian popular narrative would probably appear more rewarding if beforehand we possessed a larger amount of reliable information on narrators, narrative settings, and contexts or performance. Unfortunately, though basic information about the activities of storytellers in historical times is available (see Hanaway 1996; Omidsalar and Omidsalar 1999), only one (professional) narrator of the Qâjâr-period is discernible in terms of his individual production: Mirzâ Moḥammad 'Ali Naqibolmamâlek, the chief storyteller of the emperor Nâṣeroddin (r. 1264-1313/1848-96). The emperor's daughter Ṭurân Âġâ Fakhroddoule wrote down the story of *Amir Arsalân* as Naqibolmamâlek

related it in order to help the monarch fall asleep (Hanaway 1985). The tale that resulted is undoubtedly a genuine product of oral composition and might, once analyzed, contribute to apprehending the mechanisms of this art form in the Persian professional context. Naqibolmamâlek's production is, however, not necessarily representative of oral composition in the Persian romances in general: his audience was small, well educated, of a high social rank, and powerful—to name only some circumstances by which this tale's narrative context would differ from other imaginable contexts of performance. In contrast to the royal atmosphere of Naqibolmamâlek's performance, folk tales and popular romances were narrated in public, on the market place or in the tea-house, to a mixed and uneducated audience. Setting and context would allow for and promote a large amount of improvisation and interaction between the narrator and the audience (Cejpek 1968:652-53). In this context, formulas such as the ones listed above would serve to strengthen the ties between narrator and listeners by having recourse to a common pool of culturally acknowledged basic notions. They would create appeal by filling the gaps for which words had not been used, while at the same time constituting the raw material used for composition.

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"Ah ain't heard whut de tex' wuz": The (Il)legitimate Textuality of Old English and Black English

Michael Saenger

"Oral literature" is an uncomfortable pair of words; Walter Ong goes so far as to suggest that the phrase is "self-contradictory" (1982:13). Orality has gained legitimacy as an object of critical inquiry, but as long as critics are located in universities, they must, like archeologists, rely (however suspiciously) on transcriptions and try to piece out the gap between the fossil (the textual record) and the vanished life form (real oral performance) that it claims to record.

In this essay I examine two texts from radically different cultural situations: Anglo-Saxon monasteries and the rural Black South. Nevertheless, their respective provenance—in terms of speaker, reporter and legitimizing institution—bear intriguing similarities. Each text is concerned with the biography of the oral poet and issues of transcribing his orality. These parallels, put together, constitute a paradigm for the presentation of an oral poet in a literary frame.[1] The two framing, legitimating textual authors in question (as distinguished from the oral authors they present and circumscribe) are the Venerable Bede and Zora Neale Hurston. The embedded authors, Cædmon and John Pearson, are both Christian preachers who speak in a language still heavily structured by an oral, pagan culture. Because Bede and Hurston are both incorporating orality, they share similar structures and even images, but because they have different cultural agendas,

[1] There have been many attempts to draw parallels between Bede's account of Cædmon and other accounts of poetic inspiration, both as potential sources for Bede's narrative (if it is presumed to be fictional) and as subsequent analogues of that narrative (for critics who are interested in the inscription of oral inspiration in various cultures). Andy Orchard lists some of the copious research on analogues of Bede's narrative (1996:417, n. 4); see also Lord 1993 for some comparisons with more recent narratives. My approach is unique only in that it compares two very similar conjunctions of literate narrative and divinely inspired Christian oral poetry, thus drawing attention to the two very different cultural environments and two very different agendas on the part of the literary transcribers who relate and preserve the embedded oral poems.

the politics of their presentation of orality differ. Bede and Hurston both construct a narrative to frame and explain a transcribed (and in a sense, translated) text by an oral author. In both cases, a literary narrative not only coexists with and circumscribes an oral poem, but that narrative also presents a "performance arena," in J. M. Foley's terms,[2] within which the oral poem is said to occur as a significant event. First, I will compare the two framing narratives of the creation, recognition, assimilation, and martyrdom of the oral poet; then I will address the performance arena and the problems of the transcription of the embedded text attributed to the oral poet.

The Venerable Bede (ca. 673-735), as he is now commonly known, was a highly learned and productive scholar, historian, and theologian who spent his entire life in service of the church at a time when England was only recently Christianized. His *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* (*An Ecclesiastical History of the English People*) is a foundational text for the history of English Christianity.[3] One episode from this history has attracted a great deal of attention: Bede gives us the life story of Cædmon, as well as Cædmon's first divinely inspired poem (in Latin paraphrase). Cædmon grows up as a very ordinary cowherd, and until he is very mature has only one trait that distinguishes him from his fellow vernacular laborers—he cannot sing their beer-drinking songs. On one particular evening, he goes to tend cattle and, once asleep, receives the call to take up a new *theme* for singing, the praise of God. He does, and does so successfully that he is soon recognized and revered for this gift. For the remainder of his days he lives as a monk, inspiring others to piety and to a rejection of the world with his songs. Bede's account of the vernacular devotion of Cædmon functions as didactic propaganda; it is important mediation between the church and the rough majority of English, who considered themselves Christian but were in much need of divine, or priestly, spiritual education. Cædmon is important to Bede because he begins in an unenlightened vernacular environment and crosses the border into the monastery; Bede presents him as an exemplar to the untutored multitude. For precisely this reason, one wonders if Bede's

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[2] See, for example, Foley 1995:81. He defines the "performance arena" as "the locus in which some specialized form of communication is uniquely licensed to take place" (8).

[3] For a recent perspective on the historical Bede and Cædmon, see Stanley 1995. Lees and Overing (1994) suggest that Bede's historical record downplays and conceals the importance of Hilda, and that many modern critics have been complicit in this erasure; see also note 16.

account of Cædmon's divine inspiration is actually true, or if it perhaps borrows some dynamics from the story of the annunciation.[4]

Bede's text was initially written entirely in Latin; although the "Hymn" was clearly spoken originally in Old English, it was first recorded in a Latin translation. Subsequently, an anonymous monk provided the Old English original as a marginal gloss to Bede's Latin paraphrase. Bede himself notes, in his entirely Latin text, that his Latin paraphrase of the "Hymn" cannot do justice to the Old English original.[5] Clearly, someone felt it would be helpful to record the Old English version in the margin of Bede's manuscript page.[6] That marginal gloss, a reversed translation, constitutes the first known text of English literature. Gradually, as the manuscript was reproduced, the vernacular came to be the only medium for writing the "Hymn" and even Bede's narrative frame itself was rendered in Old English (Kiernan 1990).[7] The gradual translation of Bede's Latin, then, demonstrates the increasing legitimacy of the vernacular. Old English enters Bede's text just as Cædmon enters the monastery—as a marginal cowherd who is nevertheless educable. The story in the text and the story of the text draw attention to the paradoxes and cultural politics of oral literature.

In her first novel, *Jonah's Gourd Vine*, Zora Neale Hurston traces the career of John Pearson, a half-black man of immense physical, charismatic, and creative power whom Hurston based on her own father. John is the illegitimate son of a white plantation owner. Because of this status, John is

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[4] In her subtle account of the mixed presence of literacy and orality in Old English poetry, O'Keeffe notes that "while Cædmon's *Hymn* is our clearest record of a purely oral composition, the scholarly acceptance of its intrinsic orality is based less firmly on analysis of the nature or number of the formulae in the *Hymn* than on Bede's authoritative account of its author's illiteracy and of its miraculous occasion of composition" (1990:79).

[5] Abrams 1986:21. Bede's comment is omitted by later scribes, since the Old English version was no longer absent from the page.

[6] Kiernan (1990) has argued that the later scribe in fact performed a reverse-translation of the Latin, not supplying the original as a gloss but rather composing a new "original" based on the Latin. More recently, Isaac (1997) has supported this theory on philological grounds.

[7] The peculiar status of Cædmon's "Hymn" is reflected in the fact that in modern research it is variously entitled *Cædmon's Hymn*, Cædmon's *Hymn*, and "Cædmon's Hymn," as well as the title that I use. One's choice depends partly upon whether one wishes to take Bede's word for the poem's origin, that is, whether one takes Cædmon to be a character or an author.

hated by his black stepfather and leaves to work for his (unacknowledged) real father. Thereupon, John falls in love with Lucy, gets in trouble with the law, and then finds his calling as a preacher *par excellence*. His excessive womanizing, however, threatens his career. The congregation knows perfectly well about his sinful ways, so he must maintain their faith in him by elevating the quality of his sermons. But John is a broken man; he attempts to find work as a laborer again, then finally repents. Just when he almost has a hold on virtue, he falls into sin again and dies in what appears to be an accident with a train. The outlines of the plot are taken from the life of Hurston's father, a womanizing preacher, but much of the verbal expression that the characters use derives from Hurston's field notes as an anthropologist; the book is filled with phrases from her notes, ranging from one-liners to an entire sermon. That sermon, the artistic climax of the novel, was transcribed by Hurston from the Reverend C. C. Lovelace at a real church service.

Before properly comparing the fictional narratives, a brief sketch of Zora Neale Hurston's relation to her text is necessary. Hurston was heir to both oral and written culture. She was born in the all-black town of Eatonville, Florida, then educated at Howard University and Barnard College in cultural anthropology, a field that has long been structured by predominantly white academics who observe "primitive" culture. Like many other anthropologists, Hurston wished to record oral culture before assimilation threatened to erase it, but Hurston was recording, advancing, and engaging in her own culture, not studying it from an ivory tower. The ironies of Hurston's position are complex; she went back to Florida to gather oral sayings with the assistance of a wealthy liberal aristocrat who was enamored of the vogue of "primitivism" in the 1930s. Hurston went, in effect, as an employee; she signed a contract giving all ownership of the "data" she was to find to her patron (Hemenway 1977:110). But in order to be trusted she impersonated a local black woman, which, ironically, she happened to be. Everyone agreed that the folklore she gathered was valuable, but to whom did it belong? To the (mostly anonymous) oral tradition-bearers, to the white patroness, or to Hurston? To the discipline of anthropology or to the Harlem Renaissance? Hurston did publish some of her findings in academic journals, but she achieved her prominent place in African American letters by subverting the praxis of academic anthropology. By weaving her material into powerful works of fiction, she learned to speak as well as record the voices she studied.[8] This complex status as an

[8] She first published the sermon in question in Nancy Cunard's ethnographic *Negro: An Anthology* (1934:50-54).

author/anthropologist/scribe/spy seems at first glance to be convoluted, but it appears less so if one recalls the nature of an oral poet-author, who is always as much a collector and transmitter as she is a "creator."[9] Hurston re-enacts the structure of oral creativity and its goals of cultural retention, but she does so in a self-consciously theorized double-citizenship in both the oral and the written worlds.[10]

Hurston was keenly aware of the role Christianity played in subjugating American blacks; it helped to pacify resistance. This is a point that sharply distinguishes Hurston from the objects of her research. African traditions, including Hoodoo rituals, persist in the rural South alongside such Christian traditions as the Baptist Church. But they are both practiced "naïvely," that is to say without a book-learned awareness of their role in colonialization. The fact that Hurston recorded *and* performed Hoodoo rituals (Hemenway 1977:118, 121-22) underlines her desire simultaneously to observe and to engage in the culture she revered. Although John, as a preacher, would appear to be the center of Christianity in his parish, it is in fact the pagan rhythms of African poetry in his sermons that enchant his congregation. Hurston writes of John in his later days that "he had still enough of the former John to be formidable as an animal and enough of his Pagan poesy to thrill" (1934:221, her capitalization). One of the key aspects of oral culture is a certain structure of naïveté, and John would certainly object to the accusation of being a pagan. John (and probably Lovelace) is

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[9] It must be granted that there is some awkwardness in the pastiche of material in *Jonah's Gourd Vine*, Hurston's first novel. Critics generally agree that Hurston's art of preservation and creation is perfected in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. A contemporary reviewer writes that Hurston sets up her characters and situations "as mere pegs upon which to hang their dialect and their folkways" (Burris 1934:166). Sometimes Hurston fits the aphorisms so perfectly in *Jonah's Gourd Vine* that they retain all of their original edge, as when Lucy chides John for his womanizing, "Don't git miss-put on yo' road. God don't eat okra" (1934:204), that is, "Don't lose your path to salvation; God doesn't accept into heaven slimy (sinful) people." A comparison between my paraphrase and Hurston's figurative dialect will reveal how much, as Bede says, is lost in translation.

[10] A contemporary reviewer remarked that Hurston wrote "with double authority as a Negro and a student of folklore. An insider, she shares with her hero the touch of 'pagan poesy' that made him thrill his hearers when he preached. But she is an insider without the insider's usual neuroses" (Gruening 1934). It is amusing that pure orality should be figured as neuroses. However backhanded the compliment, this is an enthusiastically positive review. Hurston's dual citizenship in the oral and written worlds has come to appear less peculiar in the context of recent scholarship on orality. O'Keeffe, for example, points to scribes of Old English whose "participation in the texts made them literate analogues to oral performers. . . " (1990:192).

necessarily unconscious, in an academic manner at least, of the subversiveness of his own oral modality. Nevertheless, as a colored or "yellow" black man, John experiences some of the same ambivalences as Hurston does as a black anthrolopologist. When his biological father Mister Pearson gives him a job, it is as a "house nigger,"[11] a privileged slave. Pearson tells John to watch the other workers and check on whether they are cleaning things properly: "Don't say anything to 'em, but when you find 'em dirty you let me know" (43). John is asked to be an informant for white culture, much as Hurston was collecting folklore (officially, at least) for the benefit of her white patroness.

The Life Story of an Oral Poet

The careers of Hurston's John and Bede's Cædmon parallel each other. Alan Brown draws attention to the fact that the Florida in which Hurston grew up, studied, and set her novels was full of natural dangers, forcing its people to survive by becoming "animalistic."[12] Both John and Cædmon are associated with beasts in their pre-enlightened state. John is beaten by his savagely violent stepfather until he grows big enough to overcome him. Later he has his first major legal scrape after savagely beating Bud. John is certainly not as much of an angry beast as his father, but in his lust he is just as bestial. In his youth he amazes everyone with his boundless physical strength, wherein his character may owe as much to Samson as to Hurston's father (his Delilah comes later in Nettie). Like Samson, his lust is the undoing of his strength. When Alf Pearson first sees him, before finding out that John is his son, he says, "What a fine stud! Why boy, you would have brought five thousand dollars on the block in slavery time!" (37). That remark has many levels. Alf's own lust produced this young man, but because of the darker half of his racial composition Alf sees him as a horse, an animal who can sire strong new animals. He means it as a compliment, of course, and John allows himself to be intoxicated by this perception of his "bestial" charisma, never perceiving the way in which Alf's racist compliment points him toward an animalistic self-perception.

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[11] Hurston initially titled the book *Big Nigger* (Hemenway 1977:194).

[12] Brown comments that "John Pearson's external struggle with the forces of nature mirrors his internal struggle with 'De Beast' that lives within him and ultimately destroys him" (1991:76).

Lust is his tragic flaw in a rather clear-cut way, but it is also symbolic of his energy.

Cædmon, like John, works with beasts, but he is more reserved, and he has none of John's towering strength. The beasts with which Cædmon is associated are cattle (he goes to the *neata scipene*, "cattle barn" [25]),[13] animals that are lowly but docile. Like John, Cædmon's voice wins him the approval of the church hierarchy step by step, as the rough poetry shows such divine grace. John is viewed as a "house nigger" and Cædmon is a *clæne neat*, "clean cow"; they are stigmatized for their vulgar origins and their barbarous tongues, but they are paradoxically pure beasts, civilized farmhands, animals who speak. And in both cases, it is this paradoxically ugly-beautiful, rough-polished, vernacular-perfect *style* of poesy that wins them such acclaim.

Whereas John goes from being a lustful laborer to a lustful preacher, Cædmon forsakes *woruldhad*, "worldly (secular) life" (62), going from a docile cowherd to a docile monk. But even when Cædmon would seem to be entirely naturalized in the monastery, he is described as "swa swa clæne neten eodorcende in that sweteste leoð gehwerfde," "just as a clean cow chewing the cud, so he turned [the Gospel] into sweetest poetry" (67-68). In other words, Cædmon learns divine truth in Latin from the monks, and re-forms it into beautiful Old English verse. Bovine imagery follows him from his origins. This masticulation of Latin and rendering of English is an intriguing metaphor. Cædmon performs the transformation in his mouth, like a cow; Bede figures orality in physical terms. Hurston, on the other hand, is quite self-consciously subversive of the orality-literature borderline. She writes to her friend Langston Hughes in delight that she has read his poems out loud in Florida and that they have entered "back" into oral circulation. She writes, "Boy! they *eat it up*... you are being quoted in Railroad camps, phosphate mines, turpentine stills, etc." (Hemenway 1977:116; emphasis mine). In the chewing mouth of an oral poet, a text can be translated into orality. Hurston not only collected folklore but also created it, orally for Southern black laborers and in writing for the literati.

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[13] For the sake of consistency, I quote Bede's text (including Cædmon's "Hymn") in its Old English version, as found in the Bodleian Library manuscript Tanner 10, and edited by Mitchell and Robinson (1995:220-25). This stage in the evolution of Bede's manuscript, in which the entire text is in Old English, is more comparable to Hurston's text because Hurston's framing narrative is in essentially the same dialect as her transcribed sermon-poem. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that whatever the original language of Cædmon's text might have been, Bede's narrative was originally in Latin.

Both John and Cædmon have moments of silence before their divine gifts strike them. In the case of Cædmon, he is at a *gebeorscipe*, "beer-revel" (20) when he fails to sing the sort of festive poetry expected there, thus showing his piousness. A modern critic might infer that the real Cædmon probably sang often at such feasts, thus becoming a secular oral poet before his conversion, but it is Bede's purpose to compose a myth of divine inspiration. So Bede goes out of his way to make Cædmon incompetent at pagan-like *gebeorscipe* poetry, so that he gets his gift of skill *ex nihilo*. Hurston, on the other hand, wishes to stress her culture's collective contribution to John's inspiration, and so religious inspiration is rarely mentioned in her account of the preacher. John is engaging in the thriving oral culture of the railroad camp when he attends the Sanford minister's sermon, and performs it from memory to the camp again, making "the crowd [hang] half-way between laughter and awe" (173). Preaching is merely the most obvious way for a black oral poet to perform professionally.

The moment of John's silence *is* significant, however—his inability to speak to Lucy when they first meet. He overcomes this initial silence, of course, but it underlines Lucy's role in his life. Much later, when John is threatened by the congregation's condemnation of his sinful ways, Lucy instructs him to admit his sins publicly; she is essential to his voice, operating as a kind of muse. Later, John shows bestial violence, striking Lucy on her deathbed, and it is the memory of this act that haunts him and causes him to forsake his voice, finally quitting his ministry after the climactic sermon. An oral poet must have skill and inspiration. Whereas Cædmon is portrayed as having no culturally derived skill but a mystical link with God, John is shown to be thoroughly continuous with a tradition of oral skill and inspired by a mystical link with Lucy.

Both John/Lovelace and Cædmon are prolific and seemingly effortless creators, surrounded by awe-struck admirers. We are told that they each made many unrecorded poems of divine grace, but we are only given a selection of that oral plenitude in a textual sample. An important feature of the archetype of the prophet/divine oral poet is his inadequate competitors. Many tried to imitate Cædmon, but "nænig hwaðre him þæt gelice don meahte," "none, however, could perform like him" (11-12). In this respect, Hurston is clearly crafting her story to fit an archetype rather than the sociological truth. In a letter to James Weldon Johnson, she wrote: "[Y]ou and I. . . know that there are hundreds of preachers who are equalling [Lovelace's] sermon weekly" (Hemenway 1977:193-94). But in the novel John towers over all his competitors, and this is the only reason his congregation tolerates his embarrassing womanizing for as long as they do.

The only potential replacement is Cozy, who incompetently tries to fill John's shoes, straining to produce a pale imitation:

> "Y'all say 'Amen'. Don't let uh man preach hisself tuh death and y'll set dere lak uh bump on uh log and won't he'p 'im out. Say 'Amen'!! .. Say 'Amen'! Say it lak you mean it, and if yuh do mean it, tell me so! Don't set dere and say nothin'!" (249).

After the sermon, Harris seeks Sister Boger's opinion of his performance, and she makes an "indecent sound with her lips," then comments: "'dat wan't no sermon. Dat wuz uh lecture'" (250). Whether intentionally or not, Boger is using an untranscribable sound to put down a *lecture*—not only a professor's instruction but also, as Hurston would know, a *reading*. It is still, of course, an orally improvised sermon, but it is figuratively mere reading because Cozy has no understanding of the rhythms of the call-and-response system; he should never need to beg for an "amen."

Ironically, it is John's sermons that are more closely tied to the biblical text; during Cozy's sermon Sister Boger whispers "'Ah ain't heard whut de tex' wuz'," and the other lady replies "'Me neither'" (248). Cozy is simultaneously slighted for being too literary and not literary enough. Cædmon's "Hymn" is not generated in the oral sphere either; it is a paraphrase (however liberal) of Genesis.[14] Behind each text is a "real" performance, behind that performance (as Sister Boger reminds us) is a text, and behind the biblical text (a Christian believes) is the pure, spoken word of God. Orality and literacy are never easy to divide; even in the oral church environment, the audience is listening for a textual referent. The difference between Cozy and John is not knowledge of the text (though Cozy shows little) but rather knowledge of the systems of orality that are so crucial to the black church. One rule is that the preacher must frame his orality as an explication of a particular scriptural quote, which Cozy forgets to do. Cozy's sermon thus lacks what J. M. Foley calls word-power; as Foley suggests, "word-power derives from the enabling event of performance and the enabling referent of tradition" (1995:208). Cædmon's fellows do not have *Godes gife*, the "gift of God" (14), which modern readers might interpret as oral composition skills, but Hurston is perfectly aware that it is orality (and hence African-ness), not divinity, that makes John's sermons so transcendent. Finally, both figures meet appropriate ends: Cædmon predicts his death and, true to his gentle nature, asks the good will of his comrades,

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[14] Orchard (1996) has recently contributed a detailed explication of the presence of subtle allusions to native, classical, and (especially) biblical sources in both Bede's narrative and Cædmon's "Hymn."

while John, on the other hand, dies both sinful and repentant. In his great sermon, he conceives of Jesus as laying himself in front of the Damnation Train, a graphic modern image of dying for our sins. John then enacts his own image, driving from his last infidelity in such a guilty stupor that he does not seem to see the train that kills him.

Transcription or Translation?

Until this point I have discussed the given narrative story that frames the embedded text. Now I would like to turn to the oral texts themselves, Cædmon's "Hymn" and John's last sermon for Zion Hope Church. In each case, the fact that we call it a "text" is a key part of its history; in order to become a text it has undergone what Foley calls an "intersemiotic translation" (1995:94) from an oral to a written medium. These examples will provide suggestive insights into the liminality, or rather hybridity, of oral literature because each text contains distinct traces of a double origin. Cædmon's song is translated into Latin, then Old English writing, whereas Hurston transcribes the Reverend C. C. Lovelace's sermon and then transports it into a literate novel. Both Cædmon's and Lovelace's devotional song-poems are embedded in a legitimizing narrative written by a cultural ambassador. Both sermon-poems give us a narrative of God's creation of the world. The notable difference is that Bede is reinforcing the dominant culture by acculturating its primitive fringe, whereas Hurston is reinforcing a subversive Harlem Renaissance by asserting the value of the Southern oral origin that the Harlem literati (as Hurston termed them, the "Niggerati"[15]) are in danger of forgetting.

Indeed the framing narratives have an important link with the embedded text; origins are at stake. John's origin is illegitimate, whereas that of Cædmon is non-legitimate. Thus Cædmon rises in social and divine terms without any fundamental discontinuity, whereas John must reject the "legitimate" white future offered him by his biological father in favor of the

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[15] Hemenway 1977:43. Hurston included herself in this group. She is not simply being sardonic. "Nigger" is, of course, an abusive term when used by a white speaker. But it is also a term of familiar address *between* black people, with no derogative connotation. But not all black people—because of its derogatory quality in a white mouth, it was considered declassé by precisely the Niggerati to whom she refers. So her term is meant to ridicule the pretentious whitewashing of black culture implicit in the concept of an imitated "literati," but it is also a pointed reminder; if a black writer allows "nigger" to be stricken from her vocabulary, she loses a huge section of her oral heritage along with it.

"illegitimate" black future of oratory. Both of their sermon-poems are centered on creation. In retrospect, this is certainly appropriate, since one represents what would be the beginning of English literature and the other represents a key moment in the Harlem Renaissance's quest for cultural origins. Black English and Old English, John and Cædmon all lack legitimacy, and so origins are a suggestive topic.

But here again, politics is present in Hurston and absent in Bede.[16] Cædmon's poem, like John/Lovelace's sermon, tells the story of God's creation of the world. But Cædmon gives an utterly nonpolitical creation of the world in his 9-line "Hymn"; *firum*, "people" (44a) are an afterthought. In contrast, Lovelace/John puts great emphasis on the creation of man, implying that God the father is black. The incompetent Cozy had made an awkward sermon claiming that Jesus was black because of the fact that it is so hot in Israel. Lovelace, on the other hand, uses the oral situation of delivery to make the point much more effectively. Speaking in a room where presumably everyone is black (including Hurston), Lovelace narrates a thrilling drama of the creation of man. Each element of the universe asks for the new man to be made in his image. Lovelace looks around at a room of people who have been told that to be black is to be bestial, and intones "'God said, "NO"! / I'll make man in my own image, ha!'" (273).

Hurston wants to communicate not only the meaning but also the effect of a dynamic, collaborative, and improvisational oral event. As one critic writes, "those elements of early modern black arts that derived from folk culture owe a great deal to an expressive form, both in songs and folktales, that in some respects is antithetical to the notion of a fixed, regulated text" (Sundquist 1993:39). In the analogy I am drawing, medieval Latin is to Old English as academic "white" English is to the Black English vernacular (a situation that Hurston herself did much to undo). In both cases, the "lower" tongue is barely admissible, if at all, in a written text. Bede is like Hurston in that his overall narrative is in the literate tongue. But Bede is still closer to the white writers preceding (and following) Hurston who "translated" black idiom into an outsider's idea of what it should sound like. In her faithful transcription of Black English, Hurston is assiduously conscious of the grammatical rules of orality, just like the anonymous scribe

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[16] Of course, the apparent absence of political alignment in Bede in fact conceals definite political goals. In an incisive recent critique of Bede, Lees and Overing (1994) observe how Bede not only appropriates and positions Cædmon for the sake of his history, but also how Bede similarly positions Hilda, who is the unnamed Abbess in Bede's account of Cædmon. Bede's simultaneous inscription and subordination of Cædmon's orality parallels his inscription and subordination of the life of Hilda.

who wrote out the Old English version of Cædmon's "Hymn." For example, Hurston notes that "You as subject gets full value but is shortened to yuh as an object. Him in certain positions and 'im in others depending on consonant preceding" (Hemenway 1977:115).

Here Hurston consciously departs from the theory of her fellow contemporary folklorist, James Weldon Johnson, who "regularized" black dialect in order to avoid the mockery of minstrel-stereotypes, thereby losing all the original poetry and translating a sermon into quasi-white verse: "Oh, I tremble, yes, I tremble, / It causes me to tremble, tremble, / When I think how Jesus died."[17] Johnson, like Bede, wishes to translate the "substance" and wipe off the tarnish of the vulgar tongue. We see a similar disparity in knowledge of, or attention to the rules that govern, the vernacular between the early and the late transcribers of Cædmon's "Hymn," as O'Keeffe (1987) demonstrates.

Of course, the late Old English transcribers made errors because they were removed by time from the rules dictated by a living language, whereas the authors against whom Hurston was reacting (both black and white) were removed *culturally*, but no less far removed, from the living language of the black South. Inevitably, however, Hurston imposes literary regularity on her text. Committing voice to print, even if that print is phonetically adapted to a dialect, is a translation. Further, the reader is required to imagine, to re-create, the polyphonic interaction between the preacher and the congregation; after the sermon, Hurston writes, "there had been a mighty response to the sermon all thru its length" (281). Music was an essential element of a sermon (Sundquist 1993:39). The preacher certainly half-sang many sections, for example "I can hear 'em ring under His footsteps / Sol me-e-e, Sol do / Sol me-e-e, Sol do." One can see in Hurston's punctuation and capitalization of all four "Sols" an attempt to demand music in the reader's mind.[18] The reader must remember any black preacher (for example, Martin Luther King, Jr. in his "I Have a Dream" speech), and generate a sound picture by combining that memory with the provided text. Indeed, Hurston's reminder of the "mighty response" that she has not transcribed is reminiscent of Bede's comment in the Latin text that translation is never adequate. These are gestures toward a true oral event that the text inadequately records. A contemporary book reviewer in the

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[17] "The Crucifixion" (Sundquist 1993:48).

[18] Foley has recently applied the reception theory of Wolfgang Iser to help explain how "oral-derived" texts can demand an active reader who helps to fill the gaps on the page by reconstructing an oral event in her own imagination (Foley 1991b and 1995).

Times Literary Supplement, assuming that the entire book is Hurston's fiction, criticizes the climactic sermon that Hurston makes John speak, arguing no reasonable reader would believe that such a sermon was really delivered. The reviewer writes that the sermon "is too good, too brilliantly splashed with poetic imagery to be the product of any one Negro preacher" (Hemenway 1977:194). In fact, of course, it was precisely that.

Hurston's format is worth comparing to the layout of Cædmon's "Hymn." John's sermon is aligned to the left margin like poetry, and many lines have no punctuation. As O'Keeffe points out (1987), the Old English version of Cædmon's "Hymn" was originally written with no line breaks because they were not necessary to a native speaker familiar with the rhythms of the language. By refusing to punctuate Lovelace's sermon "correctly" Hurston strengthens the aural effect of the words, since punctuation causes a modern reader to concentrate on the meaning of the words as sentences, whereas a lack of punctuation makes the reader search for voice and phrasing as in modern poetry. Thus Hurston is demanding the same experience that the original Old English scribes assumed was the only option—an orally competent reader.

Transcription is inevitably political. Bede would like to erase all pagan elements from Cædmon's text. He does so partly by rendering it in Latin (the language of the Church), but he also alters Cædmon's text in translating it. It has been argued that the Old English hymn uses formulae that conjure the hero worship of Germanic culture, not Christianity. Bede's Latin paraphrase, whether intentionally or no, erases many of these oral, pagan, and Germanic elements. As Kiernan points out, when Bede originally translated Cædmon's "Hymn" into Latin, he did not use alliteration and elided the redundant addresses to God (*ece Drihten*, *Frea*, *halig Scyppend*; "eternal lord," "master," "holy maker"). Alliteration and redundancy are chief characteristics of Old English oral poetry, precisely the sort of thing Bede would erase along with the vernacular.

Whatever Bede would have us believe, Cædmon does not create by miracle alone; he is informed by church doctrine as well as oral style (although it is possible that Bede is preserving only what is most consonant with doctrine in the sample text). Likewise, C. C. Lovelace is not illiterate. In his sermon he introduces his topic, then begins with a reading from the Bible. Using his dialect he frames the quotes, which he reads in white English: "'When the father shall ast, "What are these wounds in thine hand?". . . Zach. 13:6'."[19] In so doing, he transfers the language of the King James Bible (Sundquist 1993:49) into black sermon-song just as Cædmon

[19] In the book's fiction, at least, John learns basic literacy to impress Lucy.

improvises Old English on a Vulgate ur-text as it is read to him. John and Cædmon work *from* the Bible; they are partly oral creators but also partly, in Erik Pihel's terms, "post-literate" (1996:249).[20]

John thus begins with the text, but quickly launches into improvisational poetry (271-72):

> God my master, ha!
> Father!! Ha-aa!
> I am the teeth of time
> That comprehended de dust of de earth
> And weighed de hills in scales
> That painted de rainbow dat marks de end of de parting storm
> Measured de seas in de holler of my hand
> That held de elements in a unbroken chain of controllment.
> Make man, ha!

