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Front Pages

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The current issue is the first of the eleventh volume of the *Athens Journal of Humanities & Arts (AJHA), published by the Arts, Humanities and Education Division of ATINER*.

Gregory T. Papanikos
President
ATINER

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A World Association of Academics and Researchers

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10-13 June 2024, Athens, Greece

The Arts & Culture Unit of ATINER is organizing its **15th Annual International Conference on Visual and Performing Arts, 10-13 June 2024, Athens, Greece** sponsored by the Athens Journal of Humanities & Arts. The aim of the conference is to bring together academics and researchers of visual and performing arts, and other related disciplines. You may participate as stream leader, presenter of one paper, chair of a session or observer. Please submit a proposal using the form available (https://www.atiner.gr/2024/FORM-ART.doc).

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-

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- Abstract Submission: **7 November 2023**
- Acceptance of Abstract: 4 Weeks after Submission
- Submission of Paper: **13 May 2024**

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The African Imprint in Shakespeare

By Michael Steppat[*]

Does the study of sources underlying William Shakespeare's dramas depend on a legacy of colonialism? Studies of this kind have hardly looked beyond European texts in languages that Shakespeare supposedly could read. If any records originating outside Europe are considered as possible source materials, they tend to be marginalized or appropriated within the cultural orbit of the continent. But is it accurate to assume that Shakespeare's achievements are mainly inspired by European textualities? This essay explores the proposition that much of Shakespeare's dramatic oeuvre would be unthinkable without African imprints. These are mainly (a) non-classical African mythical or geographical narratives, and (b) literary or historiographical texts written earlier with northern African origins. It is only now becoming visible how type (a) has a likely impact on early modern drama. Considering (b) in conjunction with this enables a new perspective on Shakespeare's art. We also have type (c): legacies of knowledge culture originating in Africa that leave profound marks on early modern literature. Should we begin regarding much of Shakespeare's work as being inherently non-European in origin – the opposite of what is generally assumed? Though limited in scope, this essay presents some salient evidence.

Introduction

African Textuality in Shakespeare

The nominal setting of one of William Shakespeare's best-known comedies, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (composed ca. 1595), is Athens in the time of Theseus. The play seems to be at home in Greece, sprinkled with some English Renaissance elements. Yet what if it turns out *not* to be an inherently European work – what if it features a tangible though effaced imprint from Africa, of a kind that concerns not only this play, but indeed some major achievements of the culture of the age? Such a proposition would open a different perspective on early modern England and its sociocultural context. The purpose of this essay, though limited, is to offer some salient evidence and outline its cultural significance. If we can understand imprints as distinguishing effects, the task is to investigate the traces of African textuality especially in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, a prominent comedy and a major tragedy. A further tragedy that, as an instance, would reward study from this perspective is *Othello*, which this essay will touch on briefly,[1] while space will not allow more

[*]Professor, University of Bayreuth, Germany.

1. See also Diana Adesola Mafe, "From Ogún to Othello: (Re)Acquainting Yoruba Myth and Shakespeare's Moor," *Research in African Literatures* 35, no. 3 (2004): 46-61; Susan

in-depth discussion. The investigation will begin with non-classical parallels which are likely influences, extending to a complementary inquiry into classical influences from south of the Mediterranean.

A "colonialist logic" has recently been suspected of underpinning the study of Shakespearean sources.[2] That study is not culturally and politically innocent but rather "a product of nineteenth-century nationalist criticism," using non-Shakespearean materials "wrenched out of context rather than appreciated in their historical ecosystems" – and from "under-represented" cultural milieux.[3] Consequently, even if great art can be esteemed as speaking or even belonging to all cultures, it makes a difference what sources we admit to our purview *and* where they originate. We should open our inquiries to the intercultural dimension with its focus on diversity: the ballad of *Titus Andronicus* in 1594, for instance, "must have been read in London [...] with people of color visible in the work force and in theater audiences."[4] Accordingly, the presence of transformed cultural knowledges from south of the Mediterranean is likely to be far greater than we have usually assumed.

After the Introduction, with a literature review and explanation of methodology, the main analysis focuses on the comedy (with a West African myth and a classical African source) extending to the tragedy (with an early modern source and classical African sources).

Literature Review

The overwhelming bulk of the study of literary sources suggests that the work of Shakespeare like that of his English contemporaries is essentially European in its inspiration. The emphasis is mostly on printed books and thus on Shakespeare's reading.[5] The World Shakespeare Bibliography effectively shows

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Arndt, "Trans*textuality in William Shakespeare's *Othello*: Italian, West African, and English Encounters," *Anglia* 136, no. 3 (2018): 393-429. These valuable comparative studies discuss the tragedy in connection with African myth without necessarily claiming a direct influence.

2. Dennis Austin Britton and Melissa Walter (Eds.), *Rethinking Shakespeare Source Study: Audiences, Authors, and Digital Technologies* (London: Routledge, 2018), 17.

3. Lori Humphrey Newcomb, "Toward a Sustainable Source Study," in *Rethinking Shakespeare Source Study: Audiences, Authors, and Digital Technologies*, edited by Dennis Austin Britton and Melissa Walter (London: Routledge, 2018), 27.

4. Newcomb, "Toward," 32.

5. See the following studies: Robert S. Miola, "Seven Types of Intertextuality," in *Shakespeare, Italy, and Intertextuality*, edited by Michele Marrapodi (Manchester University Press, 2004), 13-25; Robert S. Miola, *Shakespeare's Reading* (Oxford University Press, 2000); Kenneth Muir, *The Sources of Shakespeare's Plays* (London: Methuen, 1977); Stuart Gillespie, *Shakespeare's Books: A Dictionary of Shakespeare Sources*, 2001, 2nd ed. (London: Bloomsbury, 2016).

the record of research on the provenience and the types of sources as well as influences. Information on Shakespeare's sources was first collected by Gerard Langbaine in 1688 and 1691.[6] Scholars continue to explore relationships between Shakespearean plays and European texts written predominantly (apart from English) in French, Latin, Italian, and sometimes Greek. When influences from elsewhere have received attention, it is often only marginally, and oral transmission not much more. At the same time, it cannot be doubted that there are valuable impulses with an origin earlier in North Africa, from authors such as Apuleius to whom we will come back (for research on Apuleius in association with Shakespeare, see below). One can also focus on "sable" Terence as an influence on Shakespeare, as in the case of *Titus Andronicus*,[7] while Bullough in his magisterial overview of sources does not include any African-based materials for that tragedy. By mapping a perceptual space for Africa, a mnemonic process that goes beyond the singular culture – as translocal memory – would conceivably open the receptive horizon of early modern authors toward a storehouse of impulses from African narrative art. Yet only briefly has there been attention, in passing, to parallels in folktales from outside Europe.[8] Shakespeare's use of folktales is granted in principle,[9] and it is discussed more substantially by Artese,[10] yet the emphasis remains on materials from Western Europe.

It is not difficult to understand why. For scholars find it is "reassuring" to learn that a possible source text "was accessible in print."[11] A commonsensical approach focuses on Shakespeare's presumed desk and the books to which he would have access, supposing he would tend to use English materials wherever possible. These might extend to languages he could (maybe with a little help) comprehend adequately. A sprinkling of hardly noted authors have suggested an impact of Persian and Arabic con/texts,[12] and possible parallels, not necessarily

6. Gerard Langbaine, *Momus Triumphans: Or, The Plagiaries of the English Stage* (London, 1688); *An Account of the English Dramatick Poets* (London, 1691).

7. See Misha Teramura, "Black Comedy: Shakespeare, Terence, and *Titus Andronicus*," *ELH* 85 (2018): 877-908.

8. Theodor Echtermeyer, Ludwig Henschel, and Karl Simrock, *Quellen des Shakspeare in Novellen, Märchen und Sagen*, 3 vols. (Berlin: Finckesche Buchhandlung, 1831; 2nd ed., Bonn: Adolf Marcus, 1870).