The message may be Christian, but like Cædmon's "Hymn" the medium is not. As Hurston writes (145-46), "John never made a balk at a prayer. Some new figure, some new praise-giving name for God, every time he knelt in church. He rolled his African drum up to the Altar, and called his Congo Gods by Christian names." Hurston is engaging in her culture as she records it, bending her narrative voice to John's rhythms. She herself uses an oral-style epithet ("praise-giving name") to describe John's coinage of oral-style epithets. Orality has pagan connotations; John's voice is figured as a pagan African drum, regardless of his Christian intentions. It has often been said that Cædmon calls his Christian God by Germanic names,[21] and Hurston has John doing the reverse. Wearing the hat of the anthropologist, Hurston observes that "the Negro has not been christianized as extensively as is generally believed. . . ." As evidence of this, note the drum-like rhythm of all Negro spirituals."[22]

Both Cædmon's and John's poems share characteristics of oral verse. John uses the rhetorical trope of *energia* as well as anaphora to give a stirring visual effect to his description of Jesus (275):

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[20] As O'Keeffe suggests (1990:13), "the conditions 'orality' and 'literacy'" are not separate states but rather "the end points on a continuum through which the technology of writing affects and modifies human perception."

[21] See, for example, Mitchell and Robinson 1995:220-21, as well as Stanley 1995:144.

[22] "The Sanctified Church" (Sundquist 1993:53).

I see Him grab de throttle
Of de well ordered train of mercy
I see kingdoms crush and crumble
Whilst de archangels held de winds in de corner chambers
I see Him arrive on dis earth

In using the train image, John is embellishing the Bible with an object from the modern world; but this creative license, and for that matter anachronisms as well, are features of oral poetry. Like Cædmon, John puts oral epithets before God. Compare John's "Oh Jesus, Oh-wonder-workin' God" (285) with Cædmon's *weorc Wuldorfæder*, "work of the glory-father" (38a).[23]

Transcription inevitably entails translation, and translations are always political. Neither Cædmon nor Lovelace/John is an oral poet in the sense that Homer was, but both employ oral poetics, even while both are informed by and preserved by written texts. The Old English version of the "Hymn" was once considered too illegitimate to be written down. Now, it stands at the beginning of the *Norton Anthology of Literature* (Abrams 1986:21), providing an anchoring origin for a new idea of what literature means.[24] Hurston's experimental oral literacy has likewise gradually acquired canonicity as the century progressed. Like the anonymous scribe who provided the Old English "Hymn," Hurston was able to change the idea of legitimacy in literature.[25]

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[23] John's repeated "I see" reminds us of the *Rood* poet's repeated *Geseah ic*, "I saw" in the first part of the poem (ll. 4, 14, 21, 33, 36, Mitchell and Robinson 1995:258-59). Indeed, although Caedmon's poem presents an excellent textual analogue for John's sermon, the sermon is in itself much closer to *The Dream of the Rood* in that both are semi-delirious visions, taking free license to reimagine the biblical text, skipping through biblical time with evangelical zeal. Just as the *Rood* poet uses prosopopoeia to energize the passion of Christ, so John makes the sun, moon, and stars speak.

[24] For a much-needed feminist evaluation of this canonical positioning, see Lees and Overing 1994:38-43.

[25] I am in debt to John Miles Foley and an anonymous reader for *Oral Tradition* for suggestions that greatly improved this essay.

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Epea Pteroenta ("Winged Words")

Françoise Létoublon

One of the most frequent Homeric formulas, *epea pteroenta* ("winged words"), today appears as a problem in semantics: how can one apply this particular adjective, whatever its "exact" meaning may be, to this particular noun other than metaphorically? If the phrase is a metaphor, what is its import, and in what domain does the characteristic semantic transfer actually take place? Finally, to what epoch can the expression be traced back and, if it stems from a tradition preceding the era in which the Homeric poems were composed, how could the transmission of that tradition have come about? I will not address here all of these complex problems, which also involve the overall understanding of Homeric epic—its formation and transmission, along with an enormous bibliography. But it does seem to me that the formulaic phrase itself deserves a fresh analysis, and it is perhaps worthwhile to begin with a history of its interpretations.

Historical survey

The scholiasts[1] do not appear to have been troubled by the recurrence of this formula, and do not comment on this combination of noun and adjective that has so engaged modern commentators. According to the modern editor, only one occurrence seems to have caught the interest of the scholiasts: *Iliad* 8.101. ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα· τὰ μὲν πράγματα τάχιστα γέγονεν, ἡ δὲ τῶν λόγων σχολὴ ποιητική. I venture to translate as follows: "'He spoke winged words.' The things happened very quickly, but the time period assigned to the words is poetic in nature."

What can be ascertained from this brief comment, probably the most ancient one we know? The contrast between *pragmata* ("things") and *logôn*

[1] For reasons of space, I have sampled only those Iliadic scholia available in Erbse 1971.

("words"), underlined by *men* / *de* ("on the one hand / on the other hand"), is quite clear. What is less clear is the relationship between the scholiasts' terms and the Homeric lines in question: just what "things" and what "words" are being identified? The scholium reference is found opposite line 8.101, but that does not necessarily indicate that it comments uniquely on that particular second half-line (or hemistich). An examination of the context of this passage provides some illumination: the battle is raging, and the situation is critical from the Achaean perspective. Diomedes has seen that the aged Nestor is in danger. Having vainly issued a call to Odysseus, Diomedes decides to venture alone into the front lines in order to assist Nestor. He stops near Nestor's chariot, and it is to him that Diomedes' "winged words" are addressed; they begin at line 102 and come to a close at line 111 with another Homeric formula.[2] For us these things that unfold rapidly, the *pragmata*, recall the panorama of events that I have summarized above, the performance of the bard, and the words of Diomedes. But the "words" referred to by the scholium are the *epea* pronounced by Diomedes, from lines 102-11. The need for the scholiast's explanation derives from the exorbitant time and space (10 hexameter verses) devoted by Diomedes to mere speaking, when the dramatic situation apparently calls for actions rather than words.[3] If this explanation is correct, one can see that the problem of the expression *epea pteroenta* does not in itself interest the scholiasts.

On the other hand, we find the following commentary on this formula by Eustathius[4] in reference to *Iliad* 1.201:

> Ὅτι πτερόεντες οἱ λόγοι διὰ τὸ ταχὺ καὶ διὰ τὴν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἁρμονίαν καὶ εὐσυνθεσίαν, καὶ ὅτι τέμνουσι τὸν ἀέρα καθὰ τὸ πτερόν [. . .] Ἔθος οὖν ἐντεῦθεν Ὁμήρῳ ἔπεα λέγειν πτερόεντα. τῶν τινες δὲ παλαιῶν σοφῷ μεθοδικῷ ἐκλαθομένῳ τῆς κατ' αὐτὸν τέχνης τέλεον ἐπέσκωψαν εὐφυῶς, ὡς γεγόνασιν αὐτῷ οἱ λόγοι πτερόεντες ὡς οἷα πτερυξάμενοι ἐξ αὐτοῦ.
>
> That the words are winged because of their swiftness, because of their internal harmony, and because of their fine arrangement [. . .] It is on the

[2] 8:112: Ὣς ἔφατ', οὐδ' ἀπίθησε Γερήνιος ἱππότα Νέστωρ ("Thus he spoke, and Gerenian horseman Nestor did not disobey").

[3] I owe this interpretation of the *Iliad* 8.101 scholium to A. M. Chanet, whom I thank for her assistance.

[4] Cf. Van der Valk 1971 *s.v.*

> basis of this passage [concerning the Sirens' song] that Homer is accustomed to speaking of "winged words." Certain of the ancients, without understanding the deep wisdom of his art, made a mockery of them, explaining that his words became winged as if they had actually been provided with wings.

Who are the ancients to whom he alludes? In any case it certainly appears that Eustathius sees herein a metaphor (*hôs hoia*, "like those"), and that he interprets *pteron*, the root of *pteroenta*, as *pterux*.[5] Eustathius' interpretation, "winged words" and therefore "rapid like birds," accords well with the development of the Greek language, since the expression still exists in this sense in modern Greek, a fact that does not prevent an implicit reference to Homer: the formula frozen in the Homeric era was perhaps not understood by the bards who employed it.

Although the history of modern interpretations starts somewhat earlier,[6] I will commence my study[7] with Milman Parry and, following the principle of ring-composition favored by the ancients, will revisit his work in my conclusion, since despite the abundant bibliography on the question I do not believe that his investigation of and observations on this formula have received sufficient attention. The use of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (*TLG*) will permit us to enter into a somewhat more detailed analysis of the Homeric formula than could Parry.

It was in an article on traditional metaphors in Homer (1933a), that Parry initially demonstrated an interest in this particular phrase, which corresponded perfectly to his definition of the formula as given in earlier works and especially in his French theses (1928a, b). His point of departure is the error committed by Aristotle in understanding metaphors as poetic tropes common in Homeric epic. If metaphors even exist for Parry, they are frozen metaphors, like those familiar from medieval English poetry (371-72): "The metaphors which lie in the fixed epithet are of the same sort, and there is no need of going so fully into the background of their thought in the

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[5] See LSJ: s.v. πτέρον ("feather"), πτέρυξ ("wing").

[6] For the "moderns," I have found nothing before Wackernagel 1860, which duly begins and ends with a precise study of our formula—with some interesting detours—and mentions the "contrary" formula *apteros muthos* ("wingless word"). In spite of its title, Peabody 1975 (*The Winged Word*) does not concern itself with this formula, but pursues a more general perspective.

[7] I was drawn to the study of this formula during the course of a more general investigation of the Homeric idiom, and by encountering Martin's very stimulating work (1989): my reading of his analysis of *epos* initiated a return to *epea pteroenta*.

diction." Further, he writes (372-73):

> Homer, to simplify his verse-making, has a system of verses which expresses the idea such and such a person said, answered, asked, and so on, giving also the tone of voice when the poet wishes, or some other detail. One special line of this type which is needed is that in which the character who is to speak has been the subject of the last verses so that the use of his name in the line would be clumsy. The one verse that will do this is καί μιν φωνήσας ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα ["and speaking, he addressed him/her with winged words"], or, when the tone of voice is to be given, καί ῥ' ὀλοφυρόμενος ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα ["and grieving, he addressed him/her with winged words"], and so on. Homer has this one line for this one frequent need, and its use always brings in ἔπεα πτερόεντα.

He thus concluded that Homeric metaphors made up part of the stock of formulas inherited from a long poetic tradition. Moreover, one can discover parallels for other such frozen metaphors in the Homeric tradition by consulting Indo-Iranian poetry or other Indo-European traditions,[8] correspondences that prove the accuracy of his original intuition, based as it was solely on the internal analysis of formulaic style.

In the same year Parry published in the *Transactions of the American Philological Association* another article (1933b) in which he revisits *epea pteroenta*, on this occasion in order to illustrate "whole formulaic lines" in Greek and South Slavic poetry; the example καί μιν φωνήσας ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα occurs herein (380-83). Parry makes many observations that seem significant to me. In order to begin a conversation, if both the speaker and the interlocutor are known, one finds in Greek the line καί μιν φωνήσας ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα (49 occurrences), which is paralleled in South Slavic epic. If the speaker is known, but not the interlocutor, one employs, for instance, αἶψα δ' ἄρ' Εὔμαιον ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα ["and so immediately he addressed Eumaios with winged words"], or αἶψα δ' ἄρ' Ἀθηναίην ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα ["and so immediately he addressed Athena with winged words"]; and if the names of the two characters must both be specified, the bard turns to yet another formula.

In 1935 George M. Calhoun reacted, citing and criticizing Parry. Dismissing the idea of traditional oral poetry and ardently defending the

[8] See the articles conveniently collected in Schmitt 1968.

"art" of Homer,[9] he sought to justify the uses of ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα through their affective meaning. In 1937 a posthumous article by Parry responded to Calhoun and reasserted the conclusions of his earlier essays (414): "Thus Homer could not have used at a 112 such a verse as τὸν δ' αὖ Τηλέμαχος πεπνυμένος ἀντίον ἠύδα ['and in reply prudent Telemachus addressed him'] as can be seen by reading from verse 113. The name of Telemachus is given in this verse, and it serves as the grammatical subject of all of the following sentences in such a way that the second use of the name at 122 would break the style badly." He went on to argue (416) that "it is for purely grammatical reasons that we have ἔπος τ' ἔφατ' ἔκ τ' ὀνόμαζε ['he/she spoke a word and called him/her by name'] and not ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα." According to Parry, there is thus no need to locate in *pteroenta* or *onomazde* ("called by name") a particular meaning that would restrict the utility of the involved formulas.[10]

An article by A. K. Thomson, published in 1936, had the virtue of introducing into the debate another formula, *apteros muthos* ("wingless word"), apparently the opposite of the phrase under discussion. Following Wackernagel,[11] he opted for an interpretation of the frozen metaphor linked not to birds' flight but rather to the practice of archery. It was then Frederick Combellack, earlier a student of Calhoun, who resumed the debate, utilizing the ancient commentaries and referring to various parallel formulas (1950). Citing correspondences between Calhoun and J. A. Scott as well as the last conversation he himself had with his mentor (in which Calhoun seemed much less sure of his position), Combellack acknowledged the importance of Parry's argumentation.

Despite these perspectives, semantic analysis of the formula was not undertaken in a truly interesting and scientific manner before Marcello Durante (1958), who began from the image of the word as a path in Callimachos' *Aitia*, necessarily referring to the innovative work of Becker (1937). Durante observed that in other contexts in Homer the word *pteroeis* ("winged") is always employed in reference to an arrow, citing a Vedic

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[9] Note Calhoun's title: "The Art of Formula in Homer."

[10] I observe in passing that Parry adopts the conventional translation of "winged words" without ever considering its meaning.

[11] Who translated the phrase into German as *befiederte Worte*.

parallel. Numerous examples of complementarity between word and arrow[12] were adduced to support his conclusion that *epea pteroenta* are words that fly straight to the target, that are suited to the situation.

In 1968 Joachim Latacz took up the problem, using Durante's contributions as a point of departure and neatly contrasting the sense of *pteroeis* as applied to words like arrows (*gefiedert*, "feathered") to that sense appropriate to birds (*geflügelt*, "winged"), but also equally clearly recognizing Parry's insights on the formal function of the formula.[13] Detailed study of the formula *apteros muthos* (and after Homer of *apteros phatis*), which he analyzes by comparing it to other formulas designating characters' silence, allows Latacz to conclude that its fundamental meaning is not in the domain of intellect, but rather in that of psychology.[14]

Next one should mention R. D'Avino (1982),[15] for whom formularity of usage does not imply an absence of meaning. She observes, very judiciously in my opinion, that the *epea* constitute a collective unit, not

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[12] For example, ἅλιον τὸν μῦθον (*Il.* 5.715) / ἅλιον βέλος (15.575). Pindar opposes πτερόεντα ὀιστόν, χαμαιπετέων λόγων (*Ol.* 9.11), χαμαιπετὲς...ἔπος (*Pyth.* 6.37), etc.

[13] 1968:29: "Aber auch die Funktion der Einleitungsformel ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα macht Durantes Erklärung unwahrscheinlich: nach Durante müssten ja die durch diese Formel eingeleiteten 125 Reden allesamt 'situationsangemessen' oder 'ihr Ziel treffend' sein. Diese Auffassung ist ebenso subjektiv und der epischen Formelsprache unangemessen, wie es seinerzeit die Versuche waren, πτερόεντα als ein die Eigenart der folgenden Rede im voraus charakterisierendes Attribut zu verstehen (zurückgeweisen von M. Parry, *CPh* 32, 1937, 59-63). Wenn die Formel 125 Reden verschiedensten Inhalts und verschiedenster Länge einleitet, also immer passt, so kann das nur bedeuten, das zwischen ihr und dem Inhalt oder der Eigenart der folgenden Rede keine innere, sondern nur eine funktionale Beziehung bestand: die Formel war neutral."

[14] 1968:38: "Gewisse Parallelen im Formalen (gleiche Personenkonstellation) und Inhaltlichen (Schockwirkung) konnten also den Dichter bestimmen, den einmal geprägten Ausdruck auch in diesen Fällen wieder zu verwenden. Seine Aussagekraft freilich lässt im gleichen Masse nach, in dem die Situation und damit auch die Gefühle der schweigenden Person sich ändern." Further (1968:47): "Hat demnach schliesslich der Dichter der Odyssee-Stellen in der Tat zu πτερόεις den Gegensatz ἄπτερος in der Bedeutung 'unausgesprochen' gebildet (worauf nun alles hindeutet), dann hat er auch ἔπεα πτερόεντα als '(laut) ausgesprochene Worte' verstanden. Die eingangs vorgelegte Deutung von ἔπεα πτερόεντα wäre damit am Ende als richtig erwiesen."

[15] On this point I am indebted to Paola Ceccarelli and Sabina Crippa, who analyzed this article in detail and with great finesse in the context of my seminar at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes.

certainly indicating "words" as such, but more likely a distinct message. The same plural collective designates the epic verses; it recalls the origin of the sacred province of poets and seers. She also contrasts *epea pteroenta* with *apteros muthos*: the word without *pteron* is a silent voice, one that does not pass into oral expression, in response to an action.

It is surprising that the monumental commentary of G. S. Kirk (1985, 1990) appears content with ancient opinion, as transmitted by Eustathius, on this point, and does not refer to any of the studies devoted to the "winged words" formula by the various scholars mentioned above, not even those of Parry with which he is quite familiar.[16] Here is in effect everything he says in relation to the initial instance of the phrase (at *Iliad* 1.201): "This is the first occurrence in the poem of a very common formula verse (14x *Il.*, 15x *Od.*) and its even commoner component ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα (55x *Il.*, 60x *Od.*). Words are 'winged' because they fly through the air rapidly, like birds."

In his turn Richard Martin (1989:26-37) studies the formula in the context of the contrast he seeks to establish between *epos* and *muthos* in Homer. I have borrowed a part of the historical survey from his presentation, without necessarily adopting his conclusions on the opposition and the meaning of speech-acts in this case.

From a different point of view, J. M. Foley (1990:129-37) analyzes very precisely this sample of Homeric phraseology, *epea pteroenta*, according great importance to the metrical word-position of each element and of the formula as a whole in the context of the larger phrases it partially constitutes.[17] My results seem to dovetail with his findings.

Formularity and conditions of usage

In the wake of these scholars' contributions there does not remain a great deal to do, except perhaps to study in detail, with the aid of the *TLG*, the way in which the Homeric epics and hymns combine the formula *epea pteroenta* with various partnering phrases, under very exacting conditions of usage.

The great majority of instances of this formula combine with the verb *prosêuda* ("he/she spoke to," 113 occurrences) or its variant *prosêudôn*

[16] See Kirk 1985:espec. 17-37.

[17] See espec. the table and commentaries (135-37).

("they spoke to," 8 occs.), and in a single case *metêuda* ("he/she spoke among").[18] Two other predicates involving verbs of speaking are also encountered, with lesser frequency: *agoreuon* ("they spoke," 4 occs.) and *agoreuen* ("he/she spoke," 6 occs.). Notice that the second hemistich is of precisely the same structure as a whole, but that the formula *epea pteroenta* undergoes a significant variation because the verb begins with a vowel: ἔπεα πτερόεντ' ἀγόρευον/-εν· (with elision).

In fact, a large percentage of the instances of ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα, the formulaic second hemistich, is preceded by a first hemistich itself formulaically frozen: καί μιν φωνήσας ("and speaking to him/her").[19] To these 28 examples we may add another 10 in which the difference between the feminine (*phônêsas'* < *phônêsasa*) and the masculine inflection (*phônêsas*) is imperceptible except by reference to context, though of course it is orthographically cued by a mark of elision (').[20] In six additional Odyssean occurrences, the minimal variant *prosêudôn* affects the second half-line.[21] We encounter as well three instances in which another pronoun is substituted for *min* ("him/her") in the first hemistich.[22] Here again one discovers the possibility of the feminine participle with elision of the final vowel.[23]

It becomes apparent that the first formulaic hemistich does not recur except with the second hemistich in the form ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα / προσηύδων, and never with the verb *agoreuon/-en*. The small total number of instances of this formula may diminish the force of this

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[18] *Il.* 8.496: τῷ ὅ γ' ἐρεισάμενος ἔπεα Τρώεσσι μετηύδα· ("Leaning on this [spear] he spoke words to the Trojans").

[19] See Parry 1933a. *Il.* 2.7, 4.369, 8.101, 10.163, 13.750, 14.138, 16.6, 17.74, 20.331, 23.601, 23.625, 24.517; *Od.* 1.122, 5.172, 8.346, 8.407, 13.58, 13.227, 13.253, 14.114, 15.259, 16.180, 18.104, 20.198, 22.410, 24.372, 24.399; *Hymn to Hermes* 435.

[20] *Il.* 15.35, 15.89; *Od.* 2.269, 5.117, 7.236, 8.442, 8.460, 13.290, 23.34; *Hymn to Demeter* 320. E.g., *Il.* 15.34-35: Ὣς φάτο, ῥίγησεν δὲ βοῶπις πότνια Ἥρη, / καί μιν φωνήσασ' ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα·

[21] *Od.* 4.550, 10.482, 11.56, 11.209, 11.396, 12.296. Could it be that these examples testify to the *Odyssey*'s idiosyncratic taste for formulaic variants?

[22] *Il.* 4.284, 4.337, 10.191: καί σφεας φωνήσας ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα.

[23] *Il.* 15.145: καί σφεας φωνήσασ' ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα.

observation, but the fact that other initial hemistichs recur with one or the other form of the second hemistich appears to lend it some importance: in my opinion, the phenomenon can be linked to the difference in meaning between the two verbs.[24]

Various more or less formulaic structures can be recognized as such through their first hemistichs. I will try to categorize these usages by grouping together those that seem to bear a formulaic resemblance:

a. with some qualification (adjective or participle) in apposition to the subject of the verb:[25]

καί ῥ' ὀλοφυρόμενος ("and so, grieving," *Il.* 5.871, 11.815; *Od.* 16.22)

καί ῥ' ὀλοφυρομένη (*Il.* 18.72; *Od.* 11.472, 17.40; *Hymn to Demeter* 247)

καί μ' ὀλοφυρομένη (*Od.* 11.154)

καί μ' ὀλοφυρόμενος (*Od.* 10.265, 11.616)

καί μ' ὀλοφυρόμενοι (*Od.* 10.418)

ἀγχοῦ δ' ἱστάμενος ("and standing nearby," *Il.* 4.203, 13.462, 14.356, 16.537; *Od.* 4.25, 17.349,[26] 17.552, 22.100)

ἀγχοῦ δ' ἱσταμένη (*Il.* 4.92, 5.123, 18.169, 22.215)

ἀγχοῦ δ' ἱστάμεναι (*Hymn to Demeter* 112)

ἄγχι παρισταμένη (*Od.* 10.377)

καί οἱ ἐπευχόμενος ("and uttering [words] of triumph to him," *Il.* 16.829, 21.121)

καί οἱ ἐπευχομένη (*Il.* 21.409)

ἡ δ' ἄρ' ἐπευχομένη (*Il.* 21.427[27])

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[24] Nonetheless, the use of *agoreuô* is not necessarily linked to a plural addressee; indeed, a singular pronoun seems more common.

[25] On *phônêsas* / *phônêsas'*, see above. Cf. also *Il.* 8.496, cited above with *metêuda*. I have not retained those variants attested only a single time in which the first hemistich does not seem to have a formulaic character.

[26] In this example the second hemistich is ἔπεα πτερόεντ' ἀγόρευε.

[27] See the preceding note.

ὅς μιν ἀμειβόμενος ("who, making answer to him/her," *Il.* 7.356)
καί μιν ἀμειβόμενος (*Il.* 15.48, 23.557)
οἱ δ' ἀπαμειβόμενοι (*Od.* 9.409[28])

πολλὰ λισσόμενος ("and entreating strongly," *Il.* 21.368)
καί μιν λισσόμενος (*Od.* 22.343, 22.366; *Hymn to Aphrodite* 184)

τοὺς ὅ γ' ἐποτρύνων ("for, urging them," *Il.* 13.94, 13.480, 17.219)
καί μιν ἐποτρύνων (*Od.* 15.208)

δεινὰ δ' ὁμοκλήσας ("and shouting terribly," *Il.* 16.706, 20.448)

καί μιν δάκρυ χέουσ' ("and weeping tears for him," *Il.* 22.81)

στὰς ἐν Ἀχαιοῖσιν ("and standing among the Achaeans," *Il.* 22.377)
στὰς δ' ἄρ' ἐν Ἀργείοις (*Il.* 23.535[29])

καί μιν ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν ("and looking darkly at him," *Od.* 17.459, 18.388)

καί μιν νεικείων ("and insulting him," *Od.* 18.9)

b. with reference to an addressee (most often a proper noun):

αὐτίκ' Ἀθηναίην ("immediately to Athena," *Il.* 4.69, 5.713, 21.419)
αἶψα δ' Ἀθηναίην (*Il.* 8.351, 19.341)

αἶψα δὲ Τυδεΐδην ("and immediately to Tydeus' son," *Il.* 5.242)

αὐτικ' Ὀϊλιάδην ("immediately to Oiliades," *Il.* 12.365)

ἀλλ' Ἀσκληπιάδην ("but to Asklepiades," *Il.* 14.2)

[28] See the two preceding notes.

[29] See the three preceding notes for both of these examples.

῾Ιριν δὲ προτέρην ("and first to Iris," *Il.* 15.157)

αὐτίκα μητέρα ἣν ("immediately to his mother," *Il.* 19.20)

ἦκα πρὸς ἀλλήλους ("softly to one another," *Il.* 3.155)
πολλὰ πρὸς ἀλλήλους (*Il.* 24.142)

ἦ ῥα καὶ ᾽Αντίνοον ("and to Antinoos," *Od.* 17.396)

αἶψα δ᾽ ἄρ᾽ Εὔμαιον ("and immediately to Eumaios," *Od.* 17.543)

αἶψα δὲ Τηλέμαχον (*Od.* 17.591, 19.3, 22.150, 23.112)

αἶψα δ᾽ ᾽Οδυσσῆα (*Od.* 24.494)

Finally, we wish to return to the criterion of function, noted by Parry but without comment on the reasons for and the effects of this dimension.[30] All the usages of *epea pteroenta* / *epea pteroent'*—without any exceptions—introduce the direct discourse of a character in the epic. For Parry this seems simply to have been part of the compositional habit of bards, of the "formulaic tradition" of Homeric epic. To my mind, just as the analysis of formularity does not preclude research into ancient "meaning" (certainly fossilized but also latent in the formula), so one must also raise the question of how so focused a usage can be justified. Another Homeric formula, ἔπος τ᾽ ἔφατ᾽ ἔκ τ᾽ ὀνόμαζε(ν) ("spoke a word and called [him/her] by name"),[31] performs the same function in 40 instances, but presents a single exception (*Od.* 17.215-16):

τοὺς δὲ ἰδὼν νείκεσσεν, ἔπος τ᾽ ἔφατ᾽ ἔκ τ᾽ ὀνόμαζεν
ἔκπαγλον καὶ ἀεικές·[32]

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[30] See Foley 1999:221-24.

[31] On this formula, often preceded by another (ἔν τ᾽ ἄρα οἱ φῦ χειρί, "she clung to his hand"), see Kirk 1990:comm. ad *Il.* 6.253, the first occurrence of the formulaic line ἔν τ᾽ ἄρα οἱ φῦ χειρὶ ἔπος τ᾽ ἔφατ᾽ ἔκ τ᾽ ὀνόμαζε. See also Foley 1999:223-24 on the category of the "emotional speaker."

[32] In my opinion this exception can be explained by two phenomena: the speech in question is qualified, whereas ordinarily the textual quotation occurs without

> Looking at them, he insulted them, and spoke a word and called them by name, [a word] violent and unseemly.

It seems to me that this compositional law can be properly explained as one of the characteristics of Homeric orality, preserved in the written text by the power of the tradition and by the fact that the punctuation has been long established by textual convention. In an oral epic one has a compelling need for signals of direct discourse, in principle both before and after the reported speech, so that the audience will be aware that the narrating bard is assuming the voice of his characters. And these signals must be clear, perceptible even by a less than attentive audience: they must therefore be regular enough to play the role that iconic marks of quotation ("...") play for us in the written text. This function of signaling direct discourse suffices to explain the very neatly formulaic character of the second hemistich, ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα. Pragmatic necessities (that is, indications of speaker or respondent providing a prior context, as Parry noted;[33] and indications of tone or the various circumstances involved, as he also observed) allow us to account for the greater diversity of the opening hemistich. Following direct discourse, the signals for closure—equivalent to closing quotation marks in the typographical tradition—at times include *epos,*[34] but other formulas are used more often, most frequently with a verb of speaking in the aorist tense.[35]

The "meaning" on which the most recent studies of "winged words" concur is assuredly not any more vivid in this formula at the instant that the bards employ it as a signal for the direct discourse that they are about to reperform before their audience. But in contrast to "wingless word"—which designates a speech that remains silent, a "word" that does not gain expression by "passing the barrier of the teeth" (to have recourse to another

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qualification, and it is reported in the form of indirect discourse (*neikessen*, "he insulted").

[33] Today one can employ the linguistic notion of "anaphoric reference" to explain that if the subject of the preceding phrase is the same as the person making the speech, his or her name is not repeated. On the connection between the Homeric question and the theory of oral composition, see particularly Foley 1988:espec. 1-35.

[34] E.g., *Od.* 8.141: μάλα τοῦτο ἔπος κατὰ μοῖραν ἔειπες.

[35] See, e.g., *Il.* 8.112 cited above.

frequent formula in the epic[36])—one appreciates how direct discourse, orally expressed and understood as being reported by the bard just as it was spoken in "reality," could adopt as its most frequent signal the metaphor of the arrow that shoots off into the air, follows its trajectory without deviating from its route, and indeed produces an effect, for good or for ill, on the addressee.[37]

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[36] ... ποῖόν σε ἔπος φύγεν ἕρκος ὀδόντων (*Il*. 4.350, 14.83 with the vocative *Atreïdê* ("son of Atreus"); *Od*. 1.64, 5.22, 19.492, 23.70 with *teknon emon* ("my child"); *Od*. 3.230 with *Têlemache* ("Telemachos"); *Od*. 21.168 with *Lêôdes*.

[37] On "wounding" words, see Perpillou 1986.

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Serial Repetition in Homer and the "Poetics of Talk": A Case Study from the *Odyssey*

Elizabeth Minchin

The recent discussion, in Frederick Ahl and Hanna Roisman's *The Odyssey Re-formed* (1996), of the conversations between Eumaios and Odysseus in the swineherd's hut offers us what is in many respects a close and satisfying reading of the encounter.[1] The background to the scene is as follows. On Athena's advice Odysseus has gone to seek temporary shelter at Eumaios' hut. Here, disguised as a beggar, Odysseus is set upon by the swineherd's dogs. He preserves life and limb by promptly dropping to the ground and abandoning his staff. Eumaios at this point notices what is happening and calls off his dogs. He takes the stranger into his hut, and here they spend the rest of the day together in conversation.

There has been some difference of opinion among scholars as to what, precisely, is being communicated at this "first" encounter.[2] Ahl and Roisman, however, make a number of perceptive comments about the motives of the two men as they talk. For the purposes of this paper I draw

[1] Chapter 8, "First Encounters with Eumaeus." The strength of this volume is the authors' recognition that ambiguous speech may be intentionally so, but that it may be successfully interpreted in the light of other information transmitted in the text. What is crucial to interpretation is their reading of the speaker's intent (see, for example, 166).

[2] The key to the problem of interpretation in the Eumaios-Odysseus scene is not so much Odysseus; if we bear in mind his disguise and follow his words with care we can read his intentions. The key to the problem is Eumaios. The points at issue are: does Eumaios perceive Odysseus in the stranger's disguise? Do his actions, if not his words, betray his thoughts? For a range of views, see three recent publications. The first of these is Ahl and Roisman (1996), who see Eumaios as a perceptive man, a match for Odysseus. But see also Doherty (1995: 148-59), whose interest in the Eumaios episode is limited to the stories that Eumaios and Odysseus tell each other. She, however, sees the swineherd as "dutiful and unimaginative," a man of "stolid dependability" (150). For a less sympathetic view of the swineherd, see Olson (1995:chapter 6, "Eumaios the Swineherd"), and note espec. 139, where he describes the swineherd as being "completely and ironically unaware of the real identity of the Stranger."

attention to three points that are central to their reading of the scene. First, they observe here a tension within Odysseus between his desire for recognition and his need not to be acknowledged; second, they propose, and this is more contentious, that Eumaios does indeed recognize his master, whether consciously or subconsciously; and, third, they argue that Odysseus does not yet feel sufficiently confident of his swineherd's support to reveal himself to him (Ahl and Roisman 1996: 175-76). I too am interested in what happens between Eumaios and Odysseus; hence my comments in this paper on the first of their conversations, the extended conversation that takes place on the first day that Odysseus spends with his swineherd (14.111-522).