9. Britton and Walter, *Rethinking*; Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Vol. 1 (1957), Vol. 5 (1964)); Miola, "Seven" and *Shakespeare's*.

10. Charlotte Artese (Ed.), *Shakespeare and the Folktale* (Princeton University Press, 2019); Charlotte Artese, *Shakespeare's Folktale Sources* (Newark and London: University of Delaware Press, 2015).

11. Harold F. Brooks (Ed.), *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The Arden Shakespeare (London: Methuen, 1979), lxiv.

12. See Abdulla M. Al-Dabbagh, *Shakespeare, the Orient, and the Critics* (New York: Peter Lang, 2010); Nilay Avci, "Forbidden Love of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and Fuzûlî's Layla and Majnun," *International Journal of Literature and Arts* 4, no. 1 (2016): 1-4;

influences, in African culture.[13] Yet the overwhelming bulk of Shakespeare source studies works within a somewhat hidebound Eurocentric manner of reading. This can slide almost imperceptibly into cultural hegemony, a "euromorphic universalism" that "substitutes particular forms for universal ones, thereby displacing and obscuring genuine universals."[14] But access to universals, we should not forget, is only possible through other experiences and civilizations ("le sens des autres expériences et des autres civilisations").[15] In a suggestive article, Arndt has shown how it is possible to be strongly sensitive to this.[16]

Methods

The task requires scrutinizing a textual interface between source and recipient text in a range of categories: be it setting, action, motivation, characterization, dramatic structure, imagery, or style. This can but does not invariably have to involve the micro-level of lexical or semantic field overlap. In testing the assumption that the English bard could have had access to a particular pre-text,[17] discovering parallels would allow a more accurate understanding of the cultural positionality of the playscript. If parallels correspond to a playscript at least as closely as other pre-texts, they can be assumed to indicate influence. What, then, is a source? It has been defined as a text which

(a) presents "distinctive" parallels with a target text, hence ones that are wholly or nearly "unique to the two given texts"; which
(b) "demonstratively predates" the target text; and which
(c) "demonstrably circulated in the same historical and literary context as the target text."[18]

As'ad E. Khairallah, "The Story of Majnūn Laylā in Transcultural Perspectives," in *Studying Transcultural Literary History*, edited by Gunilla Lindberg-Wada (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), 232-243.

13. See Lekan Balogun, "Ajubaba: Shakespeare and Yoruba Goddess," *International Journal of Comparative Literature and Translation Studies* 1, no. 3 (2013): 18-25; Mafe, "From Ogún," 46-61.

14. Nick Hostettler, *Eurocentrism: A Marxian Critical Realist Critique* (London: Routledge, 2012), 20, 138.

15. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Le Philosophe et la Sociologie," *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie* 10 (1951): 62.

16. See Arndt, "Trans*textuality" (as in note 1).

17. Robert Scholes, *Textual Power: Literary Theory and the Teaching of English* (Yale University Press, 1985).

18. Christine Rauer, *Beowulf and the Dragon: Parallels and Analogues* (Cambridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2000), 10.

Any such evidence in the study of Shakespearean sources is usually inferential and circumstantial, since no documentary statement expressly declaring debt has been found. Still, inquiries of this kind can come very close to revealing the circulation of cultural knowledge in the early modern theatre, helping us to gain a more adequate analytical understanding of drama. For the present purpose, the comedy will receive more detailed attention owing to the complexity of its arguably African traces – beneath the Athenian surface.

Analysis: Cultural Imprints

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Brawls and Supposed Sources

Depiction of Natural Turmoil

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, pre-textual presences inform two layers of performative reality, the first being Athenian society– the aristocratic and the lowly craftsmen class – and the second, natural forces at work above and all around the urban society. These forces manipulate human characters at will, who are almost wholly unaware of their existence. A war has just come to an end. Having defeated the Amazons, to cement his victory the Athenian ruler is preparing to marry their queen Hippolyta, effectively consummating his triumph. In this situation four young citizens appear, Lysander (who is in love with Hermia) and Demetrius (who likewise desires her) as well as Helena (who rather despairingly loves Demetrius). Clearly this spells trouble. Indeed, young Hermia's livid father not only declares Demetrius to be *his* choice of son-in-law, but insists that she agree to marry his choice, otherwise she should be sentenced to death. In order to escape such a fate, Hermia and Lysander secretly flee from the city into the woods, whereupon the other two young people follow. As elsewhere in Shakespeare, the forest setting seems a place that ensures a life in harmony with nature.

Yet the natural world is inhabited by a band of fairies, a counter-society ruled by their king Oberon and queen Titania. Far from manifesting any harmonious model realm, this powerful couple is engaged in a bitter quarrel: Oberon demands a young boy under Titania's protection; when she refuses, her furious husband resolves to subdue and humiliate her. The quarrel causes life-threatening turmoil throughout the world of nature:

> [...] never, since the middle summer's spring,
> Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,

> [...] But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.
> Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
> As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea
> Contagious fogs; which, falling in the land,
> Hath every pelting [First Folio: petty] river made so proud
> That they have overborne their continents.
> The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,
> The plowman lost his sweat, and the green corn
> Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard;
> The fold stands empty in the drowned field,
> [...] Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
> Pale in her anger, washes all the air,
> That rheumatic diseases do abound.
> And thorough this distemperature we see
> The seasons alter [...] (*MND* 2.1.82ff.)

Titania's vivid complaint illuminates the strength of natural forces in the action of the play, destroying the natural and thus the urban order as well. The quarrel becomes the cause of multiple confusions among the four young humans, and no less of the pivotal episode of the play when royal Titania is forced to make love to ... an ass. We will return to the ass plot.

Alleged Sources

Literary ideas and motifs rarely arise *ex nihilo*. To understand this, the process of metamorphosis is helpful. It has been redefined as "a figure for intertextuality," a metatrope for selection and combination in textual production; creativity is most successful when it operates as "transformative intertextuality."[19] Is it possible, then, to trace from whence Shakespeare adapted this dramatic inspiration? In his magisterial collection of Shakespeare's sources, Geoffrey Bullough has nothing pertaining to the quarrel over the young boy, and it may be that the Bard simply "invent[ed]" all this.[20] Nonetheless, Jacques Derrida (among others) has a point when he speaks of "the very 'first' trace, which is already marked by duplication, echoes, mirrors, presenting itself something like 'the trace of its reflection'. […]"[21] It is very doubtful, that is, whether there is any such thing as an unprecedented origin, which is why it would be erroneous to overlook genuine influences and lines of inspiration *if* they actually exist.

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19. Kai Mikkonen, "Theories of Metamorphosis: From Metatrope to Textual Revision," *Style* 30, no. 2 (1996): 329.

20. R. A. Foakes (Ed.), *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge University Press, 1984), 6.

21. Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, translated by Barbara Johnson (London: Continuum, 1981), 361.

It is likely that Shakespeare drew generally on descriptions in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (5.477-486), where the emphasis is on excessive sun ("sol nimius") along with rain and wind.[22] One could add, from the Deucalion context, the flattening of cornfields, which saddens the peasants, the ruin of their crops and the waste of a year's labor ("Sternuntur segetes et deplorata coloni / vota iacent, longique perit labor inritus anni" (1.272-273)) – or Aeacus's account of heat and plague (7.528-541).[23]

Seneca's *Medea* (752-767) has been claimed as a complementary source,[24] rightly called unconvincing by Holland[25] seeing that the focus there is on summer blooms ("aestiva tellus floruit") as well as harvest during winter times. Another contrasting description, this time of excessive heat, is found in Seneca's *Oedipus* (37-48).[26] Brooks glances at Edmund Spenser's "December" in *The Shepheardes Calender* (lxi),[27] perhaps meaning the boughs that "[a]re left both bare and barrein now at erst: / The flattring fruite is fallen to grownd before / And rotted, ere they were halfe mellow ripe."[28] Though Brooks maintains that this is a source of Titania's speech, Spenser is speaking of the natural cycle of seasons, not their disruption; Foakes plausibly dismisses this as not being a convincing influence.[29]

West African Myth (as Source One)

These European (viz., Roman and English) sources were accessible to Shakespeare. They describe various kinds of disruption of natural order, owing to heat or plague or precipitation or other effects. Yet they have no parallel for the depiction that a power struggle is going on between natural energies, and that it is this which engenders enduring turmoil. From a shared commonsensical ground, scholars have not looked beyond Europe for possible sources. Yet a West African myth transcribed and annotated by Wande Abimbọla, professor of Yoruba language and literature, comes surprisingly close to what happens in Shakespeare's comedy.

In the myth, the universe comprises two levels of the world, "*ayé* (earth) and *òrun* (heaven)," which are not entirely detached from each other.[30] A quarrel ensues between the lord of the earth Ajàláyé and the king of heaven, Ajàlọrun:

22. P. Ovidius Naso, *Metamorphoses*, edited by Hugo Magnus (Gotha: Perthes, 1892).

23. For Ovid, see also Brooks, *Midsummer*, 137-138.

24. L. Annaeus Seneca, *Tragoediae*, edited by Rudolf Peiper and Gustav Richter (Leipzig: Teubner, 1921); also Brooks, *Midsummer*, lxiii.

25. Peter Holland (Ed.), *William Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Oxford World's Classics (Oxford University Press, 1994), 159.

26. For Seneca as putative source, see especially Brooks, *Midsummer*, lxiii and 139ff.

27. Brooks, *Midsummer*, lxi.

28. Edmund Spenser, *The Shepheardes Calender*. Renascence Editions.

29. Foakes, *Midsummer*, 144.

30. Wande Abimbọla, *Sixteen Great Poems of Ifá* (Paris: UNESCO, 1975), 261.

"Ọ́ré ni Ọba Ajàláyé àti Ọba Ajàlórun. [...]"[31] In Abimbọla's English rendering, these two powers are on good terms and decide to go hunting, so that "[a]t the appropriate time, / They burnt the forest, / The forest burnt for a long time" as a method to drive out animals for prey.[32] An ẹmó rat emerges, not a large animal, and the two powers "started to quarrel" over this prize. Ajàláyé claims the senior right and hence the rat, so that this domain should be the rat's abode. Yet Ajàlọ́run disputes that claim and demands the right to take away the rat. The quarrel grows "very bitter"; angry Ajàlọ́run announces that "[a]ll the world would know who was the senior" with the greater power (or presumption). As a result, "yams grew small tubers which could not develop. Corn grew small ears which would not ripen. Bean flowered but could not develop further. [...] The sick remained infirm. Small rivers wore garments of falling leaves." The "small" rivers (Abosede: "little") come very close to the "pelting" or "petty river" in *MND*.[33] Eventually the diviners resolve that there should be a sacrifice for Ajàlọ́run, and Ajàláyé should "beg" Ajàlọ́run sufficiently. Ajàláyé thereupon sends a messenger to Ajàlọ́run with the sacrifice, a centerpiece being the disputed bush rat, and the task being to express "complete submission" so that Ajàlọ́run may no longer be angry. Now it becomes possible for human beings to mend "the leaking roofs of their houses"; natural order with a balance of moisture is soon restored. The version subsequently retold by Emanuel Abosede, scholar of Ifá traditional religion, has no substantial differences,[34] though in other cases of oral narrative variants of detail in the transmission history might need consideration.

Whereas Ajàláyé in a few versions of the myth can be constructed as a masculine counterpart of Ajàlọ́run, that is not necessarily so: Ajàláyé is characteristically the female spirit of earth.[35] This spirit is finally humiliated by the stronger energy and has to give in – just as Titania has to do at the end of Shakespeare's drama when she finds herself compelled to yield the young boy in her charge to ruthless Oberon. Without pressing the case too far one can examine both narratives, myth and dramatic script, for further and smaller verbal correspondences: illness and disease feature in each; Shakespeare's ox who vainly stretches his yoke can recall the "*ẹ̀inlá* cows with big horns" who become the

31. Abimbola, *Sixteen*, 264.

32. Abimbola, *Sixteen*, 265ff.

33. The First Quarto's reading, adopted in the critical edition, is authoritative. See *Oxford English Dictionary*, "pelting" *adj*.1 = petty; the Folio's "petty" *adj*.3 = small.

34. Emanuel Abosede, *Ọdun-Ifa (Ifa Festival)* (Lagos: West African Book Publishers, 2000), 141-142.

35. See E. Bọlaji Idowu, *Olódùmarè: God in Yorùbá Belief*. Revised ed. (New York: Original Publications, 1994), 46-47; Babatunde Lawal, "Ejiwapo: The Dialectics of Twoness in Yoruba Art and Culture," *African Arts* 41, no. 1 (2008): 25; Annette Lyn Williams, *Our Mysterious Mothers: The Primordial Feminine Power of Ajé in the Cosmology, Mythology, and Historical Reality of the West African Yoruba*. Diss. California Institute of Integral Studies (San Francisco, 2014), 187-188.

offering to mighty Ajàlọrun. Hunting and chasing in the forest, as well as images of fire, are events taking place in Shakespeare's comedy too (as at *MND* 1.1.173, 2.2.87, 2.2.102, 3.1.104, 4.1.102ff.[36]). Yet the essential correspondence is the representation of a cosmic dispute between powers fighting over a small or young prize they both crave, a struggle that erupts into a colorful depiction of natural waste and infertility.[37] Does the nominally Athenian domain disguise a culturally rich Yoruba landscape?

We can safely assume that the popular myth was already circulating by the 16th century. Abosede's research shows that its genetic context is the neolithic stage of Yoruba history in South-Western Nigeria, until about 500 BCE, when its inhabitants were "food gatherers and hunters" whose "ideas about the world around them" reflected their socio-economic life; Ajàlọrun was responsible for "peace and good order on earth" on condition that Ajàláyé paid him "regular and due obeisance."[38] The condition could be said to be apt for the Oberon-Titania relationship as well, two powers who with some setbacks are in transition toward a kind of bond characterized by firmly patriarchal demarcation of differential authority and strength. To the substance of the myth, divinatory details may have been added in later Yoruba cultural periods.[39]

The Presence of the Myth

African myths are not included in any accounts of influences on Shakespeare. This is not surprising: with nationalist underpinnings, "a time-honored colonial strategy" claims that such objects are "primitive, discarded, or valueless," so that the British Bard's precursors are, as it were, "disinherited": the "riches of world culture" are fulfilled only in Shakespeare's exploitation of their contents.[40] It would not be exaggerating much to guess that "[i]n the assured estimation of these European men of culture, Africa had no history, no literature, no culture. [...]"[41] Evidently there is politics involved in canon formation with standards for in- and exclusion, "grounded in material, ideological, and socio-cultural

36. See also Brooks, *Midsummer*, 132.

37. Cf. the brief yet focused analysis, expanding on source materials, in Michael Steppat, "*A Midsummer Night's Dream* and African Source Materials," *ANQ* Oct. (2020). Information therefrom is used by permission of Taylor & Francis Ltd., gratefully acknowledged.