To supplement Ahl and Roisman's "rhetorical reading" of the scene (1-3, 12-16), I propose to analyze it from a slightly different perspective—as talk, or, more precisely, as a conversation in progress. I shall pay close attention to the structure of the conversation, which, to anticipate one of my findings, is shaped by the repetition of a single speech-act (I use here the terminology of Austin 1962). Then I shall make a number of observations' on its composition and on the function of repetition, both within the narrative and as a communicative strategy in conversation. My comments will reflect on the question that Rose posed (although not in so many words) some years ago: why would so sustained a conversation hold the attention of an audience (1980:285)? My discussion will examine the conversation between Eumaios and Odysseus as a representation of talk, as a means of characterization, and, through the rapport that is established between singer and audience, as a source of entertainment).[3]

This prolonged conversation between the two men may be more correctly described as negotiation: Odysseus is, as I shall demonstrate, trying to do a deal with his swineherd, who responds to his efforts in interesting ways. The exercise as a whole has been measured out for us in a series of six structurally similar proposals. Each of these proposals sets out the terms of an exchange; in each case the speaker is trying to drive a bargain. This speech-act, the bid, with which we are all familiar, given that in the real world we engage in such negotiations on a daily basis, comprises

[3] I acknowledge the contribution to the broader topic of heroic speech in Martin 1989. My concern, however, is not so much with traditional performance technique (although it is naturally fundamental to this study), nor with the tension between tradition and variation that we observe in the epics, but with Homer's representation of a particular kind of conversation.

two essential elements that may appear in either order, *request* and *offer*.[4] From everyday experience we would expect that this proposal will be taken up by the second speaker, who will accept, reject, or modify in some way the original terms (a second type of speech-act often comes into play at this point). If The terms are accepted, a third stage ensues: exchange. This third unit, often, but not always, an action-sequence, completes the negotiation. Taken together, these three units represent the information that we all store in our memories about setting up and carrying through that negotiation which we call a bargain. I now analyze the conversation between Eumaios and Odysseus in these terms. Notice that six bids in all are proposed before the bargain is concluded.

1. *Odysseus proposes a bargain* (14.111-47)

He seeks confirmation of Eumaios' loyalty to Odysseus
in return for news which he will give of his whereabouts.

Once Eumaios has prepared a simple meal for his guest and they have eaten, the time has come for talk. It is Odysseus, the guest, who seizes the initiative in conversation. This is unusual; we would expect the host to initiate conversation (cp. *Od.* 3.68-74; 4.60-64; and even 1.157-77). The hero, with gentle irony, will ask Eumaios for the name of his rich and powerful master. His introductory words, at 115, ὦ φίλε, τίς γάρ σε πρίατο κτεάτεσσιν ἐοῖσιν . . . ; ("Friend, who is the man who bought you with his possessions?"[5]) suggest some sympathy on the part of the vagrant for the swineherd. At 118-20 he builds on that sympathy to offer his only resource: he offers news of Eumaios' long-absent master. This is the first bid; in return for the information he professes to seek—he requests the name (115) and a description (118) of Eumaios' master—Odysseus holds out the possibility of news about him. If we probe beneath the surface, bearing in mind Ahl and Roisman's points above, we realize that the hero is offering to exchange a modified version of his own good news, that Odysseus has returned to Ithaka, for some indication of Eumaios' attitude toward his master (115-20). The proposal is entirely in character:

[4] If we follow Austin's classification of speech-acts (1962), we are dealing with a "commissive." For useful commentary on commissives, see Bach and Harnish 1979:49-51, espec. 51 (on the bargain-proposal).

[5] Quotations of passages from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are from the standard Oxford editions by Monro and Allen. All English translations are from Lattimore 1951 and 1965, with slight changes for emphasis.

Odysseus, as beggar, has nothing to offer but news and gossip; on the other hand, his proposal, in its indirectness, is true to the nature of the hero Odysseus, the master of subtlety.

Odysseus' offer is at first rejected by Eumaios (122-23), for he is skeptical of the beggar's promises. Beggars tell tales purporting to be true in the hope of kind treatment; they exploit his mistress Penelope's desire to believe, and her sorrow is renewed (124-32). So Eumaios dismisses Odysseus' offer, and yet he is prepared all the same to give the beggar the information he seeks. He names Odysseus and declares his devotion (133-47).

What is of considerable interest here is that Eumaios takes the upper hand in the negotiation. He has dismissed the possibility of an exchange along the lines that Odysseus proposes. He has provided information about Odysseus not because he has accepted the beggar's deal, but quite simply because he finds comfort in speaking of him to a ready listener. But he gives the beggar no chance to complete the terms of the bargain: he will not allow him to allude to Odysseus' whereabouts, even indirectly. It is Eumaios' resistance and healthy skepticism that, I suggest, rouse Odysseus' interest and commit him to the intense persuasive enterprise that ensues. This point is crucial to what follows.

2. *Odysseus' second attempt to bargain* (14.148-73)

Odysseus seeks a mantle and tunic in return
for news of his whereabouts—on oath.

The beggar revises his bid. In exchange for the news he foreshadows of Odysseus' return and the oath he is prepared to give (151-52)—

ἀλλ' ἐγὼ οὐκ αὔτως μυθήσομαι, ἀλλὰ σὺν ὅρκῳ,
ὡς νεῖται Ὀδυσεύς·

but Iwill not speak in the same manner, but on my oath tell you
Odysseus is on his way home—

he asks for a mantle and a tunic (152-54):

εὐαγγέλιον δέ μοι ἔστω
αὐτίκ', ἐπεί κεν κεῖνος ἰὼν τὰ ἃ δώμαθ' ἵκηται·
ἕσσαι με χλαῖνάν τε χιτῶνά τε, εἵματα καλά·

Let me have my reward for good news then,
as soon as he is come back and enters his own house.
Give me fine clothing, a cloak and a tunic to wear.

Unlike those beggars whom Eumaios has previously encountered (122-30), he would not claim those items immediately. As a guarantee of his good faith he would accept them only on the day of Odysseus' return. On oath the beggar promises that Odysseus will return to Ithaka (161-64).

Odysseus' request for garments to replace his ragged clothes is not surprising, given his disguise. It is interesting to note, however, that the idea for the request may have been put into his head earlier, by Eumaios; at the very least, this request is a conscious echo of Eumaios' hypothetical bargain (131-32):

αἶψά κε καὶ σύ γεραιέ, ἔπος παρατεκτήναιο,
εἴ τίς τοι χλαῖνάν τε χιτῶνά τε εἵματα δοίη.

So you too, old sir, might spin out a well-made story,
if someone would give you a cloak or a tunic to wear for it.

Just as he refused Odysseus' previous bid, Eumaios now refuses to accept it in revised form, although Odysseus has strengthened his offer with an oath, given at 158-59. Eumaios firmly refuses to credit the news that Odysseus shares and to pay its price (166-67, 171). The reason he gives is not now his mistress' distress (122-32), but his own (169-70).

Observe that the beggar does not await Eumaios' agreement to the terms of the bargain; and he does not, as before (118-20), speak of vague possibilities. On this occasion he speaks confidently and directly—but not, of course, frankly. Nevertheless, we can identify the hero's eagerness to share his relief in his homecoming in his repetition of his declaration: compare 152, ὡς νεῖται ’Οδυσεύς ("Odysseus is on his way home"), with 161, ἐλεύσεται ἐνθάθ’ ’Οδυσσεύς("Odysseus will be here"). As for Eumaios, we should note that immediately after he refused to acknowledge the force of the oath taken by the beggar (171, ἀλλ’ ἦ τοι ὅρκον μὲν ἐάσομεν ["but we will leave your oath alone"]), he makes a wish (171-73):

αὐτὰρ ’Οδυσσεὺς
ἔλθοι ὅπως μιν ἐγώ γ’ ἐθέλω καὶ Πηνελόπεια
Λαέρτης θ’ ὁ γέρων καὶ Τηλέμαχος θεοειδής

but I hope that Odysseus
will come back, as I wish, and as Penelope wishes,

and Laertes the old man too, and godlike Telemachos.

Is his wish intended simply to strike a more courteous note, to soften the abruptness with which he dismisses Odysseus' promise? Or does it indicate that Eumaios' skepticism has been shaken—that he is moved by the beggar's conviction and by his apparent integrity? To resolve this impasse, we expect confirmation within the story.

3. *Eumaios proposes a bargain* (14.174-90)

Eumaios offers the story of Telemachos' present situation—in return for the beggar's own tale.

At 174-84 there is indeed confirmation of a kind. Eumaios' despair with regard to his absent master must have been in some way diminished (although, clearly, it has not been allayed), because he is able to turn his mind elsewhere. Just as the swineherd had earlier found comfort in speaking of Odysseus, now he finds relief in sharing with the stranger his anxiety about Telemachos. This kind of ta1k—confessional talk—whereby an individual is more willing to share innermost anxieties with a stranger (whom s/he believes s/he will not see again) than with an acquaintance is plausible in psychological terms (see Wardhaugh 1985:126-27). Eumaios outlines Telemachos' history for the benefit of the beggar and laments the fate the suitors have planned for him. And, to complete the exchange, he offers his guest the occasion to do the same. In return for his confidences he requests the beggar's own story (185-90). Eumaios, it seems, has been quick to recognize the beggar's style of negotiation and to seize for himself the opportunity of operating within its frame.

4. *Odysseus' third bargain* (14.191-389)

Odysseus offers his 'life story'—in return he wants his news (of Odysseus' return) to be accepted.

The beggar readily offers Eumaios a tale; but he recasts the terms on which he offers it. Thus a fourth bid emerges from the third. This is a tale of persuasive intent, carefully contrived. A cunning blend of fact, truth, half-truth, and invention, it is a formidable creation. Only when we learn Eumaios' life story at 15.390-484 do we enjoy, in retrospect, the game that Odysseus has played with his host (and that Homer plays with his audience). Because the hero needs to win Eumaios' sympathy, he echoes in his tale the

experiences and sufferings of the swineherd. He of course knows Eumaios' history; but we, the audience, are still in ignorance. The hero includes details such as royal birth, subsequent misfortune, a deceitful Phoenician, and "rescue" by an unknown king.[6] The very overlap between Odysseus' invented life story and his listener's experience of life guarantees—for the swineherd at least—the trustworthiness of the beggar and the authenticity of his tale.

The tale reflects Odysseus' persistence and resourcefulness; in fact, Homer reminds us of this set of qualities at 191 (πολύμητις ᾽Οδυσσεύς, "Odysseus of many counsels"). For within his long narrative the beggar inserts a passage through which he can return the conversation to the topic of Odysseus and his imminent homecoming.[7] Earlier in their encounter he had offered Eumaios news of Odysseus; he had met then with a discouraging response. When next he had sworn to Odysseus' homecoming, Eumaios' gloom had lifted a little. Now, within the seductive framework of the entertaining tale, he again endeavors—against Eumaios' instructions (168-69, ἄλλα παρὲξ μεμνώμεθα, μηδέ με τούτων / μίμνησκ᾽ ["we will think of other matters; don't keep reminding me of these things"])—to forecast a homecoming. He relies this time not only on the cogency of the context (for Eumaios, as we have noted, Odysseus' story could well be true since it runs so close to his own) but also on the solemnity of a royal pledge (the oath is not now on a beggar's lips but on those of a king, 331-33):

> ὤμοσε δὲ πρὸς ἔμ᾽ αὐτόν, ἀποσπένδων ἐνὶ οἴκῳ,
> νῆα κατειρύσθαι καὶ ἐπαρτέας ἔμμεν ἑταίρους,
> οἳ δή μιν πέμψουσι φίλην ἔς πατρίδα γαῖαν.
>
> And he swore to me in my presence, as he poured out a libation
> in his house, that the ship was drawn to the sea and the crew were ready
> to carry Odysseus back again to his own dear country.

[6] Doherty 1995: 149 points out that the tale is the tale of Odysseus' own adventures presented in realistic terms, without the fantastic episodes of books 9-12. This may be so; but what is more striking, I believe, is the series of parallels between Odysseus' contrived tale and the story of Eumaios' life.

[7] A detailed study of the narrative is not relevant here. For studies of the tale as a whole, see Trahman 1952; Williams,1972-73; Haft 1983-84; Thalmann *1992:l02-7;* and, most recently, Doherty 1995:148-59.

And the beggar adds a further persuasive, but false, detail: that Odysseus is returning by way of the oracle of Zeus at Dodona (327-30), where he is consulting on whether it is better, after so long an absence, to return ἀμφαδόν ("openly") or κρυφηδόν ("in secret") (330). Eumaios would know enough of his master and his ways to acknowledge that Odysseus would naturally give thought to this question. Eumaios is not to know that Athena, rather than Zeus, has already given Odysseus the advice he needed (13.397 -415).

The poet also demonstrates Odysseus' subtlety. I propose that the hero's narrative is intended to function as a unit of exchange within the same interactive strategy, the bargain, as do the previous bids. The terms of exchange, however, are not spelled out. Odysseus offers an entertaining tale about a fictitious individual; he implies in return that Eumaios should accept the promise embedded within it, the promise of Odysseus' return. Note that Odysseus has here changed his means of presentation (but not his purpose); he now works "in secret," κρυφηδόν, hoping in this way to break down Eumaios' resistance, rather than by the more—but not entirely—direct strategies that have already proven unsuccessful.

But Eumaios, after twenty years of separation, and having learned from his previous unhappy experiences, is not to be won over in a moment. His skepticism, which he has developed over the years to shield him from disappointment, holds him back. For this reason he accepts, as I noted above, that part of the tale that refers to the beggar—the elaborate fiction, fashioned to echo his own sufferings; and at 361-62 he pays tribute to the storyteller's skills:

> ἆ δειλὲ ξείνων, ἦ μοι μάλα θυμὸν ὄρινας
> ταῦτα ἕκαστα λέγων, ὅσα δὴ πάθες ἠδ' ὅσ' ἀλήθης.
>
> o sorrowful stranger, truly you troubled the spirit within me
> by telling me all these details, how you suffered and wandered.

But he is reluctant to accept what is at the heart of the tale, that part which touches on Odysseus and the announcement of his imminent return to Ithaka (363-64):

> ἀλλὰ τά γ' οὐ κατὰ κόσμον ὀΐομαι, οὐδέ με πείσεις
> εἰπὼν ἀμφ' Ὀδυσῆϊ·
>
> Yet I think some part is in no true order, and you will not persuade me
> in your talk about Odysseus.

Eumaios explains why he cannot give credence to what he has heard (365-71) and he supports his reason with a tale (378-85) similar to that which he told at 122-30 and which echoes, in certain details, the content of the beggar's autobiography.[8] Yet Eumaios no longer, as before at 89-92 and at 133-38, speaks of the possibility of Odysseus' death. Only his unwillingness to be deceived yet again with respect to the imminent return of his master prompts him to doubt the beggar's account. The irony of this situation is inescapable. Odysseus, home at last and eager to share as far as he may his delight in his return, has met with despair and apparent disbelief from his loyal steward. The master of persuasion is thwarted in his efforts not by one of his peers, but by his swineherd. The hero's own comment at 391-92 reflects his amused surprise at his predicament:

> ἦ μάλα τίς τοι θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσιν ἄπιστος,
> οἷόν σ' οὐδ' ὀμόσας περ ἐπήγαγον οὐδέ σε πείθω.
>
> Truly, the mind in you is something very suspicious.
> Not even with an oath can I bring you round, nor persuade you.

5. *Odysseus' final offer* (14.390-456)

> Odysseus seeks a tunic and a mantle and a passage home (if Odysseus returns)—in return he offers his own life (if he does not).

The bargain that Odysseus now attempts to strike at 391-400 recalls his earlier oath (149-65) in its form and in its apparent directness. Yet it also differs, in that the terms are more emphatic. The beggar asks to be given a mantle and a safe homecoming on the day that Odysseus returns. But should Odysseus not reappear, he will consent to lose his life. Again Homer strikes an ironic note: a safe homecoming is what Odysseus desires most of all; his words, through his disguise, are absolutely sincere.

In his effort to win Eumaios' trust, the resourceful Odysseus returns to a direct approach. Through the energy and confidence of his vow he hopes now to unsettle Eumaios' skepticism. But again the swineherd refuses Odysseus' offer. And his reasons are proper. Eumaios could not accept a wager that might cause him to harm a guest, thereby offending Zeus the guest-god (402-6):

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[8] For comments on this tale, see Doherty 1995:151-52. Thalmann 1992:137 comments that it "suspiciously resembles fiction." If this were the case, Eumaios truly has the measure of his guest.

ξεῖν', οὕτω γάρ κέν μοι ἐϋκλείη τ' ἀρετή τε
εἴη ἐπ' ἀνθρώπους ἅμα τ' αὐτίκα καὶ μετέπειτα,
ὅς σ' ἐπεὶ ἐς κλισίην ἄγαγον καὶ ξείνια δῶκα,
αὖτις δὲ κτείναιμι φίλον τ' απὸ θυμὸν ἑλοίμην·
πρόφρων κεν δὴ ἔπειτα Δία Κρονίωνα λιτοίμην·

That would be virtuous of me, my friend, and good reputation
would be mine among men, for present time alike and hereafter,
if first I led you into my shelter, there entertained you
as guest, then murdered you and ravished the dear life from you.
Then cheerfully I could go and pray to Zeus, son of Kronos.

But even though he refuses the wager—through this humorously ironic dismissal—he is influenced by what the beggar has said and by the manner in which he has made his point. Eumaios expresses his renewed hope not in words but through his actions: his sacrifice of the best pig (414-17) and his sequence of offerings (to the immortal gods, 420-24; to the nymphs and Hermes, 434-36; and again, now with a libation, to the gods, 446-47). Odysseus has at last made some progress: Eumaios concedes that his report allows him to hope again. Note the narrator's comments at 423-24:

καὶ ἐπεύχετο πᾶσι θεοῖσι
νοστῆσαι'Οδυσῆα πολύφρονα ὅνδε δόμονδε.

and prayed to all the gods
that Odysseus of the many designs should have his homecoming.

6. *A new approach: a bid for a cloak* (14.457-522)

Odysseus offers a story to illustrate Odysseus' wily character—in return he seeks a warm cloak for the night.

The after—dinner conversation between Eumaios and Odysseus, which brings this episode to a close might appear to be an interlude in the narrative. The urgency and intensity that we detected in the earlier stages of the conversation have evaporated. This unexpected shift in dynamics represents the observable recursive ebb and flow of everyday negotiation (Nichol 1996:ix). Speakers who have met with steady resistance to their proposals may well adjust their goals and begin anew. In this scene Odysseus appears to have put aside his efforts to share his joy in his homecoming and to persuade Eumaios that his master is near at hand; in a

reassessment of his position he directs his energies now to attending to his immediate need, a cloak for the night—for it is windy and wet (457-58). But the sequence as a whole is not without broader significance.

The beggar offers, spontaneously, a story about himself and Odysseus that dates back to the Trojan War. He recalls a night of wind and snow when he, Odysseus, and Menelaos were on duty beneath the walls of Troy. He had carelessly left behind his mantle. He tells Odysseus of his predicament and describes the ready ingenuity of the hero's response, which is so true to character that for a moment, in the course of the telling, it restores Odysseus to the swineherd. When the beggar, toward the close of his tale, boldly asks for a cloak for himself (504-06), a request that he has foreshadowed repeatedly through his Odysseus-tale, Eumaios does not hesitate. His gratitude for his guest's evocation of the hero is repaid with a generous covering against the rain and the wind (518-22). The beggar's proposal for a deal is accepted and fulfilled.

So here at last we see a bargain negotiated from its initiation to its successful conclusion. Each of the earlier proposals has been rejected or modified or, if accepted, accepted only in part. Now at last we see a deal carried through from a proposal agreeable to both parties to a mutually satisfactory outcome: Eumaios allows himself to feel the presence of his master; Odysseus sleeps warm, secure in the knowledge of the loyalty and affection of his swineherd.

Conclusion

Negotiation between individuals may take any number of courses. The path it takes depends on the personalities involved and on the issues under discussion. Homer certainly does not have a single script in mind for a negotiation sequence in the world of epic. If we pause to study the negotiation between Priam and Achilleus in *Iliad* 24.468-620, we observe that Priam uses a variety of preparatory strategies (in accordance with Hermes' instructions) to prepare his way for his bid (his request that Achilleus ransom his son).[9] Here in *Odyssey* 14 we have a plausible version

[9] The strategies are *supplication* (477-79); *request for compassion (485-506); lamentation* (507-14); *consolation* (515-51); *bid* (ransom request) (552-58); *threatening response* (559-70); *acceptance* (592-95); and *consolation* (596-620). Note that the action-sequence *exchange* (571-90) actually precedes *acceptance* in this case—an interesting insight into Achilleus' temperament and his mood. Any ransom request is an attempt to bargain: see also *Il.* 1.17-21. For a discussion of the way in which this speech-act, the bid,

of another style of negotiation, more intense by virtue of its reliance on a single strategy. Each of these six bids represents an attempt to negotiate an exchange; each participant seeks to formulate, or reformulate, a proposal that will be acceptable to the other.

The repetition of the speech-act, the bid, in this narrative segment is an example of Homer's occasional practice of repeating scenes, or elements of scenes, *seriatim.*[10] We see such repetition, for example, in the *Iliad:* in Agamemnon's tour of inspection *(Iliad* 4.223-421), in the sequence of night-time summonses that the king initiates *(Iliad* 10.17-179), or in the funeral games described at *Iliad* 23.257-897. The repeated dining scenes 'at Odyssey 1.125-48 are a modest example of the same phenomenon (Scott 1971). What is repeated in such scenes is the format of the whole, its underlying structure; what is repeated word for word are the physical action or actions that may be part of that event.[11] In the Eumaios-scene we have noted the repetition of the speech-act, the bid. This scene, however, is unlike the scenes that I have noted above, in that there is no physical action that overtly signals structural repetition for the benefit of the audience. But there are two interconnected elements that surface and resurface in the course of the conversation: *request* and *offer*. Although verbal repetition is not as marked here as it might be in action sequences, the poet's repeated recourse to these two elements causes us to consider his purpose.

I suggest that it is useful to give some thought to serial repetition, since it differs in significant respects from the kind of occasional repetition, across the text as a whole, of word, phrase, sentence, and type-scene, that has been studied extensively since the time of Milman Parry.[12] And we

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marks out the course of the *Iliad,* see Murnaghan 1997.

[10] I distinguish this kind of repetition from the repetition of messages, a phenomenon described and discussed in Kakridis 1971:ch. 4, "Double Repetitions in Homer."

[11] At *Iliad* 4.223-421, for example, the repeated elements are *approach* (4.251, 273, 292-93, 364-65) and Agamemnon's *emotion,* delight or anger, which colors his remarks to each man (255, 283, 311, 336, 368).

[12] Repetition at the level of formula has been a topic in Homeric studies since the work of Milman Parry was first published (see his collected papers, Parry 1971). For recent discussion of the force of repetition at the formulaic level and at the level of typical scene, see Foley 1991. Doherty (1995:Appendix) addresses the topic of formal redundancy, but none of the categories that she proposes at the level of narration (Appendix, B) include repetition of this kind. On *serial* repetition at this level of production I mention two works, one minor, the other major. Scott (1971) draws our attention to this phenomenon and seeks to observe its force. On the other hand, Fenik

might consider first how serial repetition functions in the poetics of narrative. Being relatively easy (and on occasions automatic), repetition offers a ready and almost effortless solution to the challenges of composition in performance. Repetition—with or without variation, of speech acts as well as of typical scenes—resolves for the poet the problem of accessing ideas and finding the words to express them: it facilitates fluency and, of course, it sustains speech in a situation in which silence is to be avoided. This is a practical function that serves the poet in his capacity as performer.

But serial repetition serves the poet as storyteller, too. In the example we find at *Odyssey* 1.125-48, repetition is used to convey a contrast between the behavior of a civilized young man who knows how to behave in company and who is putting his understanding of etiquette into practice for the first time and that of the suitors, who have ceased to care about good manners (Scott 1971 :548). The scene points up effectively the selfishness of the suitors and the inexperience, but good intentions, of Athena's young host. Likewise, in the three Iliadic cases noted above, sustained repetition, even as it carries the narrative forward, serves as a convenient and controlled means of characterization (again, by means of contrast). The repeated scenes of *Iliad* 4 allow us to see not only some relevant aspects of Agamemnon's character—most conspicuously, his lack of interpersonal skills (cf. 4.264, 339, 370-400)—but also the different character of each of the men whom he encounters (Kirk *1985:ad loc.)*. The sequence of *Iliad* 10.17-l79 does the same. The various exchanges illuminate certain traits in each of the principal actors: Menelaos, Nestor, Diomedes, Odysseus, and, of course, Agamemnon (Hainsworth *1993:ad loc.)*. And in *Iliad* 23 the funeral games serve as a review of the cast of players, in that the poet allows us to see each of the Achaian heroes in action for one last time (Richardson 1993:*ad loc.;* Willcock 1973:1-11).

In *Odyssey* 14, however, we have an episode that, I claim, is unique. Note that in this scene there is no change of personnel: the same two people are the speakers throughout. And yet, through its balance of uniformity of

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(1968) shows that in those very scenes where we might expect serial repetition, it does not occur. Fenik demonstrates that despite *apparent* repetition within scenes of combat, Homer does not repeat the same combat pattern *seriatim* (in the way that he repeats the speech-act of *bid* in the Eumaios-Odysseus scene). For example, in the *aristeia* of Agamemnon, the king kills two pairs of brothers in succession (*Il.*l1.101-48), yet there is no structural repetition.

At the same time, however, some work has been done in the field of linguistics on this very topic: see, for example, the special issue of *Text* 7.3 (1987); Tannen 1987; and Tannen 1989:chapter 3, "Repetition in Conversation."

structure against notable differences in detail, the scene as a whole conveys important information about character and motivation—and about the way in which two "strangers" establish a bond of common interest. From Eumaios' perspective, the task is to build a completely new relationship;[13] for Odysseus, the task is to test, and to re-create, a relationship that existed in the past. Through the play of stability against variation, in repeated reference to a constant, our knowledge of how bargains are negotiated, and in the variation among the six expressions of the bid itself, the poet is able to refer us to the enduring qualities of his hero: his resourcefulness, his tenacity, and his interest in gain (after all, Odysseus will not give up information without obtaining something in return). These indeed are the qualities that the poet has identified as typically Odyssean in the vocabulary he uses throughout the epic (πολυμήχανος ["inventive"], πολύμητις ["of many counsels"], πολύτλας ["much-enduring"]), and κερδαλέος ["with an eye to gain"]). As for Eumaios, it is significant that the poet gives him on occasion a proactive role. This suggests that Eumaios is alive to what Odysseus is doing. The very fact that he can reject Odysseus' proposals or seek a revision or, indeed, make a similar move in discourse suggests to us that he is no unthinking, acquiescent servant but a man with a lively mind. His response to each of the beggar's proposals, in its use of repetition, marks the swineherd as an attentive and critical listener. Note Eumaios' responses to the beggar's terms (that Odysseus will return: 167, 171-72, 365-66, 384, 423-24 [in the narrator's voice], and 515; the request for a tunic and cloak: 510, 516). He may not be as κερδαλέος ("shrewd") as his master, but he is no fool (Ahl and Roisman 1996: 169). Hence the intensity of the persuasive exercise.

As I have noted, the poet uses thematic repetition (Odysseus' imminent return; the "reward" of a cloak and a tunic) to draw our attention to structural repetitions of this kind. Otherwise, he leaves it to us, his audience, to detect these recurrent patterns unaided and to make something of them. I suggest that he expects us to find some amusement in observing his game—in noting the simplicity of a strategy that can nevertheless offer so much information. And this reticence on his part in turn heightens our pleasure in the tale, which derives not only from an appreciation of the strategy employed but also from the rhythm of the exchange, as each bid is offered and its terms negotiated. Rhythm of this kind, at this level of

[13] Other after-dinner conversations in the Homeric epics are conversations between acknowledged peers. Each party knows the other, if not personally, then at least through family connection. What is important is that both parties share the same attitudes and have the same worldview.

production, is, I argue, a source of aesthetic delight akin to the delight we find in repetition of words and phrases (Tannen 1987:575-76).

At this point I wish to introduce Tannen's notion of the "poetics of talk" (1987:574-75). She uses this evocative phrase to make the point that all language is poetic in some degree. In her investigations of the relationship between literary discourse and everyday talk, she observes that there are linguistic patterns common to both genres. These are of two kinds: sound patterns (which we need not pursue here) and sense patterns-patterns of repetition, such as the repeated bids under discussion, imagery and detail, dialogue, and figures of thought or tropes that operate on meaning (574-75). She demonstrates that repetition, which is "artfully developed and intensified" in literary discourse, is "spontaneous, pervasive, and often relatively automatic" in everyday talk (580-81). She discusses the purposes of repetition under four headings (production, comprehension, connection, and interaction) and proposes that it is possible to link the "surface patterns of talk" with the goals of the participants and to measure their degree of contact—their mutual understanding of how the conversation is developing (581). Her conclusion is that repetition, in creating a sense of coherence, serves the high-level function of establishing rapport, of communicating involvement and a willingness to interact within the same "world of discourse" (585).

The particular instance of repetition under examination in this paper is in all these respects paradigmatic. We should remember, however, that although repetition in actual conversation creates rapport between participants, in representations of conversation it can only indicate rapport between the characters involved. The negotiation between Odysseus and Eumaios, wherein several bargain-proposals are put forward and reworked, indicates a shared understanding of the direction that this particular conversation is taking—and lays the foundation for the bond between the two men (cf. Tannen 1989:59-71). Doherty (1995:152) attributes their mutual understanding to the parallels between the stories each man tells the other; I claim, following Tannen, that the bond develops *throughout* the conversation (not simply with the life story that each man tells) and that Homer's choice of repeated structures for the presentation of their conversation and his use of repeated themes reveal this shared understanding. Eumaios' repetition of the beggar's speech-act and his echoing of the beggar's terms, as well as Odysseus' repeated bids and his adoption of Eumaios' theme, the gift of a tunic and cloak—all mark this readiness in both parties to cooperate in conversation. What we have here is a meeting of minds. For Homer's audience, too, repetition creates rapport, in the terms that Tannen has set out. It creates rapport between them and

the poet, who performs in their presence. It is this rapport that maintains listeners' sympathy for and interest in the tale. For the duration of the song they are prepared to commit themselves to the "world of discourse" that the singer has evoked.

I suggest that this brief study of the form and the presentation of this particular negotiation throws further light on the interaction between Odysseus and Eumaios. It supplements Ahl and Roisman's discussion of and insistence on Odysseus' eagerness for recognition and, more importantly, it reflects on the competence of his swineherd, who comes to realize that *this* beggar does indeed have something to tell him about his long-awaited master. This, however, has not been the sole purpose of the present case study. Our examination of the structure of the encounter has led us to reflect on yet another aspect of the role that repetition plays in the composition of the epic.

This controlled and elegantly simple construction, the repeated speech-act, endows the scene with a remarkable—indeed, an extraordinary—intensity. As the audience follows the serial reworkings of the proposal, their interest is caught and their attention is held. Given that the structural framework of the passage is identical from one conversational move to the next, the poet frees his listeners to ponder on the possible reasons for repetition and, furthermore, to concentrate on what is new in each segment—that is, the details of the revised transactions between his two speakers. It is the nature of this interaction that is the principal focus of our attention. This long and extraordinary conversation gives us the impression of a conversation rendered from life; and yet, as Tannen would argue, it offers us more. It is designed also, as I have shown, to engage, to delight, and indeed to tease. Such, in short, is the special role of serial repetition in the "poetics of talk."