38. Abosede, *Ọdun-Ifa*, 140.

39. See Abosede, *Ọdun-Ifa*, 143.

40. Newcomb, "Toward," 27.

41. James Tar Tsaaior, *African Literature and the Politics of Culture* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2013), xiii.

realities."[42] In an unduly competitive discursive domain, such a myth as that related above could be taken as nothing more than an objectified Other, an exotic and at best semi-literary analogue, which happens to have certain thematic or actional similarities – and definitely not the kind of metropolitan discourse (printed in prestigious Latin or French or English) which Shakespeare and his theatrical colleagues would have encountered at all, let alone taken seriously.

That provokes the question: could anyone in the acting company have possibly acquired any knowledge about the myth, and about other artifacts from south of the Mediterranean? Admittedly, modals are hard to avoid in source study. Even so, from the painstaking archival research of Imtiaz Habib and Gustav Ungerer we now know more. In the sixteenth century, there was quite a community of Africans in London and elsewhere in England. They have been easy to overlook in the scholarly past as "an invisible, secret population" in the Tudor period, being neither alien nor legally poor and thus excluded from "civic sight."[43] It appears that there are 89 records of Black and colored people in Elizabethan London.[44] What is of special relevance in our context is that "the black presence is documentated [*sic*] in 90 percent of the neighborhoods dominated by the theatre industry," so that we can assume "an empirical awareness" of the Black population in London among theatre people, with an impact on the capital's "cultural life."[45] In fact, a skillful silk weaver nicknamed Reasonable Blackman presumably made costumes for the London theatres, not only contributing to the "material capital" of the Renaissance theatre but even inspiring stage depictions.[46] We thus have grounds to surmise that an "Africanist presence" (to adapt Morrison's term)[47] constitutes at least some elements of an early modern White subjectivity.

We can imagine Shakespeare, as a man of the theatre, engaged in a constant exchange of experiences with the players, the apprentices, musicians, attendants,

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1.1.1 ***42****. Manish Kumar, "Interrogating the Politics of Canon Formation: A Theoretical Purview," MEJO 5 (Feb. 2021), 155. Canon politics concerns literary artifacts of diverse kinds, including those that become sources, and cultural legacies.*

43. Imtiaz Habib, *Black Lives in the English Archives, 1500-1677: Imprints of the Invisible* (London: Routledge, 2008), 5, 7.

44. Habib, *Black*, 265.

45. Habib, *Black*, 268, 270.

46. Imtiaz Habib and Duncan Salkeld, "The Resonables of Boroughside, Southwark," *Shakespeare* 11, no. 2 (2015): 141; see also Miranda Kaufmann, *Black Tudors: The Untold Story* (London: One World, 2017), Chapter 5; Duncan Salkeld, *Shakespeare and London* (Oxford University Press, 2018), 146.

47. Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), 46; see also Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1995), 14.

all operating in the theatre's communicative domain.[48] Perhaps some audience members too. Any of these would be likely to encounter Africans in various locations – taverns are likely meeting places in the urban setting. And surely they would communicate. In conversing and dealing with the ethnic majority, many Blacks would on occasion convey some of the cultural heritage of the regions of their birth and upbringing. We can plausibly assume that at least some Africans would be acquainted with a range of traditional tales and their highly expressive performative aesthetic; with the right incentive, meeting places would give scope for characteristic forms of narrative performance, not lacking suitable translators and interpreters. Such conditions of textual transmission enable "translocal mnemonic forms" to enter "local repertoires."[49] When they are capable of entering such repertoires, they might even cease being experienced as non-English, so that cultural boundaries become porous.

Likely enough traders and mariners, too, would learn about features of narrative artifacts. We can assume that travel descriptions by returning seamen had some influence at home, as we can gather from Richard Hakluyt's second edition of *Principall Navigations*: the seamen had experience in being on shore – learning about "the maners of the people" and "the wonders [...] engendred in Africke."[50] English mariners spent time in African captivity, such as the recorded cases of John Fox in Morocco or John Reynard in Egypt.[51] Returning sailors, as well as traders, captives, and pirates would transmit fictional and also "factional" descriptions to their communities.[52] Skilled seamen had African servants.[53] Orally transmitted narratives would circulate in the capital's lively communicative network. This means, as has recently been pointed out, that drama scripts "performed by actors in a public space" provide "a connection with storytellers' oral performances of folk narratives."[54] Thus players and other theatre members, from musicians to apprentices – not Shakespeare alone – had adequate occasions

48. See also G. K. Hunter, "Shakespeare's Reading," in *A New Companion to Shakespeare Studies*, edited by Kenneth Muir and Samuel Schoenbaum (Cambridge University Press, 1971), 59.

49. Astrid Erll, "Traveling Memory," *Parallax* 17, no. 4 (2011): 14-15.

50. Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations Voyages Traffiques & Discoveries of the English Nation* (1589, 2nd ed. 1598-1600.). Vol. 6 (Glasgow: James MacLehose, 1904), 175, also 150, 219.

51. Nabil Matar, "English Accounts of Captivity in North Africa and the Middle East: 1577-1625," *Renaissance Quarterly* 54, no. 2 (2001): 553-572.

52. Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 81.

53. Cheryl A. Fury, "Elizabethan Seamen: Their Lives Ashore," *International Journal of Maritime History* 10, no. 1 (1998): 30; Cheryl A. Fury, *Tides in the Affairs of Men: The Social History of Elizabethan Seamen, 1580-1603* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2002), 247-248.

54. Artese, *Shakespeare's*, 7.

to respond to performative or narrative stimuli which were easily communicable to playwrights.

In light of these findings, it is not so surprising that we can discern suggestive parallels between African myth and Shakespearean drama, ones we should not ignore as palpable influence. While Titania's watery world may resonate with echoes from the Deucalion description, that is not likely to be the whole or the dominant story. The point is not to isolate any migrant textuality, but to inquire about the mutual implications of influences from various origins. We can then ask: Is Shakespeare really writing "White verse"?[55] A cautious approach is nonetheless apposite: in another context it has been proposed that there are "axial points of intertextual affiliation between Shakespearean text and Yoruba myth" with "an extant discourse between these traditions"[56] – a discourse that is culturally significant even where we cannot know for sure (hence the caution) whether the dramatist himself was aware of overlaps. It reaches further, in principle, to embrace the playgoer and reader. This is contiguous with the concept of trans*textuality, a term for textual encounters "within wider networks" in a "criss-crossing of genres."[57] We are dealing with "a causal and rhizomic dis*continuum of oral*written*literature."[58]

Rethinking Sources .....

What does this tell us about source study, and about Shakespeare? As we have seen, the study of influences has mainly focused on Shakespeare's books, his library and his reading. With some justice it is maintained from within this focus that "more works will always be claimed as Shakespearean sources than will be widely credited."[59] Researchers focus on the author's "reading and remembering" to discern how a source text shapes an absorbing text and its content, with variable "calibration of intertextual distance" depending on one's knowledge of the author's working habits.[60] However, we can argue for a fresh look at materials which "in an often oblique and subtle manner acted as stimuli during the development of Shakespeare's thematic and verbal concepts," stimuli whose effect may be "either conscious or subconscious."[61] From these study directions, we can now extend the traditional notion of Shakespeare's sources

55. Mafe, "From Ogún," 47.

56. Mafe, "From Ogún," 59.

57. Arndt, "Trans*textuality," 400.

58. Arndt, "Trans*textuality," 402; see also Taghrid Elhanafy, *Trans*textual Shakespeare: The Arabic and Persian Pre-texts of Romeo and Juliet* (Münster: Edition Assemblage, 2020), 39.

59. Gillespie, *Shakespeare's*, 2.

60. Miola, "Seven," 19, 20.

61. Michael Steppat, "Shakespeare's Response to Dramatic Tradition in *Antony and Cleopatra*," in *Shakespeare: Text, Language, Criticism*, edited by Bernhard Fabian and Kurt Tetzeli von Rosador (Hildesheim: Olms-Weidmann, 1987), 255.

toward the folk narrative, as Charlotte Artese is doing. She rightly declares that Shakespeare's folktale sources "remain largely neglected," even though oral tradition plays a significant role in Shakespeare's culture; when we find resemblances between a drama by Shakespeare and a folk narrative, this can "help to explain Shakespeare's place at the center of the Western literary canon."[62] The distinction between center and margin can easily grow blurry. Artese is concerned with a "Western" canon, however, hence with European folk narratives, the kind that in some cases would be available in written literary shapes – and in print.

In a wider sense, a story would be taken from a popular oral source, "carried across continents or preserved through centuries" and retold to other entertainers.[63] Even before transcontinental migration, such processes lead to variations in a folk narrative's precise shape, such as the minute differences in versions of the West African myth as recorded by Abimbọla and then Abosede. In terms of books and reading, Shakespeare in particular was "well aware of the variety of tellings to which the tale was liable," and was "assiduous in collecting variant sources."[64] For *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as an instance, he would have sought inspiration from a range of sources or subtexts, going beyond reading to embrace hearing as well. Rather than a linear and conterminous descent from a particular document, that is, we are likely to be dealing with "a rhizomic network" of "multi-layered encounters" as variant sources come together.[65] Hence we should aim for a *dialogic analysis* of source materials, as pre-textualities (and people) speak to and through each other in the process of shaping an absorbing (or a recipient) text.[66] In this nexus, literacy and orality are not discrete traditions.[67] What is more, in Saussurean terms the sound-image is material and sensory, seeing that the sound creates a "psychic imprint" which we can understand as a trace.[68] There is a difference between "sensory appearing" and "its lived appearing" or "mental imprint," a difference or even *différance* which enables a "chain of significations,"[69] perceivable in a dramatic script's materialization and especially performance. The script thus becomes a "play of presence and absence, a place of the effaced trace"[70] as the original Africanist presence, its subjectivity with its articulating body become invisible for later

62. Artese, *Shakespeare*, 2, 4.

63. Stith Thompson, qtd. in Artese, *Shakespeare's*, 5.

64. Hunter, "Shakespeare's," 59-60.

65. Arndt, "Trans*textuality," 399, 400.

66. In a slightly different sense, Arndt ("Trans*textuality," 401) affirms that generations "seek dialogue with senior ones."

67. See also Artese, *Shakespeare's*, 13; Arndt, "Trans*textuality," 396.

68. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 63.

69. Derrida, *Grammatology*, 66.

70. Derrida, *Grammatology*, lvii.

generations – and for mainstream scholarly study.[71] It is apposite to say that the identification of sources "disperses into *différance*, spreading genealogies, and the silences of history."[72]

..... *And Rethinking Shakespeare*

But: why should Shakespeare stoop at all to oral sources? It is customary not only among scholars to envision Shakespeare as a more or less educated person (albeit largely self-taught) with a study and a desk, perhaps a bookshelf. It would at times feature heavy volumes from Sir Thomas North's racy translations of Plutarch to Edward Hall's chronicles. We thus tend more or less explicitly to construct Shakespeare as a kind of gentleman usually immersed in books, as a scholar might do, so that we create or assimilate him in our own image. Evidently, this construction of The Bard marginalizes any orally transmitted influences from well beyond the study. We should, however, begin to take seriously the notion that dramatists would *not* just be sitting at their desk, like us, poring over somewhat hegemonic and prestigious printed volumes. Instead, they would more likely and characteristically be among those with curious minds venturing whenever possible outdoors, seeking to encounter people,[73] since they would be especially interested in picking up diverse forms of cultural knowledge around the thriving metropolis. In any such case, there will be "remoulding" in a way that "revises, displaces and recasts the precursor" as the later author seeks to "clear a space for his own imaginative originality."[74] This involves cultural competition: the later poet will not simply replicate or reproduce the earlier form, be it European or classical or non-European.

Recent work on folktales assumes that Shakespeare would tend to adapt tales well known to theatre audiences, ones that circulated in print as well as orally.[75] That would highlight European proveniences. If post-classical poetic records originating at the intersection of Europe with non-European regions have been considered as possible source materials,[76] they have been culturally absorbed or have gained only marginal treatment—at least before Elhanafy's (*Trans*textual*, 2020) study of Arabic/Persian pre-texts.

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71. See also Habib, *Black*, 270.

72. Britton and Walter, *Rethinking*, 9.

73. See also Arndt, "Trans*textuality," 397.

74. Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 159. For the metamorphic process, see above.

75. See Artese, *Shakespeare's*, 2.

76. See for instance Charles Knight (Ed.), *The Comedies, Histories, Tragedies, and Poems of William Shakspere*, 2nd ed. Vol. 8 (London: Charles Knight, 1843), 344.

Asinus Aureus (as Source Two)

Transformation

At this juncture, let us return to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. If a potential influence from south of the Mediterranean can arguably be discerned, as analyzed above, it can be strengthened further: there is a second main layer of evidence. The most significant transformation in the play is that of Bottom the common weaver into a monster with the head of an ass in Act 3 Scene 1 and into Act 4. What happens is that Oberon's mischievous helper Puck has watched the weaver with his comrades rehearse a playlet in the woods, which they are hoping will be chosen to celebrate Theseus's wedding. Finding their antics strange, Puck without a comment or other dialogic presence changes Bottom's shape. This is instrumental to Oberon's cruel oppression of his spouse, prompted by jealousy (*MND* 2.1.24, 81), hence a consequence of the topsy-turvydom in the natural realm: "What thou seest when thou dost wake, / Do it for thy true love take; / [...] Be it ounce, or cat, or bear [...]" (*MND* 2.2.26-29).

A major parallel here is in the *Metamorphoses* or *Asinus aureus* of the writer, philosopher, and rhetorician Lucius Apuleius (late 2nd century), who lived in Madauros (modern M'Daourouch) in Numidia. A biography offered by his English translator William Adlington in 1566 introduces him as "LVcius Apuleius African, an excellent folower of Plato his sect, borne in Maudara [...] situate, and liyng vpon the borders of Numidia & Getulia, whereby he calleth him selfe, halfe a Numidian, and halfe a Getulian" (front matter).[77] Recent research takes the geography seriously enough to consider Apuleius as being *genere mixto*, and has begun reassessing Apuleius in terms of "'hybridity' and 'creolization' in the study of Roman colonization" – or of "discrepancy" between pre-Roman and Roman cultural forms.[78] Salman Rushdie writes about how he "pass[es] much time in the excellent company of a Moroccan writer of the second century AD, Lucius Apuleius. [...]"[79]The recent research proposes considering Apuleius from a "dialectic between his simultaneous multicultural identities," and explores several of his works extending to the *Metamorphoses* as "fundamentally local productions of Africa."[80] We should be aware that in classical times (and not only

77. Lucius Apuleius, *The. xi. bookes of the Golden asse conteininge the Metamorphosie of Lucius Apuleius*, translated by William Adlington (London, 1566).

78. Ellen Finkelpearl, Luca Graverini, and Benjamin Todd Lee, Introduction, in *Apuleius and Africa*, edited by Benjamin Todd Lee, Ellen Finkelpearl, and Luca Graverini (New York: Routledge, 2014), 2, 3, 6.

79. Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* (London: Penguin, 1991), 364.