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Oral-Formulaic Approaches to Coptic Hymnography

Leslie MacCoull

Shomt n-rôme auei	3 men came
sha peneiôt Abraam	to our father Abraham
m-p-nau n-hanameri	at the time of noon
ef-hen ti-skênê	when he was in his tent:
Gabriêl pi-nishti	Gabriel the great
n-archangelos	archangel
nem Michaêl	with Michael
ere p-Joeis hen toumêti	with the Lord in their midst.
Shomt n-ran enchosi	3 names are exalted
hen t-phe nem p-kahi	in heaven and earth:
asjôlh mmôou ebol	there clothed herself in them
nje tisabe m-Parthenos	the wise Virgin.
Ge gar as-ti-mêini	For she gave the sign
m-pi-batos ethouaab	of the holy bush
ere pi-chrôm nhêts	with the fire in it
ouoh mpes-rôkh	and it was not burned.[1]

From the first Coptic hymn for the twenty-first of the month of Hathyr (30 November), the feast of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, the first person recorded as having had a vision of the Virgin Mary (MacCoull 1999). It is sung to the tune called "Adam," a simple melody for three-stress quatrains (the other principal melody being called "The Burning Bush," already alluded to in this hymn's imagery). What a creative way to elaborate the Old Testament theophany image of what is termed the

[1] O'Leary 1926-29:i, 66. All translations are my own except where noted.

"Philoxenia of Abraham,"[2] with, as the hymnographer will proceed to do, New Testament imagery (Paul caught up to the "third heaven") and patristic testimonia. Every strophe begins with the letter gamma, which is the Greek and Coptic numeral 3. Exegetical, narrative, and, as I will show, folk elements are combined into a simple work that everyone could understand.

Coptic, as usually defined, is the last stage of the Egyptian language, written in the Greek alphabet with the addition of signs taken from Demotic to represent phonemes for which Greek signs did not exist.[3] Existing in several dialects and two main supraregional forms, southern and northern, it was created beginning in about the third century CE in a learned bilingual milieu of elite users who were vividly aware of the powerful utility of visually representing the vernacular by means of a Greek graphic system.[4] By the third and fourth centuries Coptic was used for biblical texts, by the fifth for letters and sermons, and by the sixth for legal documents (alongside Greek) and historiography. Seasoned throughout with Greek loanwords, it took its place alongside Syriac, Armenian, and Ethiopic (Ge'ez) as a culture-carrying language of the Monophysite commonwealth of ethnic groups in and near Byzantium who did not accept the Council of Chalcedon.[5] It continued as a vehicle for scripture, church liturgy, preaching, literature, documentation and correspondence until about the late tenth century.

After about 1000 CE the pressure of Arabic, the language of Egypt's political rulers and of the marketplace, began to replace Coptic in both the literary and the everyday realm for Christian Egyptian users. Only in the liturgies of the Eucharist and the monastic hours did Coptic persist in some degree; by the thirteenth century it had ceased to be understood. Unlike speakers of Armenian or Syriac, who also lived under Arabophone Moslem rule, Copts abandoned their ancestral language except for a few religious fossilizations. Manuscripts in Coptic continued to be copied after a fashion, however, eventually providing a clue to the decipherment of hieroglyphics.

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[2] Note that it is the Eastern understanding of the Philoxenia, Christ with two archangels, not the Western one of the Three Persons of the Trinity. Miller 1984: 43-95; see also O'Leary 1926-29:iii, 49.

[3] The whole special linguistics appendix (*CE* viii:13-227) of this volume of the *CE* is by far the best guide to the whole subject. On alphabet(s), see *CE* viii:30-45.

[4] See Bagnall 1993:253, 256-57.

[5] Syriac and Ethiopic, both Semitic languages, took their writing systems from Semitic sources; Armenian, an Indo-European language of the Caucasus, created its own by the fifth century.

The surviving body of Coptic writing comprises examples of every genre one would expect to find in the cultural practice of any religiously defined socioethnic group, including hymns.

Every Christian tradition from the earliest records has a hymn tradition. More than sixty years ago Oswald Burmester wrote, "Coptic hymnography is a vast virgin forest, beyond whose confines no Coptic or liturgical scholar has as yet penetrated."[6] That remains the case today. This rich repertoire remains unknown to scholarship and has on only a very few occasions become an object of curiosity for the pious Westerner rummaging around in Eastern liturgies in search of "spiritual gems,"[7] or for that matter the pious Easterner seeking to demonstrate the glories of his or her tradition. Questions of matters so basic as dating, attribution, and authorship remain unasked. No investigator has ever even begun to sift through the (admittedly vast) amount of preserved material to ask questions such as: what is early? What is late? Who wrote these texts? What, if any, models did the composers have?[8] Who was their audience? In addition, most of the extant material has been transmitted in very late manuscripts (even of Ottoman date), so one must ask what changes took place when material in the earlier, Sahidic (southern) dialect of Coptic was metaphrased or reworked into the later, Bohairic (northern) dialect. In my previous work I have termed Coptic hymnody "the authentic singing voice of a people."[9] I have now begun to use the methodological toolkit of oral-formulaic theory to hack a path into the virgin forest. It has been stated that the Parry-Lord hypothesis has now been applied to over a hundred language traditions: Coptic is not yet one of them.[10]

There are three main parts of the repertoire of Coptic hymnody. The first is the "Psalmodia of the Year,"[11] arranged according to the days of the

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[6] 1938:141, quoted in Borsai 1971:74.

[7] An example is Cramer 1969; see MacCoull 2000 for a comparable Coptic effort to reappropriate the past.

[8] On Coptic *troparia* and the possible role of the Jerusalem liturgy as a model, see Quecke 1978:182-83, 186.

[9] MacCoull 1989:41; cf. MacCoull 1984:4.

[10] See Foley 1985:681-85; see also Foley 1988:1, 57, 108. Coptic does not fit under either "Byzantine Greek" or "Egyptian" (the latter meaning Ancient Egyptian), in these sources.

[11] See Brogi 1962.

week and including moveable feast seasons: a subset of this category is the hymns for Advent, the month of Choiak (December) leading up to Christmas. The second is the *Theotokia* or corpus of hymns to the Virgin Mary (the *Theotokos*, "Mother of God"),[12] also arranged by days of the week. The third is the so-called *Antiphonarium*, or in Arabized-apocopated form *Difnar*,[13] hymns for fixed saints' feast days of the twelve months (an "antiphon" being conceived of as what is termed "proper," a function of the calendar day or assigned to that day). I have begun working with the third category, the hymns for saints' days, often referred to as "versified hagiography"(cf. Mossay 1996) and thought of as just renderings into simple, mnemonic verse of the stories in the late Copto-Arabic *Synaxarion* (compiled as late as the 1240s).[14] However, it appears after scrutiny that this judgment is only partly true: quite often *Synaxarion* material is left out and new material inserted in its place. Again, we must ask the basic questions about dating, about what is earlier and what is later.

There are occasional dating clues in the material as it stands. Obviously, if the story being related is that of a neomartyr put to death by the Arabs or of a patriarch of the tenth century, or of an ascetic of the fourteenth, like Barsauma the Naked,[15] the composition cannot predate the event. If linguistic clues such as a misunderstanding owing to Arabic language forms appear, the hymn comes from a time when Arabic had replaced Coptic as the language understood by Egyptian Christians (for example, Aristobulus from the book of Acts becomes "Aristo of Boulos," Paul, Boulos being the Arabic form of Paul[16]. On the other hand, memories of events from the early classic period of Coptic church history are well preserved, for example the eclipse of the sun during the patriarchate of Cyril in the fifth century,[17] or the building of a church to

[12] See O'Leary 1923.

[13] See O'Leary 1926-29.

[14] See Suter and Suter 1994.

[15] O'Leary 1926-29:iii, 51-52.

[16] O'Leary 1926-29:ii, 77-78.

[17] O'Leary 1926-29:i, 32. The date, however, given by the hymn as 10 Phaophi (7 October), is a bit off; see Schove 1984:72-73, who gives the historically correct date of 19 July 418 CE.

the Forty-Nine Martyrs of Sketis during that of Theodosius in the sixth century.[18]

The *Antiphonarium* as we have it, from the first month, Thoth (September), through the twelfth, Mesore (August), including the five intercalary days at the end of the year, Nesi, is preserved complete only in very late Ottoman-era manuscripts in the Vatican Library and the John Rylands University Library at Manchester, manuscripts that have Arabic-language headings for each day (while the hymn texts are in Bohairic Coptic).[19] Earlier partial Antiphoners are scarce. Pierpont Morgan Library MSS M575 (dated 893/94 CE)[20] and M574 (dated 897/98 CE)[21] contain Sahidic hymns for feast days: commemorations of angels, apostles, martyrs, bishops and patriarchs, military saints, monastic founders, even church councils. Both these manuscripts were written for the famous Fayum monastery of St Michael the Archangel at Hamouli. Often the hymns are in the form of alphabetic acrostics,[22] in which each strophe begins with a successive letter of the Greek-Coptic alphabet. Already in this late ninth-century material we are encountering what is clearly a fully developed form with a long life behind it. Two thirteenth- to fourteenth-century partial Bohairic antiphoners written in the Wadi Natrun monastery of St. Macarius are known in the collection of the Hamburg State and University Library.[23] MS. 165 (Hymn. 2) omits the months of Phamenoth and Pharmouthi (March and April) since they are largely taken up with Lent and Eastertide. (The other, MS 194 [Hymn. 31], is not really an antiphoner since eight of its eleven leaves have hymns to Christ not pegged to any calendar dates). In addition, a fourteenth-century antiphoner (dated to 1385 CE) written at the Red Sea monastery of St. Antony has begun to be studied in part, revealing that its text has both similarities to and differences from that preserved in

[18] O'Leary 1926-29:ii, 27.

[19] O'Leary 1926-29:i, i.

[20] So Depuydt (1993:107-12), who gives a date before 29 August 893 CE, and calls the hymns "antiphons;" cf. Cramer 1968:207.

[21] So Depuydt 1993:113-21; cf. Kuhn and Tait 1996:1-2.

[22] See Kuhn and Tait 1996:10-11.

[23] Störk 1995:335-40, 402-4.

the late Ottoman copies, a fact that perhaps points to a remote common ancestor.[24]

From all this it is apparent that the corpus of Coptic hymns for fixed saints' days comes from a monastic context. The hymns would have been sung at a morning and an evening canonical hour in the auditory space of a monastic church.[25] The hymns would have been experienced as texts, as recitations, and as material for meditative listening. They actively integrated devotional life and sacred musical practice both for the monks of the community and for any village laypeople who might have been present. For each day we have, in the later whole-year collection, two hymns, either both on the same saint or, more often, the second celebrating another saint commemorated on the same day as the calendar grew more crowded. Both hymns are in in four-line strophes, the form universally employed for these compositions. The first hymn text of each pair is in the shorter quatrain-strophic meter known as "Adam" (from the first word of the first line of the pattern, "Adam was sad" [*Adam eti efoi*]); there are three stresses per line. The second of each pair is in the longer quatrain-strophic meter known as "Batos" (meaning "bush," from the pattern "The bush that Moses saw" [*pi-Batos eta-Môusês nau erof*]); there are four stresses per line.[26] In nearly all cases each hymn text closes with a standard final strophe: for the shorter meter it is "By the prayers / of the holy N. / may the Lord have mercy on us / and forgive our sins"; for the longer it is "Entreat the Lord for us, / O holy N. the [martyr, monk, bishop, virgin, etc.], / that he may have mercy on us / and forgive us our sins." In addition, a very few special closing strophes are found.

As is the case in various areas of the late antique and medieval graphic worlds, Coptic hymnographic manuscripts use various types of minimal visual cues to inform the reader that the material being written down is poetry, in fact strophic poetry.[27] Most of the time only strophes, not individual lines, manifest a separation marked by more than a simple point. In the alphabetic-acrostic Antiphoner poems recorded in the late

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[24] Cramer 1968:210; see Krause 1998:158.

[25] Taft 1986:249-59. In addition, it might be possible, had we more evidence, to make a connection between a day's hymn and the decoration of the liturgical space, emphasizing continuity with the rituals of an earlier age, as has been done for the Hebrew *piyyutim* in late antiquity by Laderman (1997:5-6, 8, 12).

[26] Adapted from Borsai 1980:25, 41. See Appendix: Examples 1.1 and 1.2.

[27] Cf. O'Brien O'Keeffe 1990:3-6, 21-23, 25-26.

ninth-century Fayum manuscripts, which use a broad single-column format, the first letter of each strophe, important for the acrostic, is usually enlarged and decorated.[28] Line division is marked within each strophe by a raised dot, strophe-end by a double stroke. By the time of the very late copies in two-column format, copies that manifest a lack of comprehension of the Coptic language itself, often the attempted pointing of line division is erroneous. Readers/reciters would have had to bring a great deal of knowledge with them to the decoding of the text, including expectations engendered by the formulaic qualities, in order to perform the hymn aloud.

The Coptic language operates with a strong stress-accent,[29] and, so far as the matter has been studied at all,[30] only the number of stresses per line was counted, not the number of syllables. This is what is termed tonic versification.[31] Yet it is not exactly the same as what we encounter in Anglo-Saxon verse, inasmuch as the latter counts stresses in employing a half-line structure that comes to engender its own pattern-based alliterative phraseology.[32] Thus in Coptic the noun will bear a stress, but usually not the preposition and article preceding it: for example, *róme* ("man") has one stress in two syllables, but *hitn-p-róme* ("from the man") still has only one stress in five syllables. When the Coptic language adopted the Greek alphabet it took on long and short vowels (represented by ε/η, ο/ω), yet we find no attempts at achieving "quantitative"-style versification as are found in Hebrew, Arabic, and Syriac.

Four-line strophic form is as old as Judeo-Christian hymnody in the Mediterranean. It is inconceivable that the impulse to compose this type of text did not take root in Coptic-speaking Christian Egypt as well, probably as early as the fourth century, the heyday of the classic quatrain or "Ambrosian stanza," which itself had eastern roots in both its quantitative and its accentual form. Later, Coptic hymns come to exhibit all the features

[28] Kuhn and Tait 1996:viii-ix.

[29] Lambdin 1983:xv-xvi; see also Kasser 1995.

[30] Junker 1908-11 and Säve-Söderbergh 1949 are the only attempts to explicate Coptic meter: in the first case as strophic poetry, in the second as Manichaean psalms.

[31] Gasparov 1996:92-96.

[32] Cf. Foley 1990:106-7, 116-19, 201-4. Furthermore, in Coptic hymns enjambement occurs only rarely; the single line is almost always the unit.

typical of the other language groups: acrostics[33] (found in Greek, Syriac, and Hebrew), refrains, and simple or elaborate rhymes. No one has yet sought out this putative early stratum of the Coptic repertoire, but in all of these early and classical-era (fourth- through early seventh-century) compositions the writer's goal was a didactic one—to be easily understood by the congregation and to transmit doctrinal content.[34] The composers combined learned and folklore elements into texts that reflected their religious thought-world and their own culture. Egypt too should be included in this realm.

I proceed now to Coptic hymns and what I perceive to be the oral-formulaic traits of their composition. It must be remembered that every ballad, as it were, tells a story.

Since Coptic hymnographic compositions are transmitted in writing, they manifest the secondary stage of oral-formulaic composition, the stage in which the texts are written down. This amounts to an embodiment of what has been termed "residual orality."[35] Elements are selected from memory according to criteria of appropriateness and then assembled on the written page. What provided the clue that I was dealing with a body of oral-formulaic compositions was the recurrence of stock openings and stock opening strophes, often subject to variation according to the meter (A[dam] or B[atos]) (Appendix: Examples 1.1 and 1.2, 2 A and B). Since earlier investigators had simply looked up one or two individual texts, they did not notice the repetitions and recurrences. In addition, the few musicologists in the field (mostly women), employing an ethnographic approach, concentrated on recording items as they existed in churches in the 1960s, and did not ask any historical questions about the development of the observed material. (Gender may also play a role: since the culture of the Coptic Orthodox Church is totally male, female field investigators may well have been handicapped in their data collection.) As will be seen, in the

[33] In one doubtful Greco-Coptic case, there is thought to be an acrostic spelling out the author's name: see Borsai 1971:75-76, n.14. Again no attempt to date the compositions was made by the early native investigator. See also Youssef 1998.

[34] Beck 1959:263; Martin 1996:695-96; and cf. Weinberger 1998:28-40.

[35] See, for example, O'Brien O'Keeffe 1990:x.

Coptic realm we must address the interface between orality and textuality in a whole new way.[36]

Opening formulas

Unlike reference works for the Latin West or Greek-speaking Byzantium (such as Follieri's *Initia Hymnorum*), until 1995 there was no listing of first lines for any collection of Coptic hymns, however restricted. In Störk's 1995 edition, however, we have a precious *Incipitsverzeichnis* (650-63) that makes this phenomenon of stock recurrence very easy to see. So too for the hymns of the Antiphoner. Very often recurring in the A meter are:

Amôini têrou mphoou	Come all today
or	
Amôini mphoou têrou	Come today all

—followed by "O orthodox people," "O Christian flock," "O believing ones," or "and praise the glory / of Saint (name)."[37] Alternatively, "Come" in the singular can introduce *Amou sharon mphoou* ("Come to us today") or its doublet *Amou mphoou sharon* ("Come today to us"), followed by a vocative, "O psalmist David," "O evangelist (name)," or "O prophet (name)," and the conclusion "and inform us / about the honor / of Saint (name)."[38] Another plural "Come!" opening is Trinitarian (and doxological):

Amôini marenhôs	Come let us sing
e-p-Christos Iêsous	to Christ Jesus
nem pef-Iôt n-agathos	and his good Father
nem pi-Pneuma ethouaab	and the Holy Spirit.

[36] On the "transtemporal" recreative process in Coptic hymns and how formulaic material can undergo change, substitution, condensation/expansion, displacement, and contamination, I have learned much from Goldberg 1999:e.g., x-xi.

[37] O'Leary 1926-29:i, 1; i, 69 and elsewhere. The variant order *mphoou têrou* is much less frequent than the preferred order *têrou mphoou*, indicating that it is the latter that became a fixed formula (cf. Störk 1995:652).

[38] O'Leary 1926-29:i, 2; i, 7; i, 39. Again *mphoou* is found most often in final position in the line.

It continues, "And let us tell / of the glory and honor / of Saint (name), / the holy [martyr, monk, bishop, virgin etc.]." Of course, the "Come let us..." opening is extremely generative with vocatives: "O come, orthodox ones / Christians / believers" (similar to above) and with verbs: "Come let us worship / tell of / praise /...."[39]

Besides *Amôini*, another first element also beginning with the letter A and handy if an alphabetic acrostic is being constructed is *Alêthôs*, "Truly":

Alêthôs ekmpsha	Truly you are worthy
nhannishti n-taio	of great honor,
O ...	O holy (name) / the (adjective+noun)

([adjective+noun] can be phrases such as "the brave martyr" or "the good shepherd," etc.); or "Truly great / is your honor" (*Alêthôs nnishti / epektaio*)....[40] Also frequent is an initial verb in the first person singular future:

Ainaerhêts pi-atmpsha	I shall undertake, though unworthy,
or	
Ainaerhêts n-ou-chishshôou	I shall undertake with desire
esaji e-pi-taio ...	to speak of the honor
	(of the holy (name)/ the [adjective+ noun]).[41]

At the other end of the alphabet, as one might expect, "O" (ω) is a productive opening ploy, generating the beginnings of various stock strophes. Two favorites are:

Ô ouniatk nthok	O blessed are you,

continuing "O holy (name), / for you ... ... / and ... ...": "for you fought for Christ / and won the crown"; "for you left behind / the things of this world," etc.; and (another favorite beginning with "O"):

Ô nim pethnash saji	O who will be able to speak

—"of the honor and glory / of the holy (name) / the (adjective+noun)?"

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[39] O'Leary 1926-29:i, 5; i, 9; i, 16; i, 20; i, 40.

[40] O'Leary 1926-29: i, 14; i, 25.

[41] O'Leary 1926-29:ii, 8; i, 40; i, 75; i, 91.

For the longer B(atos) meter too there is a recognizable and recurring inventory of stock opening strophes. In this case we again find the letter-A beginnings:

Alêthôs afshai nan mphoou Truly it is a feast for us today,[42]

—leading into or followed by "your honored commemoration, / O holy (name), / the (adjective+noun)." Also frequent with *alêthôs* is:

Alêthôs tioi nshphêri Truly I marvel,

—continuing "and my mind is amazed, / in speaking of your honor, / O holy (name)." Other favorite openings in A are *Ash las nrem nsarx* ("What tongue of a man of flesh," introducing "will be able to praise you / and sing [/tell] of your honor, / O holy (name) the [noun]?"),[43] and *Aina ouôn nrôi esaji* ("I shall open my mouth to speak," continuing "I, the unworthy [/the sinner], / of the honor and glory / of the holy N."). Also beginning with A and with its length fitting most comfortably in the B meter we have the "Once upon a time" opening line: *Afshôpi hen pai ehoou etouaab* ("It happened on this holy day")[44] or *Afshôpi hen niehoou etmmau* ("It came to pass in those days"),[45] the latter taken from the liturgical introduction to the reading of a Gospel pericope.[46]

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[42] O'Leary 1926-29:i, 74; ii, 62; cf. i, 28. This very line is also found as the opening of prose encomiastic homilies, e.g. an instance at Worrell 1923:251, a homily on the Virgin that begins (in Sahidic) *Alêthôs afsha nan mpoou*. This correspondence raises the interesting chicken-and-egg question of whether the homilist was using a catchy hymn-opening known to him and his audience or else the hymn writer was using a device known from oratory. More likely it was the former: see Allen 1996:165 and Cunningham 1996:180, 182-83.

[43] O'Leary 1926-29:i, 36. This opening is also found in prose encomia, e.g. Worrell 1923:137, a homily on the archangel Gabriel that begins with the rhetorical question *Ash ⲛ̄las ⲛ̄sarx ê tapro ⲛ̄rôme petnashjô mpektaio* ("What tongue of flesh or mouth of man will be able to speak of your honor?"). For that matter, it is also found in some Synaxarion entries: see Suter and Suter 1994:402, 410, 473.

[44] O'Leary 1926-29:i, 4, *Thoth* 4 (1 Sept.), St. Macarius.

[45] O'Leary 1926-29:i, 49, *Hathyr* 1 (28 Oct.), St. Cleophas.

[46] For a delightful example of a hagiographical folktale hymn with this sort of opening, see Example 3 (Appendix).

The longer B meter also often employs the hortatory and/or doxological stock opening:

Marenhôs ntentiôou	Let us sing and glorify
n-pen-Joeis Iêsous p-Christos	our Lord Jesus Christ
nem pef-Iôt n-agathos	and his good Father
nem pi-Pneuma ethouaab	and the Holy Spirit.

Indeed, this pattern becomes widely manipulable, and many other items can be inserted into the appropriate slots: "Let us worship / sing to / glorify // [divine figure (name)], // and let us honor / praise / tell the deeds of // [Saint (name) the (noun)]."[47] There are also many variations on the Trinitarian doxological opening strophe in B meter:

Tenouôsht m-p-Iôt n-agathos	We worship the good Father
nem pef-Shêri Iêsous p-Christos	and his Son Jesus Christ
nem pi-Pneuma pi-Paraklêton	and the Spirit, the Paraclete,
ti-Trias ethouaab n-homoousios	the holy, consubstantial Trinity.

—often introducing a next strophe that goes, "And we venerate the holy (name), / the ...(adjective+noun)..., / who ...(did this)... / and ...(did that)...." *Tenouôsht* ("We worship") is the opening word of a hymn found as part of the eucharistic liturgy.[48] Also found is "We worship the Father without beginning / and his incomprehensible Son / and the life-giving Spirit, / one Godhead (one sole and only),"[49] showing that a great deal of sophisticated theological content can be fit into this small space. This formula can also be found in a form ending "For this is our God, us, the Christians," a phrase also found in medieval Coptic manuscript colophons that have a Trinitarian invocation clause.[50]

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[47] Compare also the longer, two-strophe variable form seen in O'Leary 1926-29:ii, 101, Amôini ntentiôou / m-pen-ch(oei)s Iê(sou)s / penouro pe-Ch(risto)s / pi-mairômi n-agathos // ouoh ntentaio / nnefmartyros / ete Abba Iesson / nem Abba Iôsêph // ("Come let us glorify / our Lord Jesus / our King, Christ, / who loves humankind and is good // and let us honor / his martyrs / Abba Iesson / and Abba Joseph//") with ii,106, in which the same first strophe is followed by Ouoh ntentaio / mpai-martyros / pi-hagios ymeôn / pi-episkopos ("and let us honor / this martyr / the holy Symeon / the bishop")

[48] Robertson 1985:83-84 n.4.

[49] O'Leary 1926-29:i, 9.

[50] An example is the thirteenth-century MS Coptic Museum Lit. 309: see Hunt and MacCoull forthcoming.

There are many other stock openings to be listed in an eventual *Initia Hymnorum Copticorum;* I will mention just two more: *Rashe shôpe mphoou (nan)* ("Joy happens today (for us,) / (introducing) in heaven and on earth, / because of the holy commemoration / of Saint (name) the [adjective+noun]"); and *Tinaerhêts hn-ou-shishoou* ("I shall undertake with desire / (introducing) to speak of your honor, / O holy (name) / the [adjective+noun]") (cf. above). There is a delightful, though sad, example of the latter in Example 4 (Appendix), an abridged version of the "Ballad of Archellites," dated to the tenth century but surely preserving monastic legend from an early period.[51] The topos is that of a male saint who vows never to see a woman's face, even if the woman should be his mother.

Many other stock items are instantly discernible in perusing the hymns collected in the Antiphoner. Saints are praised in stock strophes beginning "O this is the one who was worthy": "to receive the crown / to guard the flock / to dwell with the angels," and so on. There are stock strophes to describe the end of the saint's life and how he or she goes to heaven: "He received the unfading crown / of martyrdom, / he kept feast with Christ / in his kingdom [or: in the land of the living]"; "He heard the voice / full of joy, / 'Well done, thou good / and faithful servant'" (the last also a trope used in manuscript colophons). Holy persons and things are called by stock epithets just like their Homeric counterparts. For example, St. Cyril of Alexandria is always called "the lion-cub," for which I find no parallel in Greek hagiography;[52] and the Scriptures (taught and commented on by bishop and patriarch saints) are always *nnifi ntephnouti* "of the breath of God," a direct calque of θεόπνευστος.[53] John the Baptist is always "kinsman of the Lord."[54] The expectedly plentiful Bible allusions are introduced by stock couplets: "As it is said / in the holy Gospel," "As David sang / in his holy Psalter," or "As [prophet's name] said / in his prophecy." The task of collecting the repertoire of these stock descriptive elements has only just begun.

[51] Kuhn 1991:1985; Junker 1908-11.

[52] O'Leary 1926-29:i, 11; i, 21.

[53] O'Leary 1926-29: ii, 42.

[54] O'Leary 1926-29: i, 2; ii, 59.

Types of saints and their hymns

Saints of the calendar fall, of course, into categories: martyrs, bishops, patriarchs, monks and hermits, holy women (ascetics or mothers), apostles, as well as Old Testament figures, celestial archangels, and so on. Delehaye showed long ago that the most formulaic of all stories in hagiography are the martyr passions, which he termed an epic genre.[55] Martyr hymns are also the most formulaically composed, whether they narrate the sufferings of a martyr of the Diocletianic persecution or of a neomartyr under Islamic rule. Indeed, the later martyrs are presented in the guise of, or really as being just like, the earlier ones. Example 5 (Appendix) is the story of three martyrs probably put to death by the caliph al-Hakim around 1000 CE, but presented as though they were early Christians in the arena. The "hegemons" might as well be Roman governors and the "tyrant" Diocletian; the martyrs proclaim that Christ is their God and they will not serve demons, just like Sts. Theodore or Victor. The final phrase, "to our last breath," is a quotation from the eucharistic acclamation introduced after the consecration by Patriarch Gabriel III in the twelfth century (hence helping to date this version of the hymn): "I believe, I believe, I believe and I confess to my last breath that this is truly His body that He took from the Virgin, and that it was united to His Divinity and not separated from it for even the twinkling of an eye."[56]

For another neomartyr story consider Example 6 (Appendix), the story of an apostate who abandoned the Christian faith of his birth to pursue Islamic state service but was shamed by his sister into returning, a return for which he paid with his life.[57] It is notable that *narion*, the word for a kind of belt put on by the hero, must mean one of the items of distinctive clothing required for Christians by medieval Islamic legislation. "He confessed and did not deny" is from the words of John the Baptist: thus the neomartyr is a new John, proclaiming that though he must decrease, Christ must increase (John 1:20, 3:30). The popularity of martyr stories has never waned even up to the present:[58] the reason usually given is that these stories

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[55] Delehaye 1921; see most recently Clarysse 1995.

[56] *Liturgy* 1964:13 (giving a translation different from the present one [which is my own]).

[57] See Suter and Suter 1994:248-49. Note that the saint is a homonym of Dioscorus, the arch-defender of the Coptic separation from Chalcedon in the fifth century.

[58] See Mayeur-Jaouen 1997; MacCoull forthcoming

of joyfully sought heroic death served to strengthen a persecuted community whose members might find themselves facing execution at any time. They also, I believe, served to warn them of corruption in high places and to keep alive the primal Mediterranean drive for revenge in a culture in which the satisfaction of payback might well be slow in coming. Coptic culture was haunted by the past, and in the endlessly repeated, formulaically composed martyr hymns we see Copts expressing their need to redefine the past, which itself was signposted with dates computed according to the "Era of the Martyrs."[59]

The other categories of saint, besides martyrs, also have their stock epithets, lines, and strophes. A martyr is greeted with the following kind of salutation:

> Hail to you, fair fighter,
> noble gladiator,
> brave combatant
> for the name of Christ:
>
> You received the imperishable crown
> of martyrdom,
> you kept feast with Christ
> and all his holy ones,[60]

with variants slotted in. Correspondingly, a monastic ascetic is apostrophized in formulaic addresses such as this:

> What tongue of man can express
> the pains you underwent

[59] Youssef (1996:75-76) mistakenly thought the subject of verses found in a late nineteenth- early twentieth-century MS in the diocesan museum of Beni Suef might have been a neomartyr personally known to the copyist (in fact he is an early Alexandrian saint attested in Delehaye 1923:74). But the strophes were clearly put together in oral-formulaic fashion by a Copt struggling with the language. Each stock line is juxtaposed with the next, with no factual content about the martyr's life, just the usual "We praise you, / O perfect man, / O holy (name), / beloved of Christ" and so on. There is even an abbreviated cue for an expected doxology at the end. Youssef (a local amateur) is creating a neomartyr out of a felt need. Cf. Mayeur-Jaouen (1998:156, 183), who surprisingly downplays the neomartyrs.

[60] Cf., e.g., O'Leary 1926-29:ii, 20: Ô ni-athlitês n-genneos / ouoh nirefmishi nkalôs ... ("O noble athletes / and fair fighters"), and i, 24: Ethbe phai <a>p-Ch(risto)s / pinouti n-alêthinos / ti ehrêi ejôk / m-pi-khlom nte p-ôou... ("Because of this Christ / the true God / put upon you / the crown of glory").

subduing your body
in the angelic life?

You forsook
all the transitory glory
and the possessions
of this world.[61]

A bishop or patriarch is celebrated with strophes like the following:

He sat on his throne
by the will of God;
he illuminated the Church
with his holy teachings.

As a good shepherd
he did works of mercy
for the poor and needy,
for the widows and orphans.

He fulfilled [x] years
in the high-priestship;
he yielded up his spirit,
he went to his rest.[62]

Hymns on apostles tell the story of Christ's calling them, quoting variants of Psalm 19:4, "Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words to the ends of the earth";[63] while those on holy women employ their own formula sets praising typically either their virginity or their care for

[61] Cf., e.g., O'Leary 1926-29:i, 88-89: *Af-er-kataphronin / m-p-ôou nte pai-kosmos / nem tef-metouro / ethbe p-Ch(risto)s Iê(sou)s* ("He despised / the glory of this world / and its kingdom / because of Jesus Christ"); see also ii, 85-86.

[62] Cf., e.g., O'Leary 1926-29:ii, 58: Afshôpi hi p-thronos / n-han-mêsh n-rompi / nem ounishti n-sêou / shantef-er-hello ("He was on the throne / many years / for a long time / until he grew old"); ii, 75: Akamoni m-pi-ohi / n-logikon ethou(aab) / nte Iê(sou)s p-Ch(risto)s / hen pitoubo [m]pek-hêt ("You governed the flock, / the holy, rational one, / of Jesus Christ, / in the purity of your heart").

[63] O'Leary 1926-29:iii, 7: *...phê eta pefseji phoh / sha syrêjs ntioikomanê [l. oikoumênê]* ("whose words have gone out / to the ends of the inhabited world").

children or aged parents.[64] There are even stock hymns where the name of the saint is simply left to be filled in. An example of this last type is:

> Truly great
> is the glory and the honor
> of our blessed father
> Abba N. (*nim*)
>
> Everyone wishing
> to serve God
> will be zealous for his life (*bios*)
> and his way of life (*politeia*).
>
> And truly
> he despised
> the glory of this world
> that will pass away.
>
> Truly justly
> he followed God
> with his whole heart
> since he was little.[65]

As time went on, more saints came to be added to the calendar, and so when a hymn was needed to be composed honoring and recounting the life of a twelfth-century patriarch or a thirteenth-century neomartyr, stock material was drawn on. Monasteries were the centers where Coptic learning was preserved. A monastic hymn composer, like an African praise-singer, could carry in his head a stock repertoire of epithets, lines, couplets, and strophes corresponding to the category of saint, and could deploy them according to the requirements of subject and form—a form by now deeply traditional and second nature. Clues reside in the variants so often found. For example, there are three words for "blessed," a commonly used epithet: *smarôout* / *smamaat, naiat-* + suffix, and the Greek loanword *makarios*. The composer would want to slot in the one that fit best in a certain position in the line, or for variety. So too there are three words for "rejoice": *rashi, ounof, and thelêl.* For storytelling purposes there are two

[64] For example, the family virtues of St. Sarah, "the daughter / of Christian parents / in Upper Egypt / pleasing to God" (*ousheri de n-han-rômi* / *n-Chrêstianos* / *hen-ph-marês n-Khêmi* / *eurenaf m-Ph(nou)ti*): O'Leary 1926-29:ii, 74.

[65] O'Leary 1926-29:iii, 25.

names for the city of Alexandria: *Alexandria* and the native *Rhakote*: sometimes both words are found in the same poem. A close analysis of the ways in which these variants are employed should throw light on how composers stitched a whole structure together by employing a specialized register of speech, the varying requirements of which determined the usages.[66]

We associate oral-formulaic composition with folk poetry, and indeed folkloric motifs are plentifully interwoven in Coptic hymn texts. Example 7 (Appendix) is from the versified legend of John Khame, who died in 859 CE. What we find is a version of the love motif of "Out of her grave grew a red rose, and out of his grew a briar," reworked and transposed into the realm of the asexual love of John and his female ascetic companion, with the twining grapevine (symbolizing the eucharist) growing over them. Example 8 (Appendix), for its part, is the Ballad of Apa Victor, one of the most popular martyrs of the Great Persecution and a powerful patron saint. The repetitions are pure folksong: "I left my father, I left my mother": "My Father will be your father, My Mother will be your mother." Equally to be found in the index of folk motifs[67] is the story of Peter the tax collector, told as a hymn for his feast on 25 Tybi (20 January)[68]:

> Peter was a tax collector, hard-hearted and merciless. A poor man came to seek bread. He (P.) took bread in great anger and threw it at the poor man. Then he saw in a dream both good men and sinners, with a great balance scale in the middle. They took the bread and put it in the balance: by God's mercy it came down on the side of salvation. At this he awoke in great trembling; he distributed all his goods and gave them to the poor, ending his life as a monk in Sketis.

This story, known from Anastasius Bibliothecarius (PL 73:357-58), was told all over the Mediterranean and is here transposed from Constantinople to Egypt, as are many others.[69]

Pilgrimage too was a great motivation for Coptic hymn composition,[70] and many are the hymns to monastic founders describing

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[66] See Foley 1995:49-53, 82-92, 150-75.

[67] Goldberg 1997:137.

[68] O'Leary 1926-29:ii, 25-26.

[69] Wilfong 1996:352, 356.

[70] See Frankfurter 1998.

how "people come from all over the *oikoumênê* to make offerings to your holy *topos* [place]."[71] Hymns describing the finding or translation of relics were clearly intended to promote local cults and generate pilgrim traffic. Example 9 (Appendix) is the hymn for the (re-)consecration of the monastery church of St. Antony near the Red Sea.[72] Probably composed as late as the thirteenth century, it borrows elements from the chants of the liturgical service for the dedication of a church: the gate of heaven, Jacob's ladder, the tabernacle with the Ark, and so on.

The fixed cycle of dates in the calendar year (as against the movable cycle dependent on the date of Easter) includes numerous feasts of Christ with fixed dates, such as the Nativity, Epiphany/Baptism, Transfiguration, and so on, as well as fixed feasts of the Virgin such as the Annunciation, Presentation, Dormition, and Assumption (these last two being separate in the Coptic tradition). In addition, the twenty-first of each month is a special Marian commemoration, and Example 10 (Appendix) is a hymn for such a day, that for 21 Mecheir (15 February), with strophes beginning with Ⲍ, zeta. It is in alphabetical series with the hymn quoted at the opening of his article, the one from the third month, Hathyr, in which the strophes begin with Ⲅ, three. For the last two months of the calendar, Epeiph (July) and Mesore (August), the strophes begin with the first two of the additional letters added to the Greek alphabet to write Coptic: shai (Ⲯ = sh) and fai (Ⲫ = f). Clearly this is an intra-Coptic development upon which the hymn composers expended lavish amounts of theological and doctrinal embellishment. Investigation of how these fixed Marian hymns from the Antiphoner are related to those in the *Theotokia* has not yet been undertaken.

Theological content

Doctrines, indeed particularly doctrines peculiar to the Coptic church, are formulations for which Coptic hymnography is often the vehicle. Example 11.1 (Appendix) on the Incredulity of Thomas incorporates the folk exegesis of how Thomas's hand was burned as a result of its having been thrust into Christ's wounds. Development of popular doctrine is also seen in many hymns that go beyond their prose prototypes in the *Synaxarion*. A story is told of a Christian woman in fourth-century Antioch

[71] Kuhn and Tait 1996:142-43.

[72] See Coquin and Martin 1991:722.

married to a pagan who wanted to bring her children to Patriarch Peter of Alexandria (martyred in 313 CE) for baptism; the story is told as evidence for the practice of mass baptisms at Easter Vigil.[73] In the Antiphoner hymn for 25 Pharmouthi (20 April) we find the following version of the story[74]:

> There arose a great
> storm in the sea;
> the boat came near
> to being destroyed.
>
> The believing woman
> feared for her children
> lest they should die
> before receiving baptism.
>
> She pricked her breast,
> she took from her blood,
> she sealed (σφραγίζειν)
> her children with it.
>
> She baptized them
> with her holy hands
> in the name of the holy,
> consubstantial Trinity.
>
> She got to Rhakote,
> to Abba Peter,
> that he might baptize them
> with water.
>
> Our holy father
> reassured her
> that God had baptized them
> at that time.

This story of female courage must have given hope to a persecuted medieval community for whom having children baptized was often problematic, owing to the scarcity of ingredients for the required chrism

[73] See Hassab Alla 1985:46-49, including reference to the *Synaxarion* version; the story is attributed by the late writer Ibn Kabar to the time of Patriarch Theophilus (385-412 CE): *idem*:49.

[74] O'Leary 1926-29:ii, 112-13.

(deliberately engineered by the Islamic state), and who feared that those children might indeed undergo the "baptism of blood" at any time. Casting the story into versified form illustrates the composer's facility at construing his tale in line-units that maintain the suspense for the listeners conscious of the emotional effect.

Most of all, the Coptic church defined itself over against and in opposition to the Chalcedonian, Dyophysite confessions. Explicit and strong Monophysite convictions are sung out in Example 11.2 (Appendix), where the miracle at Cana manifests the power of Christ's single nature and refutes the Chalcedonians, and in Example 11.3 (Appendix), which exalts the great Monophysite culture hero Severus of Antioch, whose burial place at the Enaton monastery outside Alexandria was a pilgrimage goal for Monophysite believers from Armenia to Ethiopia. Singing this material must have felt like singing "Joe Hill" or "We Shall Overcome" for partisans of the cause.[75]

In the late period we find elaboration of rhyme schemes and metrical patterns. Often Greek loanwords provide the rhymes. In what appears to be a very late manuscript[76] we find some half-dozen hymns with an elaborate form of tercets with a rhyming refrain: aaa+ref., bbb+ref., ccc+ref. Twice in this group the writer actually records his name, Nicodemus,[77] in the last strophe (Appendix: Example 12.1). The following example reveals a transformation from orality to textuality. In a reverse alphabetic acrostic working back to the letter alpha he writes (in the last three strophes of Example 12.2 [Appendix]):

Ge p-sepi n-ni-klêros	And the rest of the clergy,
ni-presbyteros nem diakonos	the priests and deacons,
aritou nshphêr hen tek-klêronomos:	make them sharers in your inheritance:
khô nêi.	Forgive me.
Bon niben nte nipistos	All of the faithful

[75] Cf. Harrison 1999:111, 124: "a strongly oppositional identity, an identity founded on suffering and resistance" that used "a performed discourse of empowerment." Coptic identity too was and is founded on suffering and opposition.

[76] O'Leary 1926-29:iii, ii. The manuscript was acquired by an Anglican cleric visiting the Red Monastery in Sohag in 1886 and given by him to the Bristol Museum.

[77] This writer is dated to the second half of the eighteenth century by Youssef 1994, and redated to the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century by Youssef 1998. Of course, encoding one's own name acrostically was a late antique and medieval authorial practice from Romanos Melodes to Cynewulf.

nilaos n-ni-Christianos	Christian people,
opou ro nem nek-martyros:	number them with your martyrs/witnesses:
khô nêi.	Forgive me.
Ari-pen-meeui p-Joeis pennouti	Remember us, O Lord our God,
hen pi-nai nem pi-sôti	in mercy and salvation,
hen pi-ehoou etoi n-hoti:	on that day that is fearful:
khô nêi.	Forgive me.

With this sequence we have moved from orality to textuality and back again. The hymn writer at this late date has plucked phrases from his remembered knowledge of the Bible and the liturgy, and set them down on the page in a composition that deliberately highlights the rhyming homoioteleuton and sets off the refrain, which in its turn would be repeated by the congregation who heard it from the mouth of a reader.

Composition and language comprehension

Who composed these hymns? Who were their audience? How were they put together, and how did they bridge the gap between oral composition and being recorded in writing (and in what kind of writing)? How, in a language barely understood and in which there was virtually no active competence after about 1100 CE, could these texts be generated? To ask these questions and to attempt for the first time to answer them is to venture into the areas of language contact, language death, and even, in the very last phase, into the field of neurophysiology, the brain-hand connection.[78]

As said above, it would be hard to believe that Christian Egypt did not feel the effects of the wave of religious quatrain composition that covered all the shores of the Mediterranean beginning in the fourth century. The writers of what must have been the earliest stratum of Coptic-language hymnography took that language, in which the Bible—Old and New Testaments and especially liturgical pericopes and the Psalter—previously existed, and also took up the tonic principle of verse-making that had already been manipulated by the writers/adapters of the Manichaean psalms and hymns known since the fourth century.[79] They would have composed hymns for the daily office, for the great universal feasts of the year, and for

[78] On this last area, cf. Davis 1989.

[79] For the most recent sources from Kellis, see Gardner 1996.

early saints already widely known, such as apostles and evangelists, as well as for revered patriarchs of their own region like Athanasius and beloved local patronal heroes like martyrs of the Great Persecution and early ascetics. To such early writers we may ascribe a doctrinal motivation like that impelling their counterparts in the Latin West and in Byzantium. The fact that these have not survived in early manuscript copies can be ascribed to the thoroughness of later destruction, both by Moslem policy and through excavators' preference for Pharaonic remains. We do know that by the sixth century Greek acrostic hymns composed in accentual couplets were liturgically employed at Monophysite Coptic monasteries in Upper Egypt.[80] The step from couplets to joining a pair of couplets into a quatrain is an easy one. An early version of this kind of combination might have been the model for the Coptic "Ambrosian stanza" that has not survived as such.

Between the first third of the eighth century and about the beginning of the eleventh century CE we move into a world of diglossia, even more thoroughgoing than that described in the classic studies on the medieval Latin West.[81] It was a situation in which Egypt's Christians learned one language, Arabic, for the world of work while using another, Coptic, for family speech at home.[82] In time even the latter was phased out, as children picked up Arabic from the other children around them and mothers stopped speaking Coptic to their children. Only in the church context and the ecclesiastical register was there continued use of the old liturgical language, now of course "sanctified" by its long association with the identification of religion and community identity.[83] By the early tenth century, as can be seen from some of the Pierpont Morgan Library Coptic manuscripts, at least in monasteries Coptic hymns and other texts (such as sermons and saints' lives) were still being copied and even composed by people who could control, command, and even generate the language, the *ductus* (the accustomed flow or manner of execution) of whose hands shows

[80] Crum, White, and Winlock 1926:ii, 127-30, 132-33, 309-14, 316-17; nos. 592-94, 598-605.

[81] Cf. Irvine 1994:68-74 on how the "high" language was handled; for examples from the society of Anglo-Saxon England, 420-24.

[82] See MacCoull 1989; Wilfong 1998:184-86.

[83] As Foley asserts, " [a specialized register is] differently configured because it has a particular history and social function" (1996:25-27).

that they could understand what they were representing.[84] To use and a *fortiori* to generate a Coptic saint's hymn was a powerful cultural locator.

By the thirteenth century Coptic was a dead language, and, in order to educate priests and monks in how to perform the liturgy, Arabophone writers were producing "Introductions" and so-called "Ladders" (*scalae*), skeleton grammars with long vocabulary lists to equip professional religious people to recite the lections and other liturgical items. This was material one simply had to learn, rather like the way medieval Western churchmen had to internalize at least some elementary Latin. Now began the situation that held sway until the present, that of the church lector who has been taught to move his eyes left-to-right (instead of the right-to-left Arabic he uses in daily life) and orally produce sounds corresponding to marks on the page, but who has no comprehension of the meaning of these marks and cannot construe them.[85] In a situation like this, oral-formulaic technique coupled with memory would have constituted a strategy to generate new texts. Similarly, hymn manuscripts are known from as late as the nineteenth (and even the twentieth!) century,[86] the *ductus* of which shows that the writer was just painfully drawing shapes from his exemplar but did not comprehend, command, or feel comfortable with the process.[87] And yet these writers could produce formulaic Coptic-language manuscript colophons by stitching together words they managed to know how to put down.[88] Texts were copied as *aides-mémoire* that were thought worthy of preservation.

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[84] Cf. Sirat 1994.

[85] A parallel case in the medieval Latin West is brilliantly described in Clanchy (1997:60): "Emphasis was put on the correct pronunciation of each letter because the next stage was to form syllables and then apply these rote-learned phonetic rules to reading Latin aloud. Accurate readers of Latin were produced by this method without their having to understand a word of the texts they voiced."

[86] An example is Störk 1996:illustration on p. 120 (MS. Hamburg 276, Hymn. 113, from the St. Macarius Monastery).

[87] Cf. note 78 above.

[88] An example is the bilingual "Ghali Gospels," dated 1801 CE, for which the colophon writer can put down in Coptic "Remember, O Lord, your servant, the poor writer ... the deacon John": see Bacot 1997, and letter from Bacot to the present writer dated February 2, 1998.

Conclusion

What monastic composers did for a monastic audience in the world of the Coptic church was to evolve a traditional and artificial diction that performed the function of keeping Coptic religious and cognitive culture alive.[89] Comparable to what happened in other language traditions, they encapsulated their inherent heritage in a repertoire of conventions. With pens in hand they drew on an internalized hoard of formulas in a language they still regarded as "sacred" and "special" to tell and preserve stories basic to who they were,[90] stories that were told and retold in the daily rhythms of church services. Like Balkan bards or reciters of Japanese war epics, but using an even more remote instrument, the as yet unknown Coptic hymn composers, monastic writers or traveling reciters,[91] continued to create means for shaping identity and reality,[92] "collective enactments of devotion."[93] When the saints' hymns were recited, they created a *pro tempore* world, a Christendom, that was "shaped more nearly to the heart's

[89] Cf. Foley 1988:8, 21, 70; Foley 1996:25-27. A striking feature of the Coptic hymns is the number and variety of archaic Greek words they contain; this must have given a very special flavor to the works in the ears of their hearers.

[90] For an application to earlier Coptic works, see King 1997. Crossan (1998:535): "[I]f one has some written records of a tradition, there may be sufficient evidence to prove oral multiforms at base...When we *read* such poetry today in *books*, we recognize another world staring us in the face from behind the written page."

[91] See Mayeur-Jaouen (1997:223): "Were there ever itinerant Christian singers? ... It is probable that they did once exist, and have disappeared; for who else would have composed and transmitted the numerous traditional ballads that relate the legends of the saints?...which captivated their audience with their miraculous contents. They were very popular, especially in their musical expression and their use of the dialect." Mayeur-Jaouen is speaking of Arabic-language forms, but this picture fits the Coptic-language situation of earlier times too. For Arabic-language quatrains oral-formulaically composed (complete with a refrain consisting of the saint's name) about a saint who died in 1963, see Mayeur-Jaouen 1998:152. The Coptic equivalents of its elements are found all over the *Antiphonarium*: e.g., "The paralyzed, you healed them; / the demons, you expelled them; / the dead, you raised them, / Holy St. (name)."

[92] Crossan (1998:531), quoting Peter Levi's *The Lamentation of the Dead*: "With this poem a world ended: we had not known that it had lived so long."

[93] The expression is taken from Winston-Allen 1997:151.

desire" of compositors and reciters.[94] In a complicated web of orality and textuality, the compositors deployed "...the language in which [their] identity was created over many generations...which preserve[d] all the codes of [their] past...."[95]

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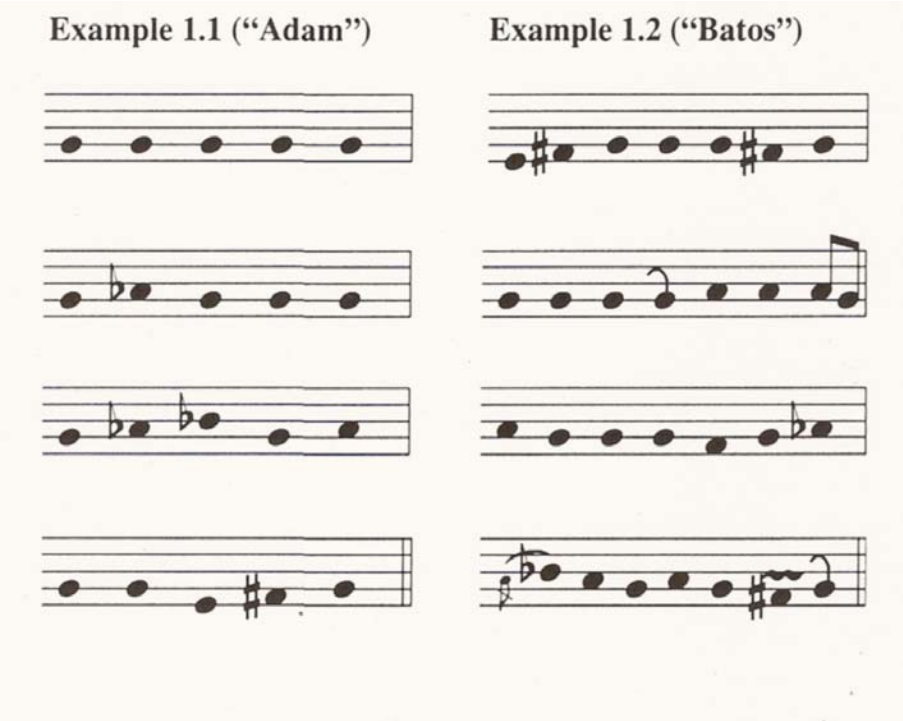
Appendix



[94] Small (1998:105): "in acting, creating, and displaying we are bringing into existence for the duration of the ritual a society in which we ourselves are empowered to act, to create and to display." See also Mayeur-Jaouen 1998:183, 185-86 on the creation of an "island" of Copticdom.

[95] *The New Yorker*, February 20, 1998, p. 58. In loving memory of Mirrit Boutros Ghali (1908-92): *Akmton mmok* / *hen-ou-methello enanes* / *akounof mmok* / *nem nê-ethouab têrou* ("You went to your rest / in a good old age; / you rejoiced / with all the saints"). I am grateful to Professor John Miles Foley for his kind reception and helpful comments; to Kent Rigsby, who will remember York Towers, New Haven, thirty-four years ago; to Mary Parry and the Reference Department of Hayden Library, Arizona State University, as well as the indispensable Interlibrary Loan Service, for help with references; and to Marilyn Strubel, formerly of the Computing Commons, for her computer expertise.

Example 2

Coptic **A**:	Coptic **B**:
Thôouti nemêi mphoou	*Thôouti têrou neman mphoou*
Ô naioti nem nasnêou	*ha nilaos nte p-Christos*
hen p-erphmeui etsôtəp	*ntenthelêl hen pi-erphmeui*
nte pi-archiereus	*nte pinishti m-manesôou*
Gather with me today,	Gather all with us today,
O my fathers and my brothers,	to the peoples of Christ,
in the chosen commemoration	and let us rejoice in this commemoration
of the high priest.	of the great shepherd.

Example 3

Asshôpi hen niehoou	It happened in the days
nte peniôt ethu(aab)	of our holy father
Abba Basilios	Abba Basil
pi-episkopos	the bishop
nte t-Kesaria	of Caesarea
ti-Kappatokia	in Cappadocia,
pi-nishti m-phôstêr	the great illuminator
ete-r-ouôini emashô	who greatly gave light,
a ou-energeia shôpi	that an *energeia* happened
hen pi-diabolos	from the devil:
as-er-hôb hen ou-helshiri	it operated in a young man
hen ni-Chrêstianos	of the Christians.
Af-er-epithymin	He desired
t-sheri m-pef-ch(oei)s	the daughter of his lord,
ethrefshôpi nemas	to be with her
hen ou-ponêria	in wickedness.
Afshenaf sha-ouai	He went up to one
n-ni-pharmagos	of the magicians;
afrôkh mpeshêt	he burned in his heart
hen tef-epithymia	in his desire.
Menensa etafshai	After this he wrote
m-pi-diabolos	to the devil
nhrêi hen tefjij	with his hand
je afjol m-p-Ch(risto)s	that he denied Christ;

ouoh afer-(h)omologin	and he confessed
m-pi-Antich(risto)s	the Antichrist,
afouôsht mmof	he worshipped him,
afshôpi hen peftoi	he became his portion.
Ouoh a ti-alou	And the girl
saji nem pes-iôt	said to her father,
je eketi mmoi	"Give me
epe n-alou phai	this young man."
...je naferhoti pe	...He was afraid
...ebol ntes-psychê...	...from his soul...
fmouti ebol hen rôf	he called from his mouth
m-ph-ran m-p-Christos	upon the name of Christ.
Asmkah emashô	She was greatly troubled
ouoh asshenas	and sought out
sha peniôt ethu(aab)	our holy father
Abba Basilios	Abba Basil.
Astamof n-hôb niben	She informed him of everything
etaushôpi mmos	that had happened to her:
afshlêl ejôou	he prayed for them,
afnohem mmôou	he saved them.
A p-Satanas ini	Satan went
m-pi-sêh n-jij	to get the manuscript:
afchitf nje peniôt	our father took it
ouoh afphôh mmof	and tore it up.

(O'Leary 1926-29:i.11-12)

Example 4

Ainaerhêts hen ou-chishshôou	I shall undertake with longing
ethrisaji e-pek-taio	to speak of your honor,
Ô phê ethouab n-askitês	O holy ascetic man,
pi-agios Archillitês	Saint Archellites.
Pek-iôt Iôannês nem tek-mau	Your father John and your mother
Synklêtikê etsmarôout	Synkletike the blessed
nou-hbêoui têrou nauranaf	performed all their actions
m-Ph(nou)ti Phiôt pi-Pantokratôr	for God, the Father Almighty.
Synklêtikê tek-mau	Synkletike your mother
akôt n-ou-pantochion	built a hostel
etas-emi e-pek-shini	so she might know your news
hiten pi-rômi n-eshôt	from the merchant man.

Tote astôns asi sharok	Then she arose, she went to you
sha pi-monastêrion ethu(aab)	to the holy monastery
nte pen-iôt Abba Rômanos	of our father Abba Romanos;
astame mmok hiten p-emnout	she found out about you from the porter.
Yppe, pejas, Ô pashêri,	"Look," she said, "O my son,
aii sharok ntanau erok	I have come to you to see you
ethbe nenshôni nte pahêt	because of the sicknesses in my heart,
hina ntekerphahri erôou	so you can give them medicine."
Satotk aktôbh m-p-Ch(risto)s	Then you entreated Christ
hina ntefchi ntek-psychê	to receive your soul
ehote ntekjôl m-pi-saji	rather than that you deny the word
etak-semnêtf nem p-Ch(risto)s	that you pledged to Christ.
Chere nak phê etefareh	Hail to you who kept
ntef-diathêkê sha ebol	your covenant all the way,
je mpe-k-nau e-p-ho n-ou-shimi	not to see the face of a woman,
shate p-ho nte tek-mau	even the face of your mother.
Psôma ethu(aab) nte tek-mau	The holy body of your mother,
auchaf nem pek-lympsanon	they laid it beside your body
kata phrêti etakhonhen nôou	as you had bidden them
manensa threkti m-pi-pn(eum)a	when you gave up the ghost.

(O'Leary 1926-29:2.15)

Example 5

Amôini ntenouôsht	Come and let us worship
n-Iê(sou)s p-Ch(risto)s	Jesus Christ
ouoh ntentiôou	and let us glorify
nnai martyros	these martyrs,
pi-agios Simeôn	the holy Simeon
nem Apa Hora	and Apa Hora
nem Apa Mêna	and Apa Mena
pi-hello etsmarôout	the blessed elder.
Nai etauôsh ebol	These cried out
mpemtho n-niourôou	before the kings
nem ni-hêgemôn	and the hegemons,
hen ou-ônh ebol	proclaiming,
je Tennahti anon	"We, we believe

e-Iê(sou)s p-Ch(risto)s	in Jesus Christ,
p-shêri m-Ph(nou)ti etônh	the Son of the living God,
p-sôtêr m-pi-kosmos	the Savior of the world.
Tenouôsht mmof	"We worship him
ouoh tentiôou naf	and we glorify him
nem pef-iôt n-agathos	with his good Father
nem pi-pn(euma) ethu(aab)	and the Holy Spirit.
Nthô tenou	"And now,
Ô ni-thêrion et-hôou	O evil beasts,
tetenneshemshi [an]	we will not serve
n-han-demôn eusôf	some defiled demons."
Etausôtem enai	There heard them
nje ni-dyrannos (sic)	the tyrants,
aujônt emashô	they were very angry
ejen nai-agios	against these holy ones.
Auer-timorin	They tormented
nnai-m(a)r(tyros)	these martyrs
n-ou-nishti n-sêou	a long time
ejen ph-ran m-p-Ch(risto)s	for the name of Christ.
Ouoh menensa nai	And after these things
aufi n-nou-aphêoui	they took their heads
hen rôs n-ti-sêfi	with the edge of the sword
hen sou-ιδ n-Chouiak	on the fourteenth of Choiak.
Auer-phorin m-pi-chlom	They bore the crown
nte ti-met-m(a)r(tyros)	of martyrdom,
*ershai nem p-Ch(risto)*s	they kept feast with Christ
hen tef-metouro	in his kingdom.
Hiten nou-euchê	By their prayers,
Ph(nou)ti matajron	O God, strengthen us
hen pi-nahti ethu(aab)	in the holy faith
sha pi-nifi n-hae	"until the last breath."

(O'Leary 1926-29:i,85)

Example 6

Ainaouôn n-rôi	I shall open my mouth
hen ou-parrêsia	in freedom of speech
eiertharin hen p-Ch(risto)s	and ask of Christ
n-ou-boêthia	some help,

ethrijô n-ou-meros so I may speak a part
hen pi-agôn ethu(aab) of the holy struggle
nte pai martyros of this martyr,
Dioskoros pi-thmêi Dioscorus the true.

Ne ou ebol pe He came from
hen Rakoti ti-baki Rhakote the city;
neouontaf n-ou-sôni he had a sister
euoi n-Chrêstianos who was a Christian.

Asshôpi naf n-ou-lôiji There came upon him an occasion
hen pi-diabolos from the devil:
afi ebol hen pefshemshi he went out into their service,
afshôpi nem n-Ismailitês he was with the Ishmaelites.

A tefsôni rimi His sister wept
ouoh as-er-mkah and was distressed
m-ph-nau etassôtem at the time when she heard
m-phê etafshôpi mmof that this had happened to him.

Ouoh as[s]hai naf And she wrote him
n-ou-epistolê a letter,
essohi mmos a reproachful one:
je Hara akmou "I had rather you died

ehote ntekjôl "than that you deny
m-p-Ch(risto)s ebol Christ,
p-ouro n-phe nem p-kahi the king of heaven and earth.
ntisôoun mmok an I do not know you."

Etafsôtem enai When there heard these things
nje pai-martyros this martyr,
afmorf e-ou-narion he tied on a *narion* (belt),
afmoshi hen ti-baki he walked in the city.

Auamoni mmof They seized him,
auenf e-pi-komis they brought him to the *comes* (count) (!)
af-er-(h)omologin he confessed
ouoh mpef-jôl ebol and did not deny.

Afôsh ebol m-pai-rêti He cried out thus
mpetho n-ouon niben before everyone
je aumasti n-Chrêstianos that he was born Christian:
tinamou m-pai-rêti "I shall die thus."

Afer-keleuin There ordered

nje pi-(h)êgemôn	the hegemon
ethrou-rôkh m-pef-sôma	that they burn his body
hen pi-chrôm efônh	in the fire alive.
Afti m-pef-pn(eum)a	He gave up his spirit
hen ou-hypomonê	in patience
ouoh afchi m-pi-chlom	and received the crown
nti-met-martyros	of martyrdom.

(O'Leary 1926-29:ii,65)

Example 7

Nim ethnaershphêri an	Who would not wonder
ejen paihôb mberi	at this new thing
ets-apshôi e-t-physis	higher than the nature
nte ti-metrômi	of humanity?
ouhôout nem-oushimi	A man and a woman
hen tou-parthenia	in their virginity
euenkot nem nouerêou	sleeping with each other
hen ou-chloj nouôt	in sweet unity.
Hiten poutoubo	In their purity
afthôsh nje p-Ch(oeis)	the Lord appointed (them)
n-ou-angelos e-erhêibi	an angel to watch
ejen pou-ma-n-enkot	over their sleeping-place.
Nem oubô n-aloli	And a grapevine
e-asrôt e-pshôi	grew up
ejen pou-ma-n-shelet	over their bridal chamber
e-ou-mêini e-pou-toubo	as a sign of their purity.
Afchishshôou nje pi-thmêi	He desired, did the true man,
m-pi-bios ethu(aab)	the holy,
n-angelikon	angelic life
nte ti-monachos	of monasticism.
Pairêti nthos hôs	So she too
ete tef-shelet	as his bride
asshôpi hen ou-topos	was in a *topos* (holy place, convent)
nem han-mêsh m-parthenos	with a band of virgins.