80. Benjamin Todd Lee, "A Sociological Reading of *A.V.* ("*Africae Viri*")," in *Apuleius and Africa*, edited by Benjamin Todd Lee, Ellen Finkelpearl, and Luca Graverini (New York: Routledge, 2014), 313, 320.

then) the Mediterranean was an interdependent contact zone, a cultural melting pot bringing together Africa and Europe. In a general sense, Henry Ebel has discussed Apuleius's significance when his work is read in a new way after the mid-twentieth century.[81]

Adlington's rendering was popular enough to go through three printings by 1596; in this transmission history Shakespeare may have known both the Latin and the English versions.[82] We have Stephen Gosson's testimony that Apuleius's work was "throughly ransackt, to furnish the Playe houses in London."[83] A founding document of *serio ludere*, the *Metamorphoses* with its Milesian genre has been said to have exerted "a profound influence" on the author of the *Dream*.[84] Sister Generosa has indicated some parallels in general "ideas" between the comedy and episodes in Apuleius, though not in textual correspondences;[85] whereas Brooks, Chaudhuri, and Gillespie ignore her article,[86] subsequent discussions (including this one) nonetheless remain indebted to her pioneering work. What is relevant for Bottom's experience is Lucius's transformation to become *asinus mysteria portans*, which Apuleius describes in Book 3 chapter 17. His accomplice Fotis gives him a magic ointment to change him into a bird – yet what actually happens is totally astonishing for him:

> After that I had wel rubbed euery parte & member of my bodie, I houered with mine armes, & moued my selfe, lokinge still when I should be chaunged into a birde as Pamphile [the hostess] was, and beholde neither feathers nor apparaūce of feathers did burgen out, but verely my heare did turne into ruggednes, & my tender skinne waxed tough and harde, my fingers and toes lesing the nūber of fiue chaunged into hoofes, and out of mine arse grewe a great taile, now my face became monstruous, my nosethrilles wide, my lippes hanginge downe, and mine eares rugged with heare. [...][87]

We could read this against Reginald Scot's narrative (in his section 5.3), which Bullough prints without mentioning that Scot repeatedly refers to Apuleius

81. Henry Ebel, "Apuleius and the Present Time," *Arethusa* 3, no. 2 (1970): 155-176.

82. James A. S. McPeek, "The Psyche Myth and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (1972): 69; see also Julia Haig Gaisser, *The Fortunes of Apuleius and The Golden Ass* (Princeton University Press, 2008), 293.

83. Stephen Gosson, *Playes confuted in fiue actions* (London, 1582), sig. D5v.

84. Robert H. F. Carver, *The Protean Ass: The Metamorphoses of Apuleius from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Oxford University Press, 2007), 444, also 434.

85. Sister M. Generosa, "Apuleius and *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*: Analogue or Source, Which?" *Studies in Philology* 42, no. 2 (1945): 198.

86. Brooks, *Midsummer*; Sukanta Chaudhuri (Ed.), *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The Arden Shakespeare, 3rd Series (London: Bloomsbury, 2017); Gillespie, *Shakespeare's*.

87. Apuleius, *xi bookes*, 32.

(in his sections 5.1, 5.4, and 5.7).[88] When Shakespeare has Bottom enter with just the head of an ass, it has been emphasized that this contrasts with Apuleius's depiction of a complete transformation.[89] Is Apuleius remote from the comedy here? Yet we should consider that Apuleius shows the head as being particularly affected when it retains some human faculties, while Shakespeare offers a hybrid creature whose whole body needs donkey-like nourishment.[90] Hence the transformation does concern the whole weaver, embracing the *pars pro toto* trope;[91] moreover, both figures retain a human consciousness.[92] We can with some confidence take Apuleius as the likeliest source after all,[93] with Bottom emerging as "an Actaeon of the Apulian and Platonic kind."[94] We ought to acknowledge at this stage that the text type of a literary document with a long Western reception and transmission history is generically not homologous with African myth. Nonetheless, fables with ambivalent animal/human identities, though not replicating the Apuleian manner of transformation, have always been popular across the African continent,[95] whence they could make their pathway northward.

Erotic Involvement

Bullough finds nothing else in Apuleius's narrative that qualifies as a "possible source," discouraging further attention.[96] Other authorities offer strongly diverging perceptions of the question of an Apuleian influence. Muir, Holloway, and Chaudhuri, for instance,[97] overlook or at least pay no attention to Apuleius's later depiction of the beast saving a young gentlewoman who had been kidnapped (Book 6 chapter 23), "sweetely kiss[ing]" her tender feet, while she murmurs:

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88. Reginald Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), edited by Brinsley Nicholson (London: Elliot Stock, 1886); Bullough, *Narrative*, 1:401.

89. Holland, *Midsummer*, 71-72.

90. See Shakespeare, *MND* 4.1.31ff., and also Generosa, "Apuleius," 199.

91. See also Carver, *Protean*, 438.

92. See also Kazuko Mariko, "'Felicity' 'in the Body': Allusion to Paul, Erasmus, and Apuleius in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*," *Reading* 37 (2016): 128.

93. See also Muir, *Sources*, 68.

94. Leonard Barkan, "Diana and Actaeon: The Myth as Synthesis," *English Literary Renaissance* 10, no. 3 (1980): 354.

95. See for instance Ruth Finnegan, *Oral Literature in Africa* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2012), 334.

96. Bullough, *Narrative*, 1:398.

97. Muir, *Sources*; Julia Bolton Holloway, "Apuleius and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: Bottom's Metamorphoses," in *Tales within Tales: Apuleius Through Time*, edited by Constance S. Wright and Julia Bolton Holloway (New York: AMS, 2000), 123-137; Chaudhuri, *Midsummer*.

> I will brauely dresse the heares of thy forehead, and then I wil finely kembe thy mane, I wyll tie vp thy rugged tayle trymly, I will decke thee rounde about with golden trappes, in suche sorte, that thou shalt glitter like the Starres of the skie, I will bringe thee dayly in my apron the kyrnelles of nuttes, and will pamper the vp with deintie delicates, I will sette stoore by thee, as by one that is the preseruer of my lyfe: Finaly, thou shalt lacke no maner of thinge.[98]

This can be read as a likely influence on the tender romance of *MND* 4.1, as Foakes acknowledges; Muir and Chaudhuri do not, while Carver only alludes vaguely to it.[99] Shakespeare's Titania tells her servants to lead the ass to her bower, where she imagines the moon lamenting "some enforced chastity" (*MND* 3.1.193). We should note that her abode in the play is in the "forests wild" (*MND* 2.1.25): this is not what an otherwise illuminating study calls "the Palace woods of Theseus,"[100] which would characterize her as not being independent of Theseus's authority, thus skewing the realms of the play. We should hear Titania's utterances as against Apuleius's young gentlewoman in connection with the ass's narration of a young and noble matron of Corinth who grows amorous of him:[101]

> she kissed me, not as thei accustome to doo at the stewes, or in brothell houses, or in the courtisant schooles for gayne of money, but purely, sincerly, and with great affection, castinge out these and like louinge woordes: Thou arte he whome I loue, thou arte he whome I onely desire, without thee I cannot liue [...] therewithall she eftsones embrased my bodie round about, and had her pleasure with me.

Unlike Apuleius's Book 6 chapter 23, and contrasting with Foakes, Muir and Chaudhuri see *this* as an influence when Shakespeare's Titania similarly sends her servants away and murmurs "I will wind thee in my arms. [...] So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle / Gently entwist" (*MND* 4.1.39, 41-42).[102] What Apuleius had to offer Shakespeare is thus construed quite differently, leading inevitably to diverging perceptions of the "transformative intertextuality" of drama (see above). One perception is Apuleius's "strident bestiality" as stressed by Chaudhuri[103] – yet for all the physicality, poetically modulated in Shakespeare's censor-controlled theatre, we should be sensitive to the young gentlewoman as well as to the ass's highlighting of "purely, sincerly," embedded in a narrative context that on careful reading reveals more than one layer of significance.[104] We do not have to situate presumable influences along a linear scale of proximity.

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98. Apuleius, *xi bookes*, 64.