(O'Leary 1926-29:i,95)

Example 8

Auen Apa Biktôr	There went Apa Victor
hen Antiochia	of Antioch
e-Rakoti ti-baki	to Rhakote the city,
sha Armenios	to Armenios.
Etauôshti mmof	There dragged him
nje ni-matoi	the soldiers,
auhitf e-pi-ma n-thôk	they put him in the strong place
nte ti-siôouni	of the baths.[96]
Afti n-ou-proseuchê	There gave forth a prayer
nje Apa Biktôr	Apa Victor
hen thmêti n-ti-hrô	in the midst of the furnace,
ouoh nafjô mmos	and he said,
je, pa-Ch(oei)s Iê(sou)s	"My Lord Jesus,
ari-boêthi eroi	help me
hen pi-ma n-shemmo	in the place of strangers
e-tisôoun mmof an	that I do not know.
Aichô m-pa-iôt	"I left my father
hen An{o}tiochia t-[b]ake	in Antioch city,
[ta-]mau ai-chas	my mother I left her
hen pi-pallation	in the palace.
Nabôk nem nabôki	"My servants and handmaids,
auchau nsôi têrou	I have left them all,
ethbe pek-ran ethu(aab)	because of your holy name,
Ô pa-Ch(oei)s Iê(sou)s	O my Lord Jesus."
Eti efjô nnai	When there had said these things
nje Apa Biktôr	Apa Victor,
afsôtem e-ti-smê nte p-Ch(oei)s	he heard the voice of the Lord
esjô mmos	saying,
je, Jemnomti, jemnomti,	"Be strong, be strong,
pa-sôtp Apa Biktôr	my chosen Apa Victor:
ethrek-mton mmok	you will rest
hen ta-metouro	in my kingdom.
Isje akchô m-pek-iôt	"Since you left your father
hen Antiochia	in Antioch,

[96] A fortified place or prison built in a bathhouse.

is pa-Iôt n-agathos	see, my good Father
efe-shôpi nak n-iôt	will be a father to you.
Isje akchô n-tek-mau	"Since you left your mother
hen tes-pallation	in her palace,
is ta-Mau m-parthenos	see, my Mother the Virgin
s-na-shôpi nak m-mau.	will be a mother to you.
Isje akchô n-nek-bôk	"Since you left your servants
nem nek-bôki nsôk	and handmaids behind you,
is na-angelos	see, my angels
na-shemshi mmok	will serve you.
N-t-shebiô m-pek-êi	"In place of your house
etaukotf hijen p-kahi	built upon earth
ti-na-sobti nak n-ou-êi	I shall prepare you a house
hen ta-metouro	in my kingdom."

(O'Leary 1926-29:ii,114-115)

Example 9

Ph(nou)ti phê etafshôpi	God, the one who was
nem nenshôrp n-ioti	with our first fathers,
Abraam, Isaak,	Abraham, Isaac,
Iakôb nem Môusês	Jacob, and Moses,
ekshôpi mphoou	be present today
nem nek-ebiaik	with your servants
ni-etohi eratou	whom you have made to stand
m-pek-mthou ebol	in your presence.
Sôtem e-pou-tôbh	Hear their supplication,
toubou m-pai-t{o}pos	purify this *topos* (holy place)
phai etaukotf ebol	that is built
hen ph-ran n-Abba Antôni	in the name of Abba Antony.
Eke-ouôrp ejôf	And send upon it
m-pek-Pn(euma) ethu(aab)	your Holy Spirit,
ntek-toubon hen ph-ran	and purify us in the name
m-pek-shêri m-menrit	of your beloved Son.
Ekshôpi nhêtf	Be present in it
ekiri m-pi-talcho	and work the healing
n-ni-psychê nem ni-sôma	of the souls and bodies
nte nek-ebiaik	of your servants.

Thai te ti-ekklêsia eteumouti	This is the church that is called
m-ph-ran m-p-Ch(oei)s ehrêi ejôs	with the name of the Lord on it,
thai te ti-pylê nte t-phe	this is the gate of heaven
ere nê ethouab shôpi nhêts	with the saints present in it.
Thai te ti-mouki etefnau eros	This is the ladder that there saw
nje Iakôb pi-p[a]triarchês	Jacob the patriarch
e-p-Ch(oei)s m-pi-eptêrf	with the Lord of the universe
tejrêout ehrêi ejen tesaphe	established at its head.
Thai te ti-skynê nte p-Ch(oei)s	This is the tabernacle of the Lord
ere ti-kibôtôs nhêts	with the Ark (of the Covenant) in it,
esjolh m-pi-ôou nte p-Ch(oei)s	sweet with the glory of the Lord,
ere nim etmethre nhêts	with everyone witnessing to it.
Phai pe pini nte Ph(nou)ti	This is the presence of God,
ere ni-throunos ouêh (n)hêtf	with thrones placed in it,
eri ni-angelos ethouab	with holy angels
shemshi she mmof hen ou-metathmonk	serving him in ceaselessness.

(O'Leary 1926-29:iii,39)

Example 10

Z n-salpiggos	7 trumpets
euer-salpizin	trumpeting
aushôpi n-han-mêini	became signs
nam han-nishti n-shphêri	and great wonders.
Z n-harabai	7 thunders
auti n-tou-smê	gave forth their voice:
afsôtem nje Iôannês	he heard it, did John:
je Mpershai n-nai	"Do not write these things."
Z n-sphragis	7 seals
euhen oujôm eftob	upon a book sealed:
mpousha ouôn mmof	there could not open it
nje ni-tagma têrou	all the (heavenly) ranks.
Zeshop hen ou-stherter	There were in an uproar
nje ni-angelos	the angels
je mpou-sh-jemjom	because they could not
e-a-ouôn m-pi-jôm	open the book.
Zôtem e-Iôannês	Listen to John
pejaf je etafi	who says, "He came,
nje pi-hiêb	did the Lamb,

afouôn n-ni-tebs	he opened the seals."
Zografin gar nôten	Depict for us
m-p-taio m-pai-jôm	the honor of this book
je fnêou ejen Maria	that came upon Mary
t-sheri n-Iôakim	the daughter of Joachim.
Zetenthôn ni-tebs	She resembled the seals
nte pi-jôm ethu(aab)	of the holy book
ehrêi ejen p-toubo	because of the purity
n-tes-parthenia	of her virginity.
Z n-shai et-chê	7 writings are
hen ph-ran n-Emmanouêl	in the name of Emmanuel:
nthof pe pi-hiêb	He is the Lamb
etafshôpi hen Maria	that was in Mary.
Z gar n-tagma	For 7 ranks (are)
hen ti-ekklêsia	in the church
etaukots hijen pikahi	that surrounds the earth
hen ph-ran m-Maria	in the name of Mary.
Z gar n-tebs	For 7 seals
et-chê hen ti-pylê	are upon the gate
etafnau eros	that there saw
nje Iezekiêl	Ezekiel.
Z n-lychnia n-noub	7 lampstands of gold
eterouôini hen t-phe	giving light in heaven
ere pi-ζ n-hêbs	with the 7 lamps
erouôini ejôou	giving light upon them.
Zôtem e-Iôannês	Listen to John
pi-euaggelistês	the Evangelist
efsaji m-p-taio	speaking of the honor
m-Maria ti-parthenos	of Mary the Virgin.

(O'Leary 1926-29:ii,50-51)

Example 11.1

Hen pai-ehoou ethu(aab)	On this holy day
a p-Ch(risto)s Iê(sou)s ouônh e-Thômas	Christ Jesus appeared to Thomas
hen pi-ehoou m-mah-H	on the day, the 8th (one),
menensa tef-anastasis	after his resurrection.
Aftamof e-ni-shenift	He told him of the nail prints

nem ph-mêini n-ti-she n-lonchê	and the sign of the shaft of the spear:
afôsh ebol nje Thômas	there cried out Thomas,
je Pa-Ch(oei)s ouoh pa-Nouti	"My Lord and my God."
Afjos naf nje pen-Sôtêr	There said to him our Savior;
je Aknahti taknau eroi	"You believed having seen me;
Ô ouniatou nnê etaunahti	O blessed are they who believe
mpounau eroi eptêrf	without having seen me at all."
Etafcha tef-jij nje Thômas	He put his hand, did Thomas,
hen pi-sphir m-pen-Sôtêr	in the side of our Savior:
asrôkh hen pi-chrom nte ti-methnouti	it was burnt in the fire of the Divinity:
afnahti ouoh afoujai	he believed and was saved/healed.

(O'Leary 1926-29:2.95)

Example 11.2

Nhrêi hen pi-ehoou m-mah-Γ	On the day, the 3rd (one),
afshôpi nje ounishti n-hop	there took place a great wedding feast
hen t-Kana nte ti-Galilea	in Cana of Galilee,
nare th-mau n-Iê(sou)s mmau pe	and the mother of Jesus was there.
Authôhem de hôf pke Iê(sou)s	And they also invited Jesus too,
nthof nem nef-mathêtês	him and his disciples,
je hina ntefouonh ebol	so he might manifest
m-p-ôou nte tef-methnouti	the glory of his divinity.
Marouchi-shipi nse-chi-shôsh	May they be put to shame and refuted,
nje ni-atnahti n-heretikos	the faithless heretics,
nai et-phôrj m-p-Ch(risto)s ebol	who divide Christ up,
eu-iri mmof m-physis B	making him 2 natures.
Maroui tinou nsenau erof	They should come now and see him,
efrôteb hen pi-dipnon	reclining at the feast
hen t-Kana n-ti-Galilea	in Cana of Galilee,
efouôm efsô hôs rômi	eating, drinking as a man.
Etauthahmef gar hos [sic] rômi	For they invited him as a man,
ouoh naf ouômef sô pe	and eating and drinking were his;
etafmonk nje pi-êrp	it ran out, the wine did:
afsmou e-ni-môou afaitou n-êrp	he blessed the waters, he made them wine.
Aunahti erof nje nef-mathêtês	They believed in him, did his disciples,

je mpe-ti-methnouti e-r-oujom — that the divinity did not exercise power

atchne t-koinonia n-ti-sarx — without the sharing of the flesh
euhen oumetouai n-atphôrj — in a unity indivisible.

(O'Leary 1926-29:2.14)

Example 11.3

Dikaios name alêthôs — Justly, truly, verily,
akshôpe nouref-shorsher — you [Severus] became a destroyer
e-ne-hretikos ethoou — of the wicked heretics
hitn-nek-dogma etsoutôn — through your upright dogmas.

Êtiôs akshôpe nouref-shorsher — With cause you became a destroyer
nne-hretikos ethoou — of the wicked heretics.
Akthbbioou shapesêt e-Amnte — You brought them low, down to hell,
hitn-nek-dogma etsoutôn — through your upright dogmas.

Ne-episkopos n-Chalchêdôn — The bishops of Chalcedon
auji-shipe hn-ou-chepê — were put to shame in a hurry,
je a Pnoute tnnoou n-Seuêros — for God sent Severus;
afshershôr neu-ekklêsia — he destroyed their churches.

Ou-petshoueit pe p-shmshe têrf — A vain thing is all the worship
n-ne-episkopos n-Chalchêdôn — of the bishops of Chalcedon,
je a nedôgma n-Seuêros — for the dogmas of Severus
shershôrou hn-ou-chepê — destroyed them in a hurry.

T-mnt-semnos nanous, nasnêu, — Piety is good, my brethren,
thypomonê ou-atshaje eros te — patience is an ineffable thing.
sha tenou nedogma n-Seuêros — Up to now the dogmas of Severus
shorsher e-ne-hretikos — destroy the heretics.

Xenôs [sic] *nim nte-nepistos* — All you friends of the faithful
kô nêtn m-p-rpmeeue n-Seuêros — keep the memory of Severus,
je fna-sh-chmchom erôtn an — that he may have no power over you,
nchi p-jaje n-apostatês — the apostate enemy.

Psaoun m-Pnoute holch emate — The knowledge of God is very sweet,
ef-kaliôpize hn Seuêros — making a fine display in Severus,
je a nefdogma etsoutôn — for his upright dogmas
shorshr e-ne-hretikos — have destroyed the heretics.

Ô Seuêros pa-p-ran et-holch — O Severus of the sweet name,
pi-sôtêr mnnsa-p-Sô(tê)r — savior after the Savior,
sops e-p-Ch(oei)s ehrai ejôn — entreat the Lord for us,

nf-ka nen-nobe [nan ebol]	that he may forgive our sins.

(Adapted from Kuhn and Tait 1996:66-75)

Example 12.1

Chere Theodokos (sic)	Hail, Mother of God,
thmau n-Iê(sou)s p-Ch(risto)s	mother of Jesus Christ;
chere pi-Prodromos	hail, the Forerunner,
Iôa(nnês) pi-ref-ti-ôms	John the Baptist.
Psychê n-nen-ioti	(The) souls of our fathers,
moi nôou n-ou-chbob	give them refreshment
he(n) kenf n-nen-ioti	in the bosom of our fathers
Abraam Isaak Iakôb	Abraham, Isaac, Jacob.
Ô pen-Sôth(ê)r ari-phmeui	O our Savior, remember me,
m-pek-bôk Nikodimos	your servant Nicodemus;
ouchô nan n-na-nobi	forgiveness for us of sins
nem p-sepi n-ni-pistos	with the rest of the faithful.

(O'Leary 1926-29:3.55)

Example 12.2

Xôoun n-th-mat-asthenês n-rômi	You know the weakness of man,
hôs agathos ouoh m-mai-rômi	as good and loving mankind:
aier-nobi nte †tametem†	I have sinned in your sight (?):
Khô nêi	Forgive me.
Nohem m-pek-laos	Save your people,
ni-kliros nem ni-laikos	the clerics and the laity,
ntouereh e-pek-nomos	that they may keep your law:
Khô nêi	Forgive me.
Matalchôou n-nen-shôni	Heal them from our diseases [*sic*]
hen pek-nai je mpoushini	in your mercy, as we ask,
Ô phê etafchi m-pen-ini	O the one who took our form (upon you):
Khô nêi	Forgive me.
Loipon ereh ouon niben	For the rest, watch over everyone
etabshebshe mmo hen mau niben	that you shield in every place,
eke-tastho hen t-hirênê {ni}ben	and make them to stand in all peace:
Khô nêi	Forgive me.
Karpos niben nte p-kahi	Every fruit of the earth,

smou erôou hen pek-emahi	bless them in your governance,
nem naioutah nte nnoê	and their intellectual fruits too:
Khô nêi	Forgive me.
Iê(sou)s p-Ch(risto)s p-ouro nte p-ôou	Jesus Christ, the King of Glory,
tentiho erok ethbe ni-ourôou	we beseech you for the kings,
n-orthodoxos areh erôou	the orthodox ones: watch over them:
Khô nêi	Forgive me.
Thôk tentiho pi-Nouti etenhot	You we beseech, the faithful God,
ethbe nen-ioti etau-nkot	for our fathers fallen asleep,
ma-mtoun {n}ôou he(n) pekma m-phôt	resting themselves in your place of refuge:
Khô nêi	Forgive me.
Êppe ni-abiaik ntak nê (sic)	Look, your servants come to you
etau-er-prospheurini (sic) *nak*	to make offering to you:
shôpou erok kata petra nak	establish them on the rock for you:
Khô nêi	Forgive me.
Zôon n-logikon nek-esôou	The rational living beings, your sheep,
ni-katêchômenos (sic) *nai nôou*	the catechumens, have mercy on them,
ntouer-p-empsha nchi-ôms nôou	and make them worthy to receive baptism:
Khô nêi	Forgive me.
Ekrôis e-pek-ouêb loipon	Watch over your priests too
ni-et-shemshi m-mystêrion	who serve the mysteries
nte nen-ioti m-patriêkon (sic)	of our fathers the patriarchs (?):
Khô nêi	Forgive me.
Daspouta (sic) Iê(sou)s p-Ch(risto)s	Master, Jesus Christ,
ari-phmeui n-ni-episkopos	remember the bishops,
n-orthodoxos n-hygoumenos	(and) the orthodox hegumens:
Khô nêi	Forgive me.
Ge p-sepi n-ni-klêros	And the rest of the clergy,
ni-presbyteros nem diakonos	the priests and deacons,
aritou n-shphêr hen tek-klêronomos	make them sharers in your inheritance:
Khô nêi	Forgive me.
Bon niben nte ni-pistos	All of the faithful
ni-laos n-ni-Chrestianos	Christian people,
opou <ro> nem nek-m(a)r(tyros)	number them with your martyrs/

witnesses:
Khô nêi Forgive me.

Ari pen-meui p-Ch(oei)s pen-Nouti Remember us, O Lord our God,
hen pi-nai nem pi-sôti in mercy and salvation
hen pi-ehoou etoi n-hoti on that day that is fearful:
Khô nêi Forgive me.

(O'Leary 1926-29:iii,57-58)

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The Inscription of Charms in Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts

Lea Olsan

Anglo-Saxon charms constitute a definable oral genre that may be distinguished from other kinds of traditionally oral materials such as epic poetry because texts of charms include explicit directions for performance. Scribes often specify that a charm be spoken (*cweðan*) or sung (*singan*). In some cases a charm is to be written on some object. But inscribing an incantation on an object does not necessarily diminish or contradict the orality of the genre. An incantation written on an amulet manifests the appropriation of the technology of writing for the purposes of a traditionally oral activity.[1] Unlike epic poetry, riddles, or lyrics, charms are performed toward specific practical ends and their mode of operation is performative, so that uttering the incantation accomplishes a purpose. The stated purpose of an incantation also determines when and under what circumstances a charm will be performed. Charms inscribed in manuscripts are tagged according to the needs they answer-whether eye pain, insomnia, childbirth, theft of property, or whatever. Some charms ward off troubles (toothache, bees swarming); others, such as those for bleeding or swellings, relieve physical troubles. This specificity of purpose markedly distinguishes the genre from other traditional oral genres that are less specifically utilitarian. Given the specific circumstances of need that call for their performance, the social contexts in which charms are performed create the conditions felicitous for performative speech acts in Austin's sense (1975:6-7, 12-15). The assumption underlying charms is that the incantations (whether words or symbols or phonetic patterns) of a charm can effect a change in the state of the person or persons or inanimate object (a salve, for example, or a field for crops). The performer, the beneficiary, and the community of hearers or believers affirm the power of the words to create a new, hoped-for reality among them. The efficacy of the speech-act

[1] See, for example, Foley 1999: 1-5 on the scratching on Bellerophon's tablet.

that is a charm depends on formulaic language and the rightness (or felicitousness) of the performance situation.

From a broader perspective, charms can be viewed as ritual acts because they incorporate conventional beliefs and actions of the society as well as the words of the incantation. It is the ritual aspect of charms that manifests the cosmological beliefs and the traditional practices of the society.[2] Also, rituals, like the performative speech-acts that they may include, are by definition repeatable. In the Anglo-Saxon medical recipe books, recipes for herbal cures are combined with charms to form remedies that differ from purely herbal recipes without verbal incantations only in the aspect of ritual.[3] Ritual in this sense also links the texts that we commonly call charms and those that have the same functions as charms but do not involve words at all, such as the use of amulets, which in Anglo-Saxon remedy books may consist of plants hung or put in some special place—under the milk pail or on the left thigh of a woman in labor. [4]

Ritual also manifests itself in Christian terms: it is likely that one of the reasons that Anglo-Saxon charms are inscribed by Christian scribes among religious materials, as in the Cambridge Manuscript (Corpus Christi College 41), is that they had been performed as rituals that eventually amalgamated with other rituals developed from Christian lore toward similar purposes (Jolly 1996:115-24). Where religious devotion directly addressed the practical aspects of community life or individual well-being involving health, property, and safety, the Christian ritual acts dealing with these circumstances were likely to mesh with ritual acts involving charms. For example, the recipe for a salve in Harley 585 (fols. 146r-49r) includes writing the names of the evangelists on the sticks with which it is stirred, then reciting pieces from Latin liturgy and a vernacular (perhaps Irish) incantation; the herbalist then adds his spittle and blows on it. Here as

[2] S. J. Tambiah (1984) defines ritual as a socially construed event that brings together words and acts under the order of the cosmological beliefs of a society. Especially useful in regard to Anglo-Saxon charms are his discussions of how rituals combine a variety of verbal genres and "media" and how they may incorporate a large practical component. See espec. chapter 4, "A Performative Approach to Ritual," pp. 12366; and chapter 2, "Form and Meaning in Magical Acts," pp. 60-86.

[3] About 69 Anglo-Saxon charms are recorded in the medical recipe books (Lindinara 1978). These books are found in British Museum Library Manuscripts, Royal 12.D.VII and Harley 585.

[4] For a survey of Anglo-Saxon vegetable amulets, see Meaney 1981:38-65.

elsewhere in the Anglo-Saxon materials, "magic" and "religion" have coalesced into one rite. In the history of Anglo-Saxon scholarship considerable effort has been expended to extricate the pagan from the Christian with some interesting results.[5] On the other hand, I propose that we accept the mostly late Anglo-Saxon documentation of charms just as it presents itself in the manuscripts; then, with careful attention to manuscript enviornments, inquire how Anglo-Saxons may have understood and performed the incantations.

Finally, the defining characteristics of the genre mentioned above—oral performance to accomplish a purpose by means of performative speech in a ritual context—are typically represented in the formal structure of the written texts, which consists of the following parts:

(a) A heading naming the purpose of the charm: in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, the heading is often in the form "against something" (e.g., *Wiþ færstic*, or "Against a Sudden Stitch"), although a charm may begin with a statement such as "A man should say this when someone tells him his cattle have been stolen."

(b) Directions for performance ("say," "sing three times," "first take barley bread and write"). The directions for the acts associated with a verbal formula may constitute the longest part of the charm and entail ritual as well as practical acts.

(c) The words of an incantation or chant. The content varies from pagan or apocryphal narrative to magical words or letters to saints' or evangelists' names, and so on.

(d) A concluding formula that may vary from a statement such as "he will soon be well" to more directions for application, such as "Say this three times and three *pater nosters* and three *aves*."[6]

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[5] See, for example, Glosecki 1989; Jolly discusses the bias toward paganism in early editors (1996:100-2). Valerie Flint (1991) has argued that bishops and others in the early Christian church deliberately accommodated pagan magic; Stephanie Hollis (1997) has applied Flint's idea to the cattle theft charms. It seems to me that Flint's model subtly reinstates the dichotomies of pagan versus Christian and magic versus religion, although the evidence of the charms will support a different model: that Anglo-Saxon possessed a tradition of verbal rituals for protection and healing before the conversion that also continued afterward. And in time, as recorded texts reveal, this tradition both absorbed Christian motifs and rituals and became a part of Christian practices.

[6] These formal components parallel in part those commonly found in medical recipes, on whose form see Hunt 1990:16-24. For more on medieval Latin charms as an oral genre, see Olsan 1992.

The inscription of charms in Bede's Old English *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* found in Cambridge Manuscript, Corpus Christi College 41 is part of a variety of materials systematically copied into the margins by one scribe, who may have owned this text (Pfaff 1995 :25). The scribe copied onto specially ruled lines six homilies in Old English, Latin liturgical formulas from masses and daily offices, the dialogue known as *Solomon and Saturn* (see O'Keeffe 1990:47-76), antiphons, prayers, and charms.[7] In order to open the question of how charms, as traditional oral texts with the features I have described above, are textualized, I put three questions to a string of charms that occur in the bottom margin of three folios in this manuscript on what are now numbered pages 206-8: (1) How do charms for the same purpose differ, specifically in structure and motif? (2) How do formulas circulating in Latin differ in manuscript contextualization from those circulating in Old English, and, (3) How do charms differ in the kind of authorization they acquire from being written in the gaps or margins of manuscripts as opposed to those written seamlessly as part of a text?

With regard to the question of how charms for the same purpose differ, no fewer than four formulas to be used in case of the theft of livestock can be identified at the foot of pages 206-8. The first (see Appendix: 1), recorded on three unused lines drawn for the Bede text, begins without a space after the last word of the Bede on the page. This charm has no heading, but the reduced size of the script and its rounded forms, as opposed to the large angular forms of the Anglo-Saxon insular miniscule script of the Bede, signals at a glance that this text is not the Old English Bede. After three widely spaced lines using the Bede lineation, the spacing changes to one that allows six lines of writing within one inch of vertical space. The second charm (Appendix: 2) begins with a capital eth, "Ðis man sceal cweðan" ("This a man must say"). The third charm, "Gif feoh sy undernumen" (see Appendix: 3A), begins at the left margin with a capital. It opens with elaborate Old English directions, followed by an incantation beginning with a string of saints' names and two short phrases in Latin. The *crux christi* formula, to recover something stolen, begins with

[7] Ten charms appear on pages 182 (*Wiþ ymbe*, "For Bees"); 206-8 (*Ne forstolen*, "Neither stolen"; *Ðis man sceal cweðan*, "This one must say"; *Gif feoh sy undernumen*, "If livestock is stolen"); 272 (*Wiþ ealra feo[n]da grimnessum*, "Against the fierceness of all fiends"); 326 (*Wiþ sarum eagum*, "For eye pains"; *Wiþ sarum earum*, "For earache"; *Wiþ magan seocnesse*, "Against great sickness"); 329 (*Creator et sanctificator pater. . . Sator*, "Creator and sanctifying father. . .Sator"); 350-53 (*Ic me on þisse gyrde beluce*, "I enclose myself with this rood [cross]").

a capital C in *Crux* on the last line on folio 207 following some verses praising St. Patrick and invoking God's protection. At this point we are faced with a problem: is the familiar Latin formula beginning "May the cross of Christ bring [it] back" (*crux christi reducat*)[8] inserted here as an independent charm? Is it part of a ritual that begins with the hanging indentation on folio 207? Or is it part of a longer ritual begun with the elaborate directions on the previous folio?[9] Immediately following the *crux christi* formulas on folio 208 is a heading for eye pain (*Wið eahwærce*) with directions for a treatment of wringing salt in the eyes;[10] no charm formula is attached to it.

Besides noting that the charms to recover missing livestock or stolen property occur in three forms—Old English, Latin, and combined Old English and Latin—another observation we can make is that the language of the charms exhibits specific oral features. Although the first Old English charm (Appendix: 1) is without directions to "say" or "sing," it has been categorized as a "metrical charm" by Dobbie (1942: 125-26) on the basis of the alliteration and stress patterns coming after the opening directions. Storms (1948:208-11) sets out the whole charm in verse form. Repetitions and near repetitions of sounds in the stressed syllables and the opening correlative negatives plus rhyme words make its opening aurally memorable:

> *Ne* for*stolen ne* for*holen* nanuht
> pæs ðe Ic age þe ma ðe mihte Herod urne drihten
>
> Neither stolen nor hidden may be anything I own, any more than Herod could hide our Lord

Only the lines containing imperatives alliterating with *feoh* (cattle) following the words "Garmund God's thane" (*Garmund godes þegen*) have been generally treated as metrical. Yet the whole charm presents us with

[8] Macbryde (1906) prints a seventeenth-century version in English from Oxford (Bodleian MS e Mus. 243, fol. 34).

[9] Ker (1957 :44) treats the *crux christi* formula on pages 207-8 as part of the third charm on page 206 (*Gif feoh sy undernumen*); see Appendix: 3A and B. Hollis (1997:147-48) argues that the scribe mistakenly inserted the hymn to St. Patrick before the *crux christi* formulas because the leaf containing these texts was reversed in his exemplar.

[10] "Wið eahwærce: geni[m] læfre neoðewearðe cnuwa and wring ðurh harenne clað and do sealt to wring þonne in þa eagan" ("take a lower part of a reed, pound it and wring it through hair cloth and put salt in and wring it into the eyes").

explicitly oral patterns. In addition, the use of *þence* ("would think" or "plan"), in the closing line of the charm and as the final word in a curse, echoes the two lines beginning *Ic geþohte* and argues against editors printing these opening lines separately from the rest of the text as introductory prose. The strong opening "Neither stolen nor concealed. . .anything I own" and the closing curse "May he wither. . ." together create a situation quite different from the one in which a property owner has been victimized by a thief. Through the charm's power as perfofmative speech, the owner is not at a loss but in control, while the thief is the one in danger of withering.

Of the two other charms for missing livestock squeezed into the bottom margin of page 206 of the Bede manuscript, the first contains the vernacular Bethlehem formula, which was widely known in English from Anglo-Saxon times to the seventeenth century,[11] It has warranted this charm's also being included in Dobbie's collection of "metrical charms" (1942: 126). Combined with this Anglo-Saxon metrical formula is a ritual for turning to the compass directions and reciting in each direction the Latin formula, "May the cross of Christ bring it back from the east" (*crux christi reducat ab oriente*. . .). In the Anglo-Saxon tradition, the cross has the power to reveal what has been illicitly hidden (as God had made known to St. Helen where the cross was buried),[12] Fortunately, this charm is also inscribed in British Library MS, Harley 585, in the section referred to as the *Lacnunga*. There too the English Bethlehem formula is linked with the same Latin Christian ritual, so we may conclude that the Anglo-Saxons considered the two parts—English and Latin—a linked pair. Moreover, the directions for when to perform this charm in both the Harley and the Corpus manuscripts mark the opening recitation of the Old English Bethlehem formula as a ritual act: "this a man must say when one tells him that any of his cattle have been lost (*losod* in Harley) or stolen

[11] On the circulation of this charm in medieval manuscripts, see Smallwood 1989.

[12] The story of St. Helen (Elena) finding Christ's cross along with those of the two thieves was part of the hagiographical tradition, retold in Ælfric's homily on the "Invention of the Cross" (Thorpe 1844-46, ii:306) and recounted in the Old English poem *Elene* (Krapp 1932:66-102). Besides having the power to reveal the hidden, the cross also appears in a Latin charm invoking the apotropaic power to ward off spiritual and earthly enemies (Pulsiano 1991). On the cross's power in the four quarters of the world, see Hill 1978.

(*forst[o]lenne* in Corpus). He [must] speak it before he says any other word."[13]

We also find this kind of ritual that includes both English and Latin formulas in other charms, such as the field ritual called the *Æcerbot* charm, a much more elaborate public ritual to insure the fertility of crop land (Dobbie 1942: 116-18). Although these charms could have been copied from earlier manuscripts without any expectation that they would be performed, I suggest that here they were recorded, as recipes and prayers usually are, to make them accessible for use, with the explicit intention that they might be put into practice.[14]

In addition, the two inscriptions of the same charm in Corpus 41 and Harley 585 give us the opportunity to observe it in two versions or multiforms. These charms for missing cattle are not identical: comparing them line-by-line yields the following observations regarding their structure and their textualization.

On the whole, the Harley charm presents us with a more complete text. The Latin *crux christi* incantation that we expect as the fourth in a string of identical incantations spoken toward the east, west, south, and north appears in the Harley text on cue, but it is omitted from the Corpus Bede manuscript. The Corpus text also collapses or abbreviates the directions in this *crux christi* ritual after giving the full version at its first occurrence. The English instructions, "And turn yourself then three times eastward and say three times" ("And gebide þe þonne þriwa east and cwæð þriwa") is reduced to "And to the west and say" ("And in west and cweþ").[15] This version may imply a reader who does not need every word and action exactly scripted, but rather a reader-performer who understands that the ritual actions will be performed the same way in all four compass directions. Further evidence that the Corpus charm is a less scripted and less textualized version of the charm is the absence of the *Amens* that

[13] See Appendix: 2 for both the Corpus and Harley versions.

[14] We have clear examples of theft charms copied solely for antiquarian interests into seventeenth century miscellanies (see note 17 below). Where the same charm appears in the twelfth-century compilations of Anglo-Saxon laws (Textus Roffiensis and Corpus Christi College 383), the problem is more complex.

[15] Editions since Grendon 1909 and including Dobbie 1942 emend "in" to the Roman numeral III, The Corpus scribe may have copied the minims for three as "in" or "in" may have existed in his original manuscript. The line "And in west cweð" is explicable if "and to the west" indicates by its "and" that the charm speaker is directed to do as he has done before—"gebide þe þonne þriwa" ("turn yourself then three times").

punctuate the charm in two places in the Harley Manuscript. Also, the Corpus charm scribe once uses a small cross as shorthand for the word *crux*. He uses the Latin phrase *per crucem Christi* in two places, once immediately after the vernacular Bethlehem formula and again at the end of the *crux christi* ritual. The Harley version translates the words *per crucem Christi* out of Latin into English and adds *Amen* after them. In the translation of this phrase, we can see the vernacularization of the Latin formula emerging in the Harley charm, which is more deliberately and carefully textualized. Finally, the Anglo-Saxon vocabulary of the two versions sometimes differs: *forst[o]lenne/losod, geboren/acænned, ofer/geond,* and *swa næfre þeos dæd/swa þeos dæd nænige þinga*. The incantations to the south and north show variations. Corpus has a *meridie* where Harley reads *ab austro*, both meaning "from the south." Corpus gives one line, *crux christi abscondita sunt* [for *est*] *et inuenta est* ("the cross of Christ was hidden and was found") for Harley's two: *crux christi ab aquilone reducat/crux christi abscondita est et inuenta* ("may the cross of Christ bring [it] back from the north / the cross of Christ was hidden and found").

One conclusion we might draw from these differences is that the form of this charm was not fixed, so that, as with other oral traditional genres, charms manifest a flexibility in performance. Another conclusion is that language barriers are rather porous: where Latin occurs for *per crucem christi* in Corpus, English (þurh þa haligan cristes rode) occurs in Harley. The less carefully scripted Corpus charm may have been recorded as part of a living tradition, if not in the life of the scribe who wrote it in the Bede Manuscript, then in his source. The abbreviated nature of the text does not appear to be a function of lack of space. To understand the Corpus charm (as a performable text), the reader must be familiar with how the charm works, whereas in the Harley manuscript every repetition is carefully spelled out. The Harley version is more explicit and more readable and presents itself as a rhythmical, recitable text. The Corpus version in contrast presents itself as less fixed, perhaps as having been passed on mostly by word of mouth, a heard text, rather than one to be read directly from the book.

But the English Bethlehem formula combined with the *crux christi reducat* ritual is not the last charm on page 206 of the Corpus Bede manuscript. In the next charm, the incantation, which invokes saints, is part of an elaborate ritual to be performed when a horse or other livestock goes missing (*Gyf feoh sy undernumen*). The Latin is to be sung (*sing* occurs three times) over the horse's fetters or bridle. Alternatively, if the animal is not a horse, one is to drip wax from three lighted candles in the hoof tracks. The formula will also work for other missing goods if it is sung in the four

directions "but first upright," that is, in the middle of a house and up. The incantatory formula itself begins with a string of saints' names and a Latin sentence: "And Peter, Paul, Patrick, Phillip, Marie, Brigid, Felix. In the name of God and Christ, he who seeks, finds." The word *chiric*, which I have translated "Christ," may derive from the name of St. Cyriac (Cyriacus),[16] as James thought (1912:83; also Grant 1979:9), but in its present form may be a confused form of *christi.*

This charm occurs in four other Anglo-Saxon manuscripts;[17] the manuscript contexts vary. If it was not a commonly performed charm, it was at least a familiar one. It appears, for example, between an Anglo-Saxon law on wergild and an elaborate bequest formula asserting ownership of lands in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 383 and again precedes the bequest formula in Textus Roffensis. In Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 190, also a compilation of laws, it is added after a Latin church injunction against incest and a decretal of Pope Gelasius. In the British Library manuscript Cotton Tiberius A. iii, the ritual appears among ethical rules for monastics, falling between a rule that one must end life well and Alfric' s letter on how to administer holy oil to the sick. So this charm circulates with lists of legal customs as well as liturgical rites like those in Corpus 41.

The Latin formulaic string of saints' names that follows the opening ritual in Corpus 41 is an unusual formula for this charm. Its customary Latin formula appears on the following page in the Bede manuscript (Appendix: 3B). This formula opens with the *crux christi reducat* motif, which we have already encountered in the Bethlehem charm elaborated as a ritual. But in this charm this one line is immediately followed by lines invoking Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (or Abraham and Job), who will close the paths of escape to the potential thief. In the semantics of the charm, the Old Testament figures of Abraham and Isaac, who have the power to close off paths of escape, are the same figures who according to Biblical narrative made their way up a mountain. The last formula, "Jews crucified Christ," appears in Latin here in the Bede manuscript, though in English in Corpus Christi College MS 190 (Appendix: 4). These two versions are further

[16] There are two saints named Cyriacus, one who traveled to Persia and was martyred in Rome, and the other a Pope from Britain who was martyred with Ursula and the virgins at Cologne.

[17] Consider MS Corpus Christi College 190, British Library (hereafter BL) MS Cotton Tiberius A.iii, Rochester Cathedral Library MS Textus Roffensis, and Cambridge MS Corpus Christi College 383. Two seventeenth-century copies survive in BL MS Harley 438 and BL MS Cotton Julius C. ii.

evidence of how easily formulas are transformed from one language to another. On one level the problem of whether or not this set of formulas beginning with the *crux christi reducat* on page 208 belongs to the ritual of singing over the fetters is solved by the existence of the other versions of the ritual containing the lines. Should that lead us to decide that the incantation of saints' names and St. Patrick's hymn were copied here erroneously as Hollis has suggested? The spacing and punctuation in the Corpus manuscript do not offer a conclusive answer, although the layout of Corpus 41 clearly introduces the names of saints as the incantation. The Latin stanzas to the hymn then follow naturally as an extension of the saints motif. If so, the ritual to be sung over the fetters has been significantly augmented by the inclusion of the verses of the Latin hymn. The inclusion of the hymn verses would not be not entirely surprising, since it has been shown that the last three verses of this Hymn were recommended as an apotropaic against demons and the yellow plague (Grant 1979:12-13), and formulas are sometimes used for more than one purpose. Nevertheless, the charm closes with the *crux christi* and *Judei Christum* formulas, versions of which we find in the other records of this ritual to be chanted over the animal's tracks.

If we return to the questions put to the charms at the bottom of pages 206 to 208 in Corpus Christi College 41, we can conclude first that we have three charms for loss of livestock and other property and that the Corpus versions of the Bethlehem *crux christi* charm and the *Gif feoh sy undernumen* ritual differ from versions found in other manuscripts in ways that are predictable for oral materials. We have seen how the first charm, *Ne forst[o]lenne. . .Garmund*, reverses a loss and curses a thief through a strong vernacular speech-act, while the second joins the vernacular Bethlehem formula to the expanded *crux christi* ritual then closes with a vernacular version of the "Jews-hanged-Christ" formula. In the third charm, *Gif feoh sy undernumen*, we found a widely recorded vernacular ritual to be performed over fetters, hoof tracks, or a house that introduces Latin incantations, which in turn include verses from the alphabetic hymn to St. Patrick. A religious person might have performed this charm as formal liturgy, whereas property owners evidently used the vernacularized versions preserved in the legal collections to strengthen their claims for punishment against thieves (Hollis 1997: 163). Sometimes the same formulas (e.g., *per crucem Christi* and *Iudei Christum crucifixerunt*) circulated in both Latin and English, and they may occur in different charms. Finally, when we look at the work of this scribe who wrote so much in the margins of Corpus 41 and beyond him to the book or books he copied from, we can conclude that his work authorizes performance of all

of these three and other charms as Christian rituals. But this statement speaks only for Corpus 41. Each manuscript merely glanced at here—the collection of medical remedies in Harley 585, the religious lore and devotions in Cotton Tiberius, the lists of laws in Textus Roffensis and Corpus 190—contextualizes the theft charms differently. It appears, then, that we must attend closely to manuscripts if we want to explore further the oral tradition of charms.

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Appendix[18]

1. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 41, p. 206

Ne forstolen ne forholen nanuht
þæs ðe Ic age þe ma ðe mihte herod urne drihten
Ic geþohte sancte eadelenan
and ic geþohte crist on rode ahangen
swa ic þence ðis feoh to findanne næs to oðfeorrganne
and to witanne næs to oðwryceanne
and to lufianne næs to oðlædanne.
Garmund godes ðegen
find þæt feoh and fere þæt feoh
and hafa þæt feoh and heald þæt feoh
and fere ham þæt feoh
þæt he næfre næbbe landes
þæt he hit oðlæde
ne foldan þæt hit oðferie
ne husa þæt he hit oð hit healde
Gyf hyt hwa gedo ne gedige hit him næfre.
Binnan þrym nihtum cunne ic his mihta
his mægen and his mihta and his mundcræftas.
eal he weornige swa syre wudu weornie

[18] In the texts below, abbreviations are expanded silently; emendations appear in brackets; capitalization follows that of the manuscripts. I have not attempted to represent manuscript punctuation although it serves as a cue for spacing. The spacing is editorial and intended to emphasize oral patterns in alliteration, syntax, and stress (cp. Doane 1994). The translations are mine.

swa breðel seo swa þystel
se ðe ðis feoh oðfergean þence
oððe ðis orf oðehtian ðence Amen.[19]

Neither stolen nor hidden may be anything I own, any more than Herod could hide our Lord. As I thought of St. Helen and I thought of Christ, hanged on the cross, so I expect to find these animals, not have them gone far away; and to know where they are, not have them harmed; and to care for them, not have them led off. Garmund, God's thane, find these cattle and fetch these cattle and have these cattle and hold these cattle, and bring these cattle home, so that he who took them may never have any land to put them on, nor country to carry them to, nor houses to keep them in. If anyone tries it, he would never accomplish it. Within three nights I would know his might, his main and his might, and his hand-strength. May he thoroughly wither, as dry wood withers, as bramble does, so the thistle [and also] he who intends to carry off these goods or drive away these animals.

2. MS CCC 41, p. 206 and British Library, MS Harley 585, fol. 180v.

Corpus: Ðis man sceal cweðan ðonne his ceapa hwilcne m[an] forst[o]lenne
Harley: þonne þe mon ærest secge þæt þin ceap sy losod
Corpus: c[w]yð ær he ænyg oþer word cweðe:
Harley: þonne cweð þu ærest ær þu elles hwæt cweþe:
Corpus: Bethlem hattæ seo burh ðe Crist on geboren wes
Harley: bædleem hatte seo buruh þe Crist on acænned wæs
Corpus: seo is gemærsod ofer ealne middan geard
Harley: seo is gemærsod geond ealne middangeard
Corpus: swa ðeos dæd wyrþe for monnum mære
Harley: swa þyos dæd for monnum mære gewurþe
Corpus: per crucem christi
Harley: þurh þa haligan cristes rode amen.

Corpus: and gebide þe ðonne þriwa east and cweð þriwa
Harley: gebide þe þonne þriwa east and cweð þonne þriwa
Corpus: + christi ab orient[e] reducat
Harley: crux christi ab oriente reduca[t]
Corpus: and in [for iii?] west and cweð
crux christi ab occidente reducat

[19] Cf. "Charms," no. 9 (Dobbie 1942:125-26).

Harley: gebide þe þonne priwa west and cweð þonne þriwa
crux christi ab occidente reducat
Corpus: and in [for iii?] suð and cweð
crux christi a meridie reduca[t]
Harley: gebide þe þonne þriwa suð and cweð þriwa
crux christi ab austro reducat
Corpus: and in [for iii?] norð and cweð
crux christi abscondita sunt [sic] et inuenta est
Harley: gebide þonne þriwa norð and cweð [fol. 181r] þriwa
crux christi ab aquilone reduca[t]
crux christi abscondita est et inuenta est

Corpus: Iudeas crist ahengon gedidon him dæda þa wyrstan
Harley: iudeas crist ahengon dydon dæda þa wyrrestan
Corpus: hælon pæt hi forhelan ne mihton
Harley: hælon pæt hy forhelan ne mihtan
Corpus: swa næfre ðeos dæd forholen ne wyrðe
Harley: swa þeos dæd nænige þinga f[o]rholen ne wurþe
Corpus: per crucem christi.[20]
Harley: þurh þa haligan cristes rode amen.[21]

[Corpus] This one must say, when someone steals some of his cattle. He says before he may speak any other word: "Bethlehem is the name of the city where Christ was born. It is famous throughout the world. So may this deed be famous among the people, through the cross of Christ." And then pray three times to the east and say three times, "May the cross of Christ bring it back from the east." And pray to the west and say, "May the cross of Christ bring it back from the west." And to the south and say, "May the cross of Christ bring it back from the south." And to the north and say, "The cross of Christ was hidden and was found." The Jews hanged Christ, did to Him the worst of deeds. They hid what they could not hide. So may this deed never be hidden, through the sacred cross of Christ.

3A. MS CCC 41, p. 206.

Gif feoh sy undernumen.

[20] Cf. "Charms," no. 10 (Dobbie 1942: 126).

[21] See Grattan and Singer 1952:182 and "Charms," no. 5 (Dobbie 1942:123).

Gif hit sy hors sing þis on his fetera oððe on his bridel
Gif hit si o[ðer] feoh sing on þæt hofrec
and ontend .iii. candella dryp þriwa þæt weax
ne mæg hit nan man f[or]helan
Gif hit sy oþer orf þonne sing ðu hit on iiii healfa ðin
and sing ærest up rihte hit:

and petur pol patric pilip marie brigit felic
in nomine dei and ch[risti] qui quer[it] inu[e]nit.

3B. [p. 207]

Christus illum si[bi] elegit in terris [u]icarium
qui de gemino captiuos liberet seruitio
plerosque/ de seruitute quos redemet hominum
innumeros de sabuli obsoluit dominio.

Ymnos/ cum apocalipsi salmosque cantat dei
[quo]sque et edificandum dei tractat pupulum
quem legem/ in trinitate sacre credent nominis
tribusque personis unam.

Sona[22] domine precintus diebus ac noc/tibus
[sine?] intermissione deum oret dominum
cuius ingentes laboris percepturis percepturis [sic] premium/
cum apostoli[s] regnauit sanctus super israel.

Audite omnes amantes Deum sancta merita
uiri in christo/ beati patricii episcopi
quomodo bonum ab actum simulatur angelis
perfectumque est propter uitam/ equatur apostolis.[23]

[22] *Sona* substitutes for *zona*. The hymn is alphabetic: *Christus* above expands the manuscript reading *xps*.

[23] These lines beginning *Christus illum* derive from the last three and first stanzas (in that order) of the hymn of St. Sechnall (or Secundus) in honor of St. Patrick. See Raby 1959:34 and 37.

patricii laudes semper dicamus ut nos cum illo defendat deus.[24]

Crux christi reducat
crux christi perriit et inuenta est
habraeham tibi uias montes/
[p. 208] silua[s] semitas fluminas andronas [con]cludat.
isaac tibi tenebras inducat
Crux iacob te ad iudicium ligatum perducat

iudei christum crucifixerunt
pe[s]simum sibimet ipsum perpetrauerunt
opus celauerunt quod non potuerunt celare
sic nec hoc furtum celatur nec celare possit
per dominum nostrum.[25]

If livestock is stolen. If it is a horse, sing this over his fetters or his bridle. If it is another animal, sing it over the hoof tracks and light three candles and drip wax three times over them so. No one will be able to hide it. If it is other property, then sing it toward the four sides of the house, and sing it first straight up: "And Peter, Paul, Patrick, Phillip, Maria, Brigit, Felix. In the name of God and Christ [or Cyriacus], he who seeks, finds. Christ chose that one his vicar on earth who frees captives from a double bond. And those innumerable men whom he redeems from servitude, he absolves from the dominion of the devil. Hymns with the apocalypse and the psalms of God he sings, which he expounds to build up the people of God. They trust that law in the Holy Trinity, also one name in three persons. Girded with the belt of the Lord, days and nights in turn he prays to the Lord God, whose monumental labor will take the prize. With the apostles he has reigned holy over Israel. Hear, all who love God, through the holy merit of a man blessed in Christ, Patrick the Bishop, how by a good act he is made like to the angels and on account of his perfect life he is equal to the apostles. Let us always sing the praises of Patrick, so that God may defend us along with him." May the cross of Christ bring it back. The cross of

[24] This line occurs in the antiphons that accompany the hymn in four manuscripts: Dublin, Franciscan Convent, *Liber Hymnorum*; Milan, Ambrosian Library, *Antiphonary of Bangor*; Dublin, Trinity College, MS E.4.2 *Liber Hymnorum*; Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, *Leabhar Breac*. For antiphons in the Franciscan ms., see Stokes 1887:pt. ii, 389; for antiphons in the other mss., see Bernard and Atkinson 1898, i:x-xvi and 13; ii:105-6.

[25] Cf. McBryde 1906: 181.

Christ was lost and is found. May Abraham close to you the roads, mountains, woods, paths, rivers, passages. May Isaac lead you into the darkness. The cross [and] Jacob bring you bound to judgment. Jews crucified Christ. They achieved the worst thing for themselves. They hid a deed that could not be hidden. Thus this thief is neither hidden nor can hide through our Lord.

4. Cambridge, MS Corpus Christi College 190, p. 130.

Gyf feoh sy underfangen.
Gyf hit sy hors sing on his feteran oðde on his bridele.
Gyf hit sy oðer feoh sing on þæt fotspor
and ontend .iii. candela and dryp on þæt hofrec þæt wex þriwa.
Ne mæg hit þe nan man forhelan.
Gif hit sy innorf
Sing þonne on feower healfe pæs huses and æne on middan:

Crux christi reducat
Crux christi per furtum periit inuenta est
abraham tibi semitas uias montes concludat
iob et flumina ad iudici[um] ligatum perducat.

Judeas Crist ahengan þæt heom com to wite swa strangan
gedydan heom dæda þa wyrrestan hy þæt drofe on guldon
hælan hit heom to hearme micclum
for þam hi hyt forhelan ne mihtan.[26]

If livestock is stolen. If it is a horse, sing over his fetters or his bridle. If it is other animals, sing over the tracks and light three candles and drip the wax on the hoof tracks three times. No one will be able to hide it. If it is household property, sing then on the four sides of the house and once in the middle: "may the cross of Christ bring it back." The cross of Christ was lost through a thief and was found. May Abraham close off to you the paths, roads, and mountains. May Job also close the rivers, bring you bound to judgment. The Jews hanged Christ. That deed brought them a harsh punishment. They did to him the worst of deeds. They paid severely

[26] Cf. Wanley, as quoted in McBryde 1906:181.

for that. They hid it to their own great harm, because they could not hide it completely.

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Speakerly Women and Scribal Men

Christine Neufeld

I want to begin my discussion of oral tradition and manuscript authority by drawing attention to the term "old wives' tale." Since classical times writers have referred scornfully to the image of the "maundering old woman" telling stories by the fire in order to, as Boccaccio states, "scare the little ones, or divert the young ladies, or amuse the old" (54).[1] Medieval authorities such as Augustine and Macrobius used this classical and early Christian image of a devalued oral culture associated with the private world of women to shape literary aesthetics. They invoked the term "old wives' tale" to denigrate certain tales as immoral, false, or superstitious. Consequently, medieval writers often sought to establish their literary authority in contradistinction to such tales and their tellers. Ironically, the gendering of oral and literate discursive spheres did not prevent women from being conceived of as discursive threats. Instead, medieval and early modern literature often depicts women as dangerous and subversive precisely because of their uses of speech acts as gossips, scolds, and tellers of immoral tales.[2] Indeed, medieval attempts to ghettoize women in the realm of a debased oral culture result in the literary conception of a

[1] Cicero and Seneca both apply the term *aniles fabulas* and its variants to superstitions, stories involving magic, and false or unfounded tales. Macrobius adopts this term in his *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* to distinguish between fables that flatter the ear and tales that lead to virtue. Boccaccio picks up on the passage on old wives' tales in Macrobius in his classification of fables in *Geneologia deorum gentilium*. Sarah Disbrow (1986) offers information on the history of the term and the ways in which it was wielded by patristic writers.

[2] According to Disbrow, Augustine in particular defines old wives' tales as works that do not conform to Christian doctrine. In his "In Iohannis Evangelium" Augustine identifies the foolish woman of Proverbs 9:13 as the quintessential receptacle and purveyor of such tales (67).

women's counterdiscursive sphere.[3] This paradoxical construction of the speaking woman as simultaneously diminished and empowered by her forms of speech is a result of the relationship between oral and literary traditions in the Middle Ages. In this article I will outline how medieval notions of oral tradition and manuscript authority contributed to the construction of women as constituents of an oral culture.

I shall illustrate my argument by way of example. William Dunbar's *Tretis of the Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo* explicitly constructs manuscript authority as men's mastery over feminine orality. Yet the aesthetic utilized by the poet places the authority of written tradition into question. The poem, set on Midsummer's Eve, is likely to have been one of Dunbar's many occasional poems produced and orally performed at the court of James IV of Scotland in the late fifteenth century. As unrhymed, alliterative verse, the *Tretis* is the descendant of the oral-formulaic traditions familiar to both the Germanic and Celtic elements of the Scottish court. Nevertheless, the poem first surfaces in literary history as part of a 1508 Chepman and Myllar print; only later does the poem appear in manuscript form in the Maitland Folio MS (1570-82).[4] The poem is distinctive in that it is the product of a time when orality contrasted with textuality in both manuscript and print forms. Given the history of its reception, the *Tretis*' overt engagement with oral and literate cultures makes it a particularly provocative commentary on the conceptions of manuscript authority that late medieval culture passed on to early modernity.

The Tretis of the Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo presents an account of a male poet who happens upon three beautiful noble women, two wives and a widow, during their merrymaking on a Midsummer's Eve. The poet conceals himself in a hedge in order to overhear their elevated conversation; however, the courtly scene set up in the style of a *chanson d'aventure* by the first forty lines of the poem dissolves with the Widow's initial words, and what follows is instead a racy *chanson de mal mariée* relating the miseries of marriage and the sexual escapades of the Widow. Each woman's monologue is punctuated by a curious chorus of loud laughter and hearty drinking. The poem ends with a return to the courtly frame and with the narrator's mocking *demande d'amour*: "Of thir thre

[3] My reference to oral culture as "debased" is intended to clarify the fact that women were not associated with the formal methods of composition in primary oral cultures. Women were aligned with the more informal "word of mouth" aspect of oral culture.

[4] For information concerning the poem's history of reception, see Roth 1981.

wantoun wiffis, that I haif written heir, / Quhilk wald ye waill to your wif gif ye suld wed one" (529-30)?[5]

Dunbar's *Tretis* provides a striking example of how the literary identification of women with oral and vernacular traditions contributed to a specifically masculine conception of manuscript authority. The most obvious way in which Dunbar does this is by highlighting through genre the disparity between the voice of the eavesdropping scribe and the voices of the women. The poem's extraordinary transformation of an ideal courtly paradigm into base medieval comedy about wives struggling for sexual autonomy sets up an exaggerated example of gendered discursive modes. The effect of the moment of metamorphosis has dimensions only expected, perhaps, in fairytales. The beautiful woman, described in courtly terms by the male narrator, opens her mouth to speak and, instead of the anticipated elegant rhetoric, the audience is confronted with the cackling voice of *fabliau* womanhood, another literary incarnation of La Vieille and Chaucer's Wife of Bath. The courtly diction of the narrator is replaced by a virtuosic display of earthy invective by the women. Drawing on the strengths of the alliterative tradition, these women use, for example, 80 different words and images for "man" or "husband" (Bitterling 1984:340); needless to say, most of these are derogatory.

The women's abusive words reveal the confessional nature of their discussion. The majority of critics agree that the three speeches do not present an intellectual debate so much as variations on the parodic confession typical of the characters' infamous literary predecessors.[6] In fact, the debate form is entirely abandoned. The women do not argue about abstractions. Instead they unanimously present the same subjective view drawn from their personal experiences. Notably, the Widow invokes pseudoreligious terminology in her demands for self-revelation. She invites the second wife to "confese. . .the treuth" (153) in order that the Widow might "exeme" her (156). By mapping the confessional mode onto the intimacies shared among a group of gossips, Dunbar generically defines

[5] Dunbar 1932; all citations of the poem are drawn from this edition.

[6] One notable exception is Ray Pearcy's (1980) reading of the poem as a *jugement*, a subgenre of the debate form where logic is subordinate to rhetorical ingenuity. The similarity between the *jugement* and flyting—both are forms of verbal invective games—suggests that a reading of the poem as *jugement* does not detract from my conclusions about the influence of oral tradition on the *Tretis*.

their conversation in terms of a familiar oral ritual of self-representation.[7] As the three women confide their private experiences of sexual frustration and desire, reveal their husbands' most private inadequacies, and detail their acts of insubordination, the audience understands that these accounts serve to divulge the characters' true natures. This familiar medieval depiction of a female gossips' alliance antipathetic to men evokes an image of a feminine counterdiscursive sphere: a place where women tell their side of the story. As an oral mode of discourse that shares in the confession's self-representational impetus, gossip constructs what Spacks terms an "oral artifact" to counter the written narratives of men (1986:15).[8] Through the Widow's speech Dunbar represents women's discourse as opposed to written texts. It is not that the Widow is unaware of textual traditions; she is explicitly depicted as rejecting literate culture. The Widow does own a book and she makes great use of it as a beautiful accessory and, more importantly, as a prop enabling her to observe attractive men at church. In fact, the Widow sets up her truthtelling authority in opposition to the tales that might have been found in her book. In closing she asserts, "This is the legeand of my life, thought Latyne it be nane" (504). This comment, particularly with its invocation of scholarly Latin, overtly juxtaposes the stories written by men with the oral accounts the women give of themselves. However, the pseudoreligious overtones in the women's confessional accounts undermine their authority by creating an evaluative context, one that confers the authority to judge on the eavesdropper and on the audience who eavesdrops vicariously through him.

In marked contrast to the Widow's identification with orality, the narrator's concluding discussion of his authorly activities draws our attention to his association with a masculine textual realm. He points out that he used his "pen" to "report thair pastance" (526). In the *demande d'amour* he states explicitly that he has "writtin" (529) of these three wanton wives, insisting that his audience of listeners acknowledge the text behind the performance. Dunbar uses the rhetorical device of the eavesdropping narrator to invest this textual voice with authority over the "ryatus speche" (149) of the women. In her discussion of the eavesdropping narrator in late medieval German poetry, Ann Marie

[7] My discussion of confession as self-representation is indebted to Leigh Gilmore's consideration of the matter (1994).

[8] Spacks (1986) points out that, as an oral mode, gossip is a resource for socially subordinated groups. My own work seeks to demonstrate in terms of aesthetics exactly how orality contributes to gossip's liberative potential.

Rasmussen suggests that the trope of the eavesdropping narrator places the eavesdropper and speaking characters into a power relationship based on a hierarchy of knowledge (1995:2). Thus, the framework of the eavesdropping scribe presents the narrative text as a form of journalistic documentation. The narrator purports to be an objective reporter of "facts" about women, to have access to facts that women normally attempt to hide. As documentary textual evidence of women's secrets and linguistic deceitfulness, the eavesdropping narrative presents itself as an attempt to stabilize meaning that is constantly linguistically obscured and destabilized by women in their regular interactions with men.

Moreover, the narrative text utilizes physical description to distinguish between the truth claims of the feminine and masculine voices. Dunbar's poem is typical of eavesdropping narratives in that the narrator elaborates on the beauty of the women, detailing their "glorious gilt tressis" (19), the arrangement of their hair, headdresses, and cloaks, and marveling at their "quhyt, seimlie and soft" faces (28). The narrator figure, on the other hand, remains undescribed and therefore invisible. The women's furious words are depicted as issuing from desiring and desirable female bodies whose excessive drinking and laughter further characterize them as sensual. Meanwhile, to quote Rasmussen, "the male narrator is a disembodied narrating and moralizing voice, a textualized voice that issues omnisciently from an apparently genderless text" (1996). The effectiveness of this approach is demonstrated by numerous critical responses to the poem describing the narrator as "neutral," "impartial" and a "lucid third person."[9] This lack of bias attributed to a text that nevertheless manages to define textual authority as a masculine privilege over impudent feminine speech is, in my opinion, one of the more insidious achievements of such antifeminist satire.

However, while Dunbar's satire constitutes women as oral, the satirical nature of the *Tretis* is ironically also what undermines the ultimate authority of textuality in Dunbar's poem. John Leyerle's (1962) discussion of Dunbar's two poetic voices gestures toward a potential dilemma. Leyerle defines the voice Dunbar uses for allegorical poetry as "aureate" in that it emulates Lydgate's gilded latinate diction (318). The poetic voice Dunbar uses for flyting, humor, and satire, Leyerle defines as his "eldritch" voice (320). This is the virtuosic voice of the Germanic oral-formulaic tradition still alive in the alliterative poetry and flyting competitions of late

[9] The three terms, used by Henderson (1898), Singh (1967), and Nicolaisen (1977), respectively, are indicative of a consistent reading of the narrator as impartial that spans the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

medieval Scotland.[10] The oral tradition Dunbar invokes through his eldritch voice aesthetically modifies the satire he presents in his *Tretis*. C. S. Lewis notes in his reading of the *Tretis* that the poem lacks the conventional corrective urge of social satire. He concludes that the poem should be considered "abusive" not satirical (1954:93). In fact, he refers to the poem as "almost a flyting" (94). Similarly, Ian Ross suggests that Dunbar's choice of alliterative stanzaic poetry for the *Tretis* allows him the freedom to develop the poem "in the direction of sustained invective" (1981:215). This critical recognition of the abusive intention of the *Tretis* draws our attention to an ancient oral aesthetic invoked by Dunbar's eldritch voice.

The tradition of satirical invective employed by Dunbar in the *Tretis* has its roots in primary oral societies that believed in language as a "mode of action" (Ong 1982:32). Robert Elliott's work on the magical and ritual origins of satire demonstrates the widespread belief among early Classical, Arabic, and Celtic cultures that derisive words are weapons to be deployed in order to harm an enemy socially and physically. He argues that these preternatural associations inform later, more literary manifestations of satire as well. Certainly medieval flyting, as an offshoot of satiric invective, is a more ludic manifestation of a belief in the power of the extemporaneous poetic utterance. While participants in a late medieval flyting competition did not, arguably, believe that they could rhyme one another to death like the rats of Irish legend, they were nevertheless participating in a mode informed by oral culture. The victory in a flyting contest does not go, as one might think, to the participant whose cause is more just, but instead to the "greater master of ridicule" (Elliott 1960:73). As Downes states, in oral societies, the *argumentum ad hominem* establishes its claim to truthful narrative by virtue of its verbal prowess and its display of knowledge (1995:130). Dunbar's *Tretis,* like so much of medieval antifeminist satire, is an *argumentum ad hominem* (or rather *ad feminam*); consequently, its use of satirical invective should alert us to the oral terms with which it establishes its authority.

Dunbar's use of his eldritch voice explains why women's exclusion from an emerging literary culture failed to prevent the conception of women as discursive threats. Dunbar's text is an example of what Franz Bäuml (1984) defines as a pseudo-oral work: that is, it is a literary work that uses oral-formulaic conventions to invoke a horizon of expectations

[10] Fox (1966:166) points out that the alliterative tradition that had died out in England by the fifteenth century remained influential in Scotland at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

associated with oral tradition (44). While the text seeks to denigrate women by aligning them with orality, the poet as narrator nevertheless attempts to establish his own authority in terms of oral tradition. Consequently, his use of the eldritch voice undermines his satirical objective. By assuming the power of his own invective, the author invests the objects of his satire with this same ancient authority of the derisive word. Indeed, if verbal prowess is the measure of truthtelling authority in antifeminist satire such as the *Tretis*, then the garrulous women of medieval literature are formidable foes.

I want to close by outlining some of the broader theoretical implications of my analysis. The paradoxical stance of Dunbar's poem is one not uncommon in late medieval literature. Medieval and early modern representations of women's gossip circles provide evidence not only of concern regarding feminine secrets, but also of a continual anxiety about the power of women's speech. As Spacks states, in a comment only too appropriate for Dunbar's *Tretis*: "Gossip dramatizes the possibility that the unruly tongue may master the unruly phallus by telling stories about it" (1986:137). The medieval belief in this possibility depends to some extent on the continued cultural currency of oral traditions. Since Albert Lord's (1960) well-known assertions that oral and literate cultures are mutually exclusive, scholars have been working to bridge the so-called Great Divide by demonstrating the ways in which the modes of voice and text coexisted and interacted in medieval society. Michael Clanchy and Jesse Gellrich have collectively demonstrated the persistence of oral modes in the face of rising literacy in the eleventh to fourteenth centuries; Dunbar's poem suggests that oral tradition continues to be a factor to consider in late medieval literature and, consequently, in the attitudes towards manuscript authority passed on to early modernity and print culture.