99. Foakes, *Midsummer*, 10; Muir, *Sources*; Chaudhuri, *Midsummer*; Carver, *Protean*, 439.

100. McPeek, "Psyche," 76.

101. Apuleius, *xi bookes*, 109-110 (Book 10 Chapter 46); see also D. T. Starnes, "Shakespeare and Apuleius," *PMLA* 60, no. 4 (1945): 1032.

102. Foakes, *Midsummer*; Muir, *Sources*, 68; Chaudhuri, *Midsummer*, 225.

103. Chaudhuri, *Midsummer*, 57.

104. For narrative levels, see also Carver, *Protean*, 441.

Psyche

Nor is this all. Apuleius can be found to contribute also to the description of the bitter strife of the fairy rulers in Shakespeare's drama.[105] In Book 5 chapter 22, after the young princess Psyche, of "singuler passinge beautie and maidenly Maiestie,"[106] disobeys and even inflicts a quasi-accidental injury on her husband Cupid, people complain that "the marriages are not for any amitie, or for loue of procreatiō, but ful of enuy, discorde, & debate," and even that Cupid and his mother Venus "are now become no more gratious, no more pleasaunt, no more gentle, but inciuill, mōstruous & horrible."[107] Psyche's fear of what might turn out to be her husband's secretly "dyre" and serpentine nature is behind this, and effectively augments the correspondences from the West African myth introduced further above. This conjunction can indeed appear highly significant for any understanding of the play.

Because of this "discorde," Shakespeare's Oberon humiliates Titania. Bewailing the "injury" to his honor (*MND* 2.1.147), he announces to his servant Puck: "I'll streak her eyes, / And make her full of hateful fantasies" (*MND* 2.1.257-258) – gleefully aware that she is sleeping where "the snake throws her enamell'd skin, / Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in" (*MND* 2.1.255-256). Titania's misery arguably draws on Apuleius's story of Venus and Psyche.[108] Holland barely mentions this in passing, but it deserves more attention.[109] The young princess Psyche is revered by thousands for her beauty as if "she weare Ladie Venus in deede" – amounting to "contempt" of the real goddess Venus. As a result, "[t]his sodeine chaunge and alteration of celestiall honour did greatly inflame & kindle the minde of very Venus," goading her to declare that the princess, who "hath vsurped mine honour, shall shortly repent her of her vnlawfull estate." Calling in her son Cupid (who is "sufficient prone to woorke mischiefe"), Venus enjoins him to charm his wife "y^{t} she may fall in loue with the moste miserablest creature liuinge, the most poore, the most crooked, and the most vile, that there may be none founde in all the worlde of like wretchednes." Apollo thereupon prophesies that Psyche's husband will be "no wight of human seede / But Serpent dyre and fierce as may be thought." Psyche is couched "emongst the softe and tender hearbes, as in a bedde of soote and fragrant flowres" set in "a pleasaunt woodde"[110] – anticipating Titania's "flowery bed" (*MND* 4.1.1). She is not allowed to look at Cupid, who becomes her husband, while her sisters tell her "there is a

105. On the fairy rulers, see McPeek, "Psyche," 74-75.
106. Apuleius, *xi bookes*, here Book 4 Chapter 22.
107. Apuleius, *xi bookes*, 54.
108. Apuleius, *xi bookes*, 44, in Book 4 Chapter 22.
109. Holland, *Midsummer*, 71.
110. Apuleius, *xi bookes*, 46, in Book 5.

great Serpent full of deadly poyson, with a rauenous and gapinge threate, that lieth with thee."[111]

With these and further correspondences, there can be little doubt that Shakespeare's Titania emerges as a Psyche figure. It has been claimed that the young boy whom Titania refuses to yield to Oberon is an Apuleian "Cupid figure,"[112] yet this is not convincing as the boy does not at any time become Titania's husband. Instead, and more plausibly, when Apuleius's Psyche is represented as constantly devoted to her love despite adversity, Shakespeare's two young women characters Hermia and Helena become "manifest Psyches"[113] in adhering to their respective male lovers despite some grossly insensitive treatment. The foundations of both the myth and the main stories of the play do resemble each other fairly strongly, enabling us to gather that we can understand Shakespeare as remaining "essentially true" to Apuleius.[114] The Madauran makes use of Neoplatonic registers which appear to be used in "pastiche, a display of styles, multiple arguments, and intertextuality" playing against Ovidian discourse, both of which together form the chief and conjoined intellectual stimuli of the play.[115] This interplay should remind us that the Shakespearean work is a cultural hybrid. It should also remind us that a narrow search for particular source materials would be inadequate, and in a dialogic analysis the interplay might be explored for other dramas that arguably show traces of Apuleian imprints.

Extending the Perspective

Complementary Impulses .....

In at least two complementary ways, then, it appears plausible to regard narratives and partly narrative performers from south of the Mediterranean as shaping this significant comedy, which with its thoroughly European setting would not suggest such influences, intertwined with possible implications from European textualities. Originating in different periods and different regions of Africa, the narratives come together in a creative conjunction to gleam through the textual surface of early modern drama. It is precisely this process that adds depth to interpretive analyses of what audiences are witnessing, then as now.

111. Apuleius, *xi bookes*, 51.

112. McPeek, "Psyche," 74.

113. A term used by McPeek, "Psyche," 70.

114. McPeek, "Psyche," 70.

115. Sarah Carter, "From the Ridiculous to the Sublime: Ovidian and Neoplatonic Registers in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*," *Early Modern Literary Studies* 12, no. 1 (2006), para. 31.

Should we not assume that there are further cases in the work of Shakespeare (and contemporaries) where African impulses become effective, for the playgoer and reader and quite likely for the playwright, not only in isolated dialogic elements but in more comprehensive ways? One might expect this to happen in dramas with a setting or characters associated with Africa, *but* it happens not only there: it was proposed decades ago, for instance, that Apuleian correspondences may make themselves felt in as many as nine of Shakespeare's works, and that the Bard read *Asinus aureus* several times.[116] In each case, dialogic analysis that also takes European textual influences into complementary account could become fruitful.

..... And the Case of Antony and Cleopatra

Connections subtly link Shakespearean works, from this and related perspectives. A non-classical African-derived source, somewhat as in the comedy, is likely to have contributed to the major tragedy *Antony and Cleopatra* (ca. 1606): this is Leo Africanus's *Geographical Historie of Africa*, translated by John Pory in 1600.[117] The work has been analyzed as an influential element in *Othello*;[118] we are now focusing, however, on the Egyptian/Roman tragedy. Not recognized by either Bullough or Bevington, and apparently being too marginal for Muir,[119] Leo's work nonetheless offers useful accounts of the life-giving Nile which shape a key interpretive feature of the unfolding dialogue in this drama which contrasts the values and the forms of political action embodied in Egypt and in Rome.[120] The measure of the river's flowing or of overflowing, according to Leo's account, makes possible the Egyptian poetic claim (or even perspective) of a renewable life-energy that transcends the specifically European and finite rationality as

116. See Starnes, "Shakespeare," 1050.

117. Joannes Leo Africanus, *A Geographical Historie of Africa*, translated by John Pory (London: George Bishop, 1600), Book 8 pp. 312ff. The author's authentic name is **al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad al-Wazzān al-Zayyātī** (or **al-Fāsī); born in Granada, he was raised and educated at Fès and died ca. 1554 in Tunis or in Morocco.**

118. See Andrew Hadfield, "Race in *Othello*: the history and description of Africa and the Black legend," *Notes and Queries* 46, no. 3 (1998): 336-338. Further archival research on such lines of influence is surely desirable.

119. Bullough, *Narrative*, Vol. 5; David Bevington (Ed.), *Antony and Cleopatra*. The New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge University Press, 1990); Muir, *Sources*.

120. See also Michael Neill (Ed.), *William Shakespeare: The Tragedy of Anthony and Cleopatra*. Oxford World's Classics (Oxford University Press, 1994), 212; John Wilders (Ed.), *Antony and Cleopatra*. The Arden Shakespeare, 3rd Series (London: Routledge, 1995), 163; for Nilotic analysis Sophie Chiari, "Overflowing the Measure: Cleopatra Unbound," *Actes des congrès de la Société française Shakespeare* 37 (2019); and François Laroque, "Le Nil dans *Antoine et Cléopâtre*," in *Le fleuve et ses métamorphoses*, edited by François Piquet (Paris: Didier Erudition, 1994), 437-442.

manifested in conquering Rome. Symbolically, the scope of the energy goes beyond the immediate topographical images, because it reaches out to the West African mythical Ọṣun's healing movement of waters in a process enabling life, together with a rebirth of vital energies.[121] Cleopatra, who is driven to taking her life, is the "Serpent of old Nyle" (*Antony*, TLN 552)[122]: The waves of the river associate the waters (not necessarily extending to the open sea) with the movement of the serpent, which in the final scene of Act 5 becomes the queen's chosen instrument of death and thus, in the mythical dimension, presumably of new life, enabling her to turn into the air which carries the seeds of generation and which is itself engendered of water (*Antony*, TLN 3540).[123] The transmission

121. Joseph M. Murphy and Mei-Mei Sanford (Eds.), *Ọṣun Across the Waters: A Yoruba Goddess in Africa and the Americas* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), Introduction p. 2: Ọṣun heals by water, the name is related to "the source of a river," and she represents "the perpetually renewing source of life," preserving life for creation. See also Jacob K. Olupona, "Orìṣà Ọṣun: Yoruba Sacred Kingship and Civil Religion in Oṣogbo, Nigeria," in the same volume, 51.

122. The Through-Line-Numbering system is adopted here, as a standard reference for the First Folio text and its diplomatic reprint; it is used in William Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*. A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare, edited by Marvin Spevack, Michael Steppat, Marga Munkelt (New York: MLA, 1990).

123. George Olusola Ajibade, "Water Symbolism in Yorùbá Folklore and Culture 1," *Yoruba Studies Review* 4, no. 1 (2019), 111: Ọṣun is praised as the "one who moves snake-likely" (again 114). For the air, see Plutarch's "Of Isis and Osiris" (p. 1305) − Isis, being male *and* female, "sendeth forth and sprinkleth in the aire, the seeds and principles of generation" − and see "Of the Oracles That Have Ceased To Give Answers" (p. 1327) on transmutation: "Of earth is ingendred water, of water aire, and of aire fire." Both treatises appear in *The philosophie, commonlie called, the morals*, translated by Philemon Holland (London: Arnold Hatfield, 1603). Apart from his own sojourn in Egypt, about which little is known, Plutarch's chief source in the "Isis" treatise is a priestess who has been consecrated in the rites of Osiris. As to the air, it is again specified as the life-enabling element, also termed wind, in a Hymn to Osiris: It is Isis who makes the air come into being in order to enable her to generate new life and an heir from the body of her spouse/brother Osiris. See E. A. Wallis Budge, *Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection*, Vol. 1 (London: The Medici Society, 1911), 94; *The Papyrus of Ani*, edited by E. A. Wallis Budge (London: Longmans, 1895), liii, 360. The early modern era may not have been familiar with particulars of these writings about the afterlife.

The fire with which Cleopatra identifies herself together with air (*Antony*, TLN 3540) appears in the Hermetic explanation of "the things that are": "untempered fire leapt up from the watery nature to the height above"; this fire "was nimble and piercing and active as well, and because the air was light it followed after spirit and rose up to the fire away from earth and water" owing to "a holy word" (*Hermetica*, 1992, Discourse of Hermes Trismegistus, 1). The mind, as "the most penetrating of all the divine thoughts, has for its body fire, the most penetrating of all the elements"; another expression for this is that the mind, once free of "the earthy body," puts on "a tunic of fire" (*Hermetica*, 34). The ideas appear to show an influence of the Isis cult (see *Hermetica*, 163). The Corpus Hermeticum,

pathway of the African understanding toward London and theatre would be similar to that of the cosmic myth that is turning out to be relevant for *Dream*.

When the rising of the river is said to be due to the tears of Isis,[124] we again meet Apuleius as pre-text: it is the goddess who releases Lucius from his bestial identity, initiating him into her priesthood.[125] The Isis cult is especially prominent in *Antony and Cleopatra*, the central part of which play is set in Athens – where the comedy too is located. The cult also requires study when it plays a key role in Edmund Spenser's epic poem *The Faerie Queene* (Book 5 or the Legend of Justice, with implications for other Books). As in the *Dream* comedy, in the tragedy it is the coming together of influences from different periods that has especially salient analytical import. In the tragedy the Egyptian queen, who is closely associated with the Nile, characteristically appears "[i]n th'abiliments of the Goddesse *Isis*" (*Antony*, TLN 1768), identifying herself with the deity and finally with her celestial manifestation. Not all of the modern editors of the tragedy show awareness of Apuleius: like Bullough, Neill ignores him, as does the chief German study edition.[126] Yet Bevington is more careful and does admit an

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originally from Hellenistic Egypt, was translated into Latin by Marsilio Ficino and Lodovico Lazzarelli in the 15th century. In connection with royalty, we should also consider the fire of the uraeus, which defends the ruler and protects Osiris as well. See John Coleman Darnell and Colleen Manassa Darnell, *The Ancient Egyptian Netherworld Books* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2018), 217, 308, 434. The uraeus was not unknown in the Renaissance.

In alchemy, the fire is able to clothe elements in glory for a divine state, intimately and mystically related to childbirth. See *Antony* (TLN 3562-3) as well as the anonymous, presumably Alexandrian "Dialogue of the Philosophers and Cleopatra" from Codex Marcianus graecus 299, for which see *The Alchemy Reader*, edited by Stanton J. Linden (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 44-45: Elements, plants, and stones are "not mature until the fire has tested them. When they are clothed in the glory from the fire and shining color thereof, then rather will appear their hidden glory, their sought-for beauty, being transformed to the divine state of fusion. For they are nourished in the fire and the embryo grows little by little nourished in its mother's womb, and when the appointed month approaches is not restrained from issuing forth." Standard editions of the tragedy focus instead on the Stoic idea of fire and air being hot and dry and associated with men (Neill, *Anthony*, 319) or being lighter than earth and water (Bevington, *Antony*, 254); Cleopatra's "air" is interpreted as "the breath of the actor" (Raphaëlle Costa de Beauregard, "The Mediterranean Dream in Perspective," *Caliban* 58 (2017)). Joshua Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas's *La Sepmaine*, as a highly influential European poetic reference, speaks of fire and air as possessing "vitall spirits," but then specifies that air is associated with blood and fire with choler (*Du Bartas his deuine weekes*, London, 1611, 26).

124. For this, see Pausanias, *Periegesis, Description of Greece*, edited by W. H. S. Jones. 4 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1918), section 10.32.18.

125. Apuleius, *xi bookes*, Book 11.

126. Bullough, *Narrative*, Vol. 5; Neill, *Anthony*; Dimiter Daphinoff (Ed.), *Antony and Cleopatra: Englisch-deutsche Studienausgabe* (Tübingen: Francke, 1995).

influence of Apuleius's Isis,[127] and for an understanding of Cleopatra's "creative" influence on Mark Antony it is meaningful not only to discern the way her functions in the drama resemble those of Apuleius's Isis, but also that as she approaches her death she again parallels the Madauran's spiritualizing depiction.[128] From there, one could trace further aspects of an Apuleian influence contributing to Shakespeare's generic concept of romance drama as his final compositional innovation