However, while Dunbar's poem demonstrates the hybridity of medieval literature and the cultural diglossia of medieval society, its content does signal shifting attitudes toward orality and textuality at the end of the Middle Ages. The *Tretis* exemplifies the way in which medieval literary representations of the battle of the sexes polarized orality and literacy in order to establish truthtelling authority. Brian Stock points out (1983:17): "Whether or not there is a real linguistic difference between the oral and the written word, a good deal of the medieval and early modern perception of cultural differences was based on the assumption that there is." To my knowledge, few critics chose to use gender as a category of analysis in the continuing scholarly attempts to map these medieval conceptions of

language.[11] It is my hope that this discussion of the gendering of oral and literary discursive spheres conveys the relevance of gender as a paradigm for examining both the construction of manuscript authority and the status of oral tradition in Western literary history.

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[11] One notable exception is Eric Jager, who draws attention to the ways in which medieval writers began to identify oral tradition with the dangerously "seductive, fallible, 'bodily'" discursive practices of pagans, heretics, and women (Jager 1993:188).

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Writing as Relic: The Use of Oral Discourse to Interpret Written Texts in the Old French *La Queste del Saint Graal*

Lisa Robeson

Many well-known critics of the thirteenth-century French romance *La Queste del Saint Graal*[1] have noted that the *Queste* author transformed the nature of Arthurian adventure. Scholars such as Pauphilet, Matarasso, Todorov, Poirions, and de Looze have argued that success in the quest of the Holy Grail depends on correct interpretation of signs and symbols that the knights encounter on their path, and not on military valor.[2] Interpretation of this new code requires that the knights substitute spiritual signifieds for the things that they see and hear, including the many inscriptions they read, for the traditional meanings that affirm the values of conventional chivalry: love, honor, *prouesse,* and material gain.[3] Only the knights who are irredeemably worldly, such as Gawain and Hector, engage in typical Arthurian adventures and combats. The three chosen knights who eventually find the Grail—Galahad, Perceval, and Bors—are without peer in understanding spiritual interpretations.

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[1] The thirteenth-century French romance *La Queste del Saint Graal,* or *The Quest of the Holy Grail,* is the second of the first three Arthurian romances that comprise the Vulgate Cycle. Probably composed by different authors, the stories of Lancelot *(Lancelot en prose),* and the narrative of the downfall of the Round Table *(Le Marte Artu)* delineate the rise and fall of the Arthurian kingdom of Logres. Written by an anonymous author, probably a cleric, perhaps a Cistercian, around 1220-25, the romance attempted to redirect chivalry toward spiritual goals. Adventures on the quest often require the knights to read rather than to fight, and their goal is a religious object: the Holy Grail (in this narrative, the cup of the Last Supper).

[2] See Pauphilet 1921:157-58; Matarasso 1979:11; Todorov 1971:137; Poirion 1994:204; de Looze 1985:131.

[3] For more on the transformation of Arthurian romance in the thirteenth century, see Poirion 1976; Frappier 1976b; Hanning 1985.

Given the focus on interpretation in the romance, the written texts that the knights encounter on their adventures are of critical importance in achieving their goal. In this essay, I would like first to argue that the inscriptions that appear on stone monuments, crosses, and other durable surfaces share the characteristics of saints' relics; second, that the oral interpretations of these written texts, which are presented by a host of hermits, anchoresses, and other holy people, validate the inscriptions in the same way that oral hagiographies and eyewitness accounts of miracles supported the authentication of relics; and finally that the texts in the *Queste* that are not inscribed, but rather written down on parchment, are analogous to the documentary evidence necessary to validate the authenticity of relics after the twelfth century.

Jean Frappier and Pauline Matarasso have contended that the Holy Grail itself operates as a saint's relic in the *Queste*.[4] However, the monumental inscriptions that appear in the romance also share characteristics with relics, since both serve as links between earth and heaven. Relics, or the physical remains of saints, were thought to retain the power of what Peter Brown has called "the holy dead."[5] A saint's body retained the saint's holiness in *praesentia,* the sacred physically manifested. The relic is a point of contact between the divine and the temporal that may serve as a conduit for God's grace. Even after the early Christian period when the practice of veneration began, the inseparability of soul and body even after death remained a basic premise of veneration.[6]

Inscriptions in the *Queste* are obviously not the remains of human bodies, however holy. On the other hand, there is some evidence in the text suggesting that they are loci of *praesentia,* points at which the divine is physically made manifest and available to human beings. In the *Queste,* inscriptions are not "channels of grace," as one theologian in late antiquity termed relics,[7] but conduits for the Holy Spirit. The Spirit, which plays an important role as a source and an end of the quest for the Holy Grail in this romance, moves through these inscriptions because it is the author, or at

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[4] Frappier 1976a:557; Matarasso 1979: 182.

[5] 1981: 10. Brown provides a clear summary of the influence of Christianity on pagan attitudes toward the bodies of the dead and the rise of the cult of saints in the late antique world. For more on the cult of the saints in the later Middle Ages, see Herrmann-Mascard 1975 and Geary 1990. For a complete bibliography to date, see Wilson 1983.

[6] Brown 1981:88,6-10; Bynum 1991:76-77.

[7] Vitricius, *De Laude Sanctorum,* cited in Kemp 1948:4-5.

least the *scriptor,* of the mysterious inscriptions that prompt many of the knights' adventures.[8]

For example, events in the first episodes of the romance suggest a direct relationship between the presence of inscriptions and the Holy Spirit. The romance opens as Bors, Lionel, and Lancelot read texts incised on the stone chairs that surround the Round Table. Each chair bears an inscription that says, "Here shall sit this or that one."[9] On the Sieges Perilous, however, the inscribed letters trace a different message: "454 years have passed since the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ; and on the day of Pentecost, this seat shall find its master."[10] The knights do not understand the inscription, but it inspires such a feeling of awe in them that they decide to cover it with a veil. When Galahad arrives the next day, which is Pentecost, the knights lift the veil and find that the inscription has changed to "This is the seat of GALAHAD."[11] To the knights, these words look "newly made" *(nouvelement fete; idem).* In other words, it seems as if the text has been supernaturally edited while the inscription was covered.

A *topos* of medieval exegesis suggests that this editor may have been the Holy Spirit. Commentaries often stated that the Scriptures were written "by the finger of God," a metaphor for the Holy Spirit.[12] The metaphor

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[8] Lancelot, for example, is told by a holy man that" ... the Holy Grail is the grace of the Holy Spirit" (*... ce est Ii Sainz Graax, ce est la grace del Saint Esperit)* in *Queste:159.* All quotations from the *Queste* are taken from Pauphilet's 1984 edition, hereafter *Queste;* all translations are my own unless otherwise noted. For important discussions on the role of the Holy Spirit in the initiation of the quest and the symbolism of the Holy Grail, see Matarasso 1979:180-204 and Lot-Borodine 1951.

[9] "Cl DOIT SEOIR CIL" *(Queste:4).*

[10] " ... CCCC. ANZ ET .LIIII. SONT ACCOMPLI EMPRÉS LA PASSION JHESUCRIST; ET AU JOR DE LA PENTECOUSTE DOIT CIST SIEGES TROVER SON MESTRE" (4).

[11] "CI EST LI SIEGES GALAAD" (8).

[12] The following passages, drawn from authors writing between the eighth and twelfth centuries, show consistent use of the figure "finger of God" to indicate the Holy Spirit: Ambrosius Autpertus, *Expositio in Apocalypsin:* "Que propterea arca testamenti vocatus, quia duorum in ea Testamentorum virtus digito Dei, hoc est, Spiritus Sancto inscribitus, non iam in tabu lis lapideis, sed in tabulis cordis carnalibus" (CCCM, 27:441); Walter of St. Victor, *Sermones:* "Utrumque scriptum est in digito Dei, id est Spiritu Dei Sancti ... " *(Sermo* 3, CCCM, 30:26); William of St. Thierry, *Expositio super Epistolam ad Romanos:* "Scilicet que legis sunt, in tabulis scribuntur vel chartulis, quae vero sunt gratiae, digito Dei, id est Spiritu Sancto mentibus nostris inscribuntur" (CCCM, 86:58);

may have been suggested by the account of the giving of the Law in Deuteronomy. In this version, Moses says, "And the Lord gave me two stone tablets written with the finger of God and containing all the words that have been spoken to you in the mountain in the middle of the fire . . . " (Deut. 9: 10).[13] Furthermore, in the Exodus account of the giving of the Ten Commandments, Moses puts a veil over his face after he has spoken to the Lord on the mountain, just as the knights veil the inscription on the Sieges Perilous after reading it (Ex. 34:33-35). In *On the Letter and the Spirit,* St. Augustine connects the inscription of the Law with the coming of the Holy Spirit at the first Pentecost. He writes that the crowd of apostles and people gathered in Jerusalem were like those Jews who waited at the foot of Sinai for Moses; only there, at Sinai, the finger of God *(digitus Dei)* worked in stone tablets, but at Pentecost it wrote in the hearts of men.[14] Finally, the first inscriptions are read on the day before Pentecost and the search for the Holy Grail begins on the day of the feast, which commemorates the coming of the Holy Spirit.[15]

Johannes Belethus, *Summa de Ecclesiasticis Officiis:* "Sed Spiritus Sanctus datus est centumviginti discipulis in corde digito Dei spiritualem intelligentiam intus eis dictante" (CCCM, 41A:247); John of Ford, *Super Extremam Partem Cantici Canticorum Sermones CXX:* "Meum erit ex munere tuo, vocum aliquas significationes verbo vel scripto exhibere: tuum vero digito Dei, qui est Spiritus Sanctus, ea quae significantus inscribere" (CCCM, 17:34-35); Peter Abelard, *Commentaria in Epistulam Pauli ad Romanos:* "Probat quod dixerat, legem videlicet Moysi bonam esse, licet occasionem inde in peccatum acceperit, quia videlicet est spiritualis lex, non saecularis, tamquam dig ito Dei scripta, id est Spiritu Sancto . . ." (CCCM, 11:205); Rupert of Deutz, *De Sancta Trinitate et Operibus Eis:* "Igitur legis et gratiae summa secundum numerum consonantia est, quia videlicet a paschali vespera quinquagesimo die, lex in tabulis lapideis digito Dei scripta per Moysen data est; gratia autem et veritas per Iesum Christum facta est, quinquagesimo nihilominus a ressurectione eius die Spirito sancto misso de caelo in cordibus apostolorum scripta est" (CCCM, 22:715); Hildegard of Bingen, *Scivias:* " . . . quia idem Filius in sapientissima Virgine, quam aurora significat, incarnatus est inspiratione digiti Dei qui Spiritus Sanctus . . ." (CCCM, 43A:338).

[13] "Deditque mihi Dominus duas tabulas lapideas scriptas digito Dei et continentes omnia verba, que vobis locutus est in monte de medio ignis. . . ." Quotations from the Vulgate are taken from *Biblia Sacra.*

[14] ". . . ibi in tabulis lapideis digitus dei operatus est, hic in cordibus hominum" (CSEL, 60: 182).

[15] For more on the many parallels that the *Queste* author draws between the gathering of the knights of the Round Table after Galahad arrives at court and the appearance of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, see Matarasso 1969:286.

Saints' remains designated as relics also produced miracles. In the *Queste,* monumental inscriptions do not cause the spontaneous healing or alterations to the body so common in twelfth- or thirteenth-century accounts of miracles, but they do serve as a conduit for miraculous revelation.[16] The messages of the inscriptions are not directions to find the Holy Grail; rather, they often contain references to history or prophecy. These references are usually explicated in oral discourses by local hermits or anchoresses. It is from these spoken explanations that the three Grail knights receive an understanding of what they see, hear, and experience; gradually, over the course of the narrative, Arthur's knights receive a fuller understanding of the history of the Grail and its relation to the Arthurian court. For example, in an episode in which Lancelot discovers an inscription on a stone cross, the nearby hermit who helps him understand his discovery recounts the long and detailed story of Joseph of Arimathea and the Grail in which Joseph's descendants bring the cup of the Last Supper to Arthur's realm of Logres.[17] Lancelot cannot read the letters on the cross because he has not yet confessed his sin with Guenevere, but the encounter with his inscription begins an adventure during which the story of Joseph is told.

More significant still are the historical accounts that are presented to the knights in response to inscriptions that appear on the Ship of Faith, a large ship built by Solomon that will take the three knights who have been chosen to see the Grail to the last leg of their journey. The ship, which has no master and moves of its own accord, is filled with inscribed surfaces, including its hull, the scabbard of a sword, a cloth covering the sword, and both sides of the blade of the sword. Perceval's sister, who is their guide on this portion of the journey, provides oral explanations of the inscriptions that reveal that Galahad is descended from the Maimed King of Arthurian legend; she also discusses what role the Grail of the apocryphal *Gospel of Nicodemus* plays in the history of the Maimed King's descendants. She explains that the inscription on the scabbard is the story of the Maimed

[16] On the nature of miracles effected by relics in accounts of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, see Bynum 1991:70-72.

[17] Robert de Boron's early thirteenth-century romance *Joseph d'Arimathie* was probably the first Arthurian narrative to conflate the platter or stone of Celtic tradition and the cup of the Last Supper. The story of the transportation of the cup from the Holy Land to Logres by Joseph's family appears in the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus; see Robert de Boron.

King and his descendants at Arthur's court (204-5).[18] Furthermore, when the knights read the text on the blade of the same sword, they receive an expansion of both histories and their connections (206-10). In other words, Galahad, Perceval, and Bors, the three Grail knights, obtain a history of the

[18] History in the *Queste* is a complicated and uneasy blend of Biblical narrative, apocryphal tradition, and Celtic legend. There are no fewer than five major dispositions on the history that culminates in the arrival of Galahad at Arthur's court and the beginning of the quest of the Holy Grail. The first, related to Galahad at the abbey where he receives his shield, recounts the departure of Joseph of Arimathea from the Holy Land, his arrival in the pagan city of Sarras ruled by King Evalach and his brother-in-law Nascien, and his conversion of both men to Christianity. The abbot also explains to Galahad that Joseph and his son Josephus left Sarras to come to Britain, accompanied by Mordrains (the baptismal name of Evalach) and Nascien; Galahad is descended from Nascien (32-35). The second important discourse on the history of the *Queste* world is given to Lancelot when a hermit explains the meaning of one of his visions. Lancelot sees the Grail moving toward a wounded King. The hermit reveals that the king is Mordrains. Lancelot is a descendant of Nascien (as is, of course, Galahad), and Galahad's mother is the daughter of the Fisher King: thus Galahad' s history combines both the apocryphal and Arthurian traditions (134-38). A third disposition is recounted to Percival by his aunt, a holy woman. It is she who explains the underlying schema of the history to Logres. Major eras are marked by three great tables. The first table is that of the Lord's Supper; the second is the table of the Holy Grail, which supplied Joseph and Josephus with food when nothing could be found to eat. The third era of history is associated with the Round Table, established to bring chivalric Christendom together in order that they might undertake the Quest of the Holy Grail (74-79). The connections between biblical and apocryphal history and Celtic legend are further elaborated by Perceval's sister on the Ship of Faith. First, she explains the origin of the Waste Land. King Lambar, the father of the Maimed King, met and converted the pagan King Varian in Logres near the Ship of Faith. Varian killed Lambar with a sword; this murder, the first ever committed in Logres, laid the land waste (204-5). Her second narrative explains how Mordrains was wounded. His brother-in-law Nascien undertook a quest in a distant land, returned after great peril and rejoined Mordrains, bringing a miraculous sword that saved him. Despite a warning on the sword, Mordrains draws it and is instantly struck down as the sword breaks in two (206-8). Her final narrative sketches the connection between the lineage of Mordrains and Nascien, and that of the Maimed King and of the Fisher King. King Parlan, the Maimed King, was hunting in the forest when he came upon the mysterious Ship of Faith. Despite the warnings on the ship and the scabbard, Parlan enters the vessel and draws his sword. He is instantly pierced through the thighs with a lance. Perceval's sister tells him that the wound will remain unhealed until Galahad arrives at his seat, the Castle of Corbenic (209-10). At Corbenic it is revealed that King Parlan is the father of the Fisher King, Galahad's grandfather (259). Therefore, Galahad is descended from both Nascien and the Maimed King, neatly unifying history from the apocryphal tradition and the distant past of the Celtic story. Finally, a letter left by Solomon provides the history of the Ship, which was built from the Tree of Life in the Garden; it summarizes biblical events from the Fall to the construction of the boat by Solomon (210-26).

Grail and its connections to their own culture and colleagues. They receive the religious and historical context of their individual adventures as well as an explanation of the purpose of the court and its role in history. Through the divulgence of the sacred and legendary histories of Logres and the Grail, they are able to transcend the limits of normal human understanding.

Such revelation is not a miracle in the same sense as those produced by relics, that is, a miracle that produces an effect against the laws of nature. In the *Queste,* however, inscriptions do generate at least one miracle of this type: they allow the Grail knights to transcend the normal sequence of time. When Galahad, Perceval, and Bors have completed their separate adventures, they reunite and enter the magical ship that does not have a pilot or crew. With Perceval's sister as interpreter, they read the inscriptions that contain prophecies on the scabbard and blade of the sword. The prophecies are unusual because what they predict has already occurred. For example, the writing on one side of the blade warns that anyone who unsheathes it—except he who is bolder than any other—is foredoomed to death; the inscription adds that this will occur only one time.[19] However, Perceval's sister reveals that the event referred to has already occurred (204-5). In other words, the knights decode the prophecy *after* it has been fulfilled. In the same way, the inscription on the sword's scabbard foretells the unfastening of the old swordbelt and its replacement by one made by a virgin who is the daughter of a king and queen (205-6). Perceval's sister discloses that she is the maiden designated by the prophecy and that she has already made the belt (227). Finally, the inscription on the other side of the sword blade states that it will be most treacherous to the one to whom it should bring most honor, and that this event would happen only once (206). When Perceval asks about that prophecy, his sister replies, "Good brother, both these things have already occurred."[20]

At the beginning of the romance, all of the inscribed prophecies are read first and fulfilled later; for example, the first inscription on the *Sieges Perilous* says " . . . and on the day of Pentecost, this seat shall find its master," and Galahad appears the next day. On the strange ship inscribed "I am Faith," the expected sequence of events is reversed. It is as if the Grail knights and Perceval's sister have somehow outdistanced normal

[19] "ET cESTE CHOSE A JA ESTE ESPROVEE AUCUNE FOIZ" (203).

[20] "Biax freres ... ces deus choses sont ja avenues" (206).

chronology and are in passage on a ship that moves at high speed through time as well as space.[21]

The inscriptions in the *Queste,* then, function like saints' relics. Relics are created because the Holy Spirit is present in a saint's body, even after that body is dead; these bodies enable miracles to occur. In the Qu*este,* on stone monuments and other hard surfaces, the Holy Spirit codifies written texts whose messages ultimately open a door to a revelation not permitted to any other than the select Grail knights. The inscriptions are a means of transcendence first of the normal parameters of human understanding and second of time itself.

Not any physical remain can become a relic, however, and not every written text in the *Queste* is a portal to transcendence. Relics had to be substantiated by testimony, either of the saint's life or of the miracles produced by his or her remains, or preferably by both, before they were accepted as authentic by the Church. Both oral and written discourses were acceptable as validation. However, these were both subject to credulity and charlatanism. In the most famous critique of the validation of relics, *On the Saints and their Relics,* Guibert of Nogent presses for more rigorous evaluation of the reliability of both oral and written hagiographies and accounts of miracles.[22] He recognizes that relics are often too easily accepted because prelates want the prestige, donations, business, and pilgrimage that relics bring to a site.[23] First, sources should be examined. Guibert is a lawyer who demands reliable evidence for claims to stop abuse. He cites, for example, the story of Saint Pyro in Brittany whose legend glorified him as a martyr. When Guibert inquired personally into the circumstances of the man's death, interviewing those who knew him, he

[21] Burns (1985:74-77) has also noted the knight's transcendence of chronological time after they enter the Ship of Faith. She argues that the *Queste* does not present a series of allegories and interpretations, "but a text that says the same thing over and over in a slightly different form, recasting itself constantly in a series of analogical molds" (77). Continual repetition of the histories and adventures in the narrative constitute a series of attempts to create a full explanation of the human past and future; these repetitions are an attempt to recreate "a past that can only be recaptured through textual re-enactment" (148). Certainly the knights do receive the information that fills "gaps" in the mysteries of the Grail. However, one may also see the reception of this information as part of an initiation ritual that the knights undergo on the Ship of Faith.

[22] CCCM, 127: 79-175. I am indebted to Dr. Thomas Head for providing me with a draft of his new translation of Guibert's *On the Saints and Their Relics* (Head forthcoming).

[23] CCcM, 127:103-4.

found that Pyro had actually gotten staggeringly drunk and fallen down a well.[24] Unconfirmed or unexamined testimony should not be accepted. Furthermore, testimony should include certain information. Guibert says that it is a "sacrilege" *(prophanum)* to accept as a saint one of whose times, birth, life, and time and manner of death are uncertain or ambiguous.[25] Dependable information of this sort should be available in order to validate a relic.

Brian Stock points out that Guibert does not completely discount the validity of oral sources, but asks that they be substantiated, as Guibert himself investigated the stories related about St. Pyro.[26] However, his treatise does imply certain criteria for oral sources. For example, oral tradition is more reliable if it is presented by an eyewitness or by a person who received the account from an eyewitness. The information about a saint's life he recommends—historical times, birth, life, and the time and manner of death—is not reliable if it does not use information that has been retained in the memory of the living *(nullius viventis memoria resident)*.[27] This requirement is paralleled by the English preference for testimony that is "time out of mind," within the memory of the oldest living person, usually a period of one hundred years.[28]

Also, Guibert's treatise reflects the bias of a highly literate reader. He seems to prefer that trustworthy written documentation support oral

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[24] CCCM, 127:88.

[25] "Illud dicere audebo prophanum, quod ararum pone sacraria altissimos tribunalium instar thronos obtinent, quorum tempus, natalis ac vita, dies quoque et qualitas mortium in nullis viventis memoria resident" (CCCM, 127:89).

[26] Stock 1983:244. Guibert (CCCM, 127:87) recommends the support of ancient tradition *(vetustatis)* and truthful written accounts *(scriptorum veracium traditio)*.

[27] CCCM, 127:89; The fact that testimony came from an eyewitness was important in the Middle Ages. According to Isidore of Seville (1:41), history is the narrative of deeds that have happened in the past; among the ancients no one composed history unless he was present and saw the things that were later written about (Historia est narratio rei gestae, per quam ea, quae in praeteritio facta sunt, dinascuntur. . . . Apud veteres enim meno conscribetat historiam, nisi isque interfuisset, et ea quae conscribenda essent vidisset) (1:41). Authorship by an eyewitness is important because things that are seen are things that are made known without falsehood (Quae enim videntus, sine mendacio proferuntur) (1:41). Jeanette Beer points out (1981:10) that Isidore falsely attributes the etymology of *historia* to the Greek words meaning "to know" and "to see."

[28] According to Clanchy (1993: 152), "time out of mind" referred to "the earliest times that could be remembered by the oldest living persons."

testimony. How can a community, he asks, "take as their patron someone about whom they know almost nothing because they can discover nothing written about him except for his name?"[29] In these cases, as Guibert says, "the clergy remains silent while any old wife or flocks of worthless little women chant fabricated stories about such patrons while at work on their treadles and looms."[30] Finally, both oral and written texts supporting the claims of relics should conform to the stylistic aesthetics of literary tradition. Guibert reminds his readers that Augustine discounted the authenticity of the *Gospel of Thomas* in part because of its style, which created a *strepitus aurium,* a rattling or clattering in the ears.[31] If the style of an account, even a written one, is ragged *(pannoso),* pedestrian *(pedestri),* serpentine *(humi serpente eloquio proferuntur),* and confused *(inconditissime delatrantur),* it will be believed to be false even if it is true.[32] In other words, the style of any source should lack the repetition that creates a rattling in one's ears, follow a logical and not a winding order, and should not sound pedestrian or vulgar. These, of course, tend to be standards created by literate culture and not by oral tradition.

Looking at the inscriptions in the *Queste,* probably composed about one hundred years after *On the Relics of the Saints,* in light of Guibert's recommendations for evaluating the authenticity of relics, one sees that the oral discourses used to support and explain the inscriptions follow Guibert's principles for good attestation.[33] For example, these discourses maintain a literate style and organization in that they mimic written biblical commentary.[34] Matarasso, for example, argues that these commentaries

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[29] CCCM, 127:100: "Decant ergo michi quomo sibi illum patrocinari estimant, de quo quicquid est sciendum ignorant; nusquam de eo scriptum preter nomen invenies."

[30] CCCM, 127:100: "Ceterum tacente clero anus et muliercu1um vilium greges talium patronorum commentatas historias post insubulos et 1itatatoria cantitant. . . ."

[31] CCCM, 127:87.

[32] CCCM, 127:87.

[33] Huygens dates *De Sanctis et eorum Pigneribus* between 1114 and 1120 (CCCM, 127:32). Pauphilet (1921:12) assigns 1220 as an approximate date for the composition of the *Queste;* Matarasso (1969:25) suggests a time between 1215 and 1230.

[34] Many critics have argued that the *Queste's* narrative structure and interpretive episodes reflect biblical models, either gospel texts or exegeses. Locke (1960:25-33) considers the central model of the narrative to be Holy Scripture. Strubel (1989:44) asserts that the interpretive episodes function as "une glose permanente." Baumgartner (1981:44) writes that the *Queste* is "un nouvel evangile pour cette nouvelle race de chevaliers"

follow a pattern of threefold biblical exegesis, certainly a structure developed from the literate establishment and not from folk tradition (Matarasso 1979:11). Furthermore, these oral discourses are often delivered by an eyewitness. Perceval's sister, for example, is reporting her own experience when she reveals that she has made the swordbelt that will replace the one found on the Ship of Faith (227), and an inscription on the forehead of Josephus, the son of Joseph of Arimathea, testifies to his identity and the reliability of the history of the Grail (268).

Even better, however, are oral accounts that are supported with reliable written documentation. Three written texts that are *not* inscriptions are encountered in the work. Two of these are letters, one written by the biblical character Solomon and read by the knights who discover it on the Ship of Faith; the other is a letter written by Perceval about his sister's death. Perceval places the letter under her body on the Ship of Faith, where it is discovered and read by Lancelot. The final manuscript text appearing in the work is the text of the romance itself.

First, the letter written by Solomon expands the explanation of the history presented to the elect knights as part of their encounter with inscriptions. The letter recounts the story of the Tree of Life, the tree from which Eve picked the apple. When she is expelled from Eden with Adam, she takes a twig from the tree with her and replants it. Eventually, the twig becomes the tree under which Cain kills Abel. In conformity with medieval tradition, the tree will become the source of the wood of Christ's cross, but as an Old Testament character Solomon does not know this and merely says that he used the wood to build the Ship of Faith (210-26). In other words, the letter, written by the builder of the Ship himself, helps to attest to the history that the knights have learned on their adventures and to connect the Arthurian present with the biblical past.

The second letter is even more significant in light of Guibert's recommendations. This letter provides exactly the information Guibert suggests to authenticate sainthood. Perceval's sister dies because the blood of a virgin was necessary to save a noble woman. Perceval writes a letter containing an account of his sister's parentage, the manner of her death, and

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proclaimed by Bernard of Clairvaux. Poirion (1994:205) modifies the "*Queste* as Gospel" position by suggesting that while the *Queste* author did not intend his work to be read as a new Bible, he did draw from the hermeneutical tradition of grammar, rhetoric, and exegesis in developing his adventures and interpretations. Not all critics concur with the position that the *Queste* responds to biblical-type exegesis. Burns (1985:3), for example, suggests that the *Queste's* narratives and interpretations constitute "a whole series of highly fictionalized re-tellings which show literature's bold divergence from the theological model."

her role in aiding the knights in their quest. He does this, he says, so that if her body is found in a strange country, they will know who she is (242). The ship sails away by itself with the body of Perceval's sister. Lancelot enters it several days later, discovers the woman's body, and finds the letter, which says, "This young woman is the sister of Perceval of Wales, and was a virgin in both will and deed all her days. It is she who changed the belt on the Sword of the Strange Belt that Galahad, the son of Lancelot of the Lake, wears now."[35] The letter describes the young woman's lineage: who she is, her times, her activities on the Grail quest, and manner of her death. In short, it includes all the information Guibert specifies. Finally, Lancelot is also provided with the names of living witnesses—Perceval and Galahad—who could confirm the contents of the letter if necessary.

The final document alluded to in the narrative is the manuscript of the romance itself, which in a way becomes a written attestation to its own authority. In the last two paragraphs of the story, Bors returns to Camelot from the distant, mythical, eastern city of Sarras where Perceval, Galahad, and he had finally found the Holy Grail. After ruling Sarras briefly, Galahad receives communion from the Grail and is translated directly into heaven. Perceval becomes a hermit and dies after a year and three days; only Bors is left to return to court. Almost the moment Bors arrives, however, Arthur is determined to write down Bors' story, a personal history that is also the history of the Grail. Bors' eyewitness account is immediately transferred from oral into written text: it is *metoient en escrit,* put into writing, and placed for permanent preservation in the library at Salisbury, from which it is extracted by Walter Map and translated from Latin into French. Now, presumably, the French translation serves as the documentary authority—the *monumentum,* in the Latin sense of written authority—for the romance.[36]

The fact that the romance presents itself as its own written authority has two important implications. First, a written authority has replaced the oral explanation and testimony that *primarily* supported the inscriptions in most of the narrative. In fact, the spoken discourses that are ubiquitous in the first two-thirds of the tale almost disappear in the last third. This substitution seems to undermine the authority of oral discourse and tradition. In the first two-thirds of the romance, new adventures commonly

[35] "Ceste damoisele fu suer Percevalle Galois, et fu toz jorz virge en volente et en oevre. Ce est cele qui chanja les renges de 1 'Espee as estranges renges que Galaad, filz Lancelot del Lac, porte orendroit" *(Queste:247).*

[36] Queste:279-80.

begin with the formula *or dit li contes* . . . ("then the tale says . . ."). The formula almost suggests that the tale is its own author. The last sentence of the romance, however, says, that the tale becomes silent *(se test)* and says no more about the adventures of the Holy Grail.[37] After it has been written down, it says no more because the orally transmitted tale no longer has validity; at that point, the written manuscript version has supplanted it as the official voice of the story. In a way, the tale's last speech-act is to make its own testament, a written version that speaks when the tale itself is silent.

Second, the fact that the tale has been written down serves to distance the reader from the knights' experience. Walter Ong has argued that the spoken word creates a community, drawing people through language into a living communal experience, but that writing distances the reader from the subject of the text.[38] The reader of the *Queste,* whether he or she is of the thirteenth century or the twentieth, cannot interpret the romance as the knights did with the inscriptions: they have no direct experience of writing as a reliquary for grace. R. Howard Bloch (1972:206) has written the following concerning the last paragraph of the *Queste:* "What looks . . . like a simple attempt to bolster the romance with realistic detail corresponds to a double linguistic movement: from the lived experience perceived at the ontological level of gesture, ritual, and vision to the oral account raised to documentary status through transcription and, finally, to literary status through translation."

In its last paragraph, the text itself delineates its own layers of authority from oral tradition to written attestation to literary *monumentum*. But with this series of transitions in medium and language comes distance from the reader. Most Grail romance authors tend to refer to a source text, *un grant livre,* that is the source for a given romance.[39] But the inscriptions in the *Queste* belong to the realm of lived experience. Like the rituals the knights undergo, like the sacrament of the Eucharist they so frequently celebrate, like relics, and like the Grail, they provide direct access to what Bloch calls "the ontological level" of human experience. What is left is not written by the Holy Spirit, but by government clerks recording eyewitness testimony. Ultimately, the romance manuscript is an authenticating

[37] "Si se test a tant li contes, que plus n' en dist des A VENTURES DEL SEINT GRAAL" *(Queste:280).*

[38] See espec. Ong 1982:41-46.

[39] For more on references to a "great book" as a source of the Grail romances, see Poirion 1976; Hanning 1985:356; Leupin 1982; Bloch 1972:206.

secondary document and not a primary text; it allows the reader to glimpse the Holy Grail only at two removes.

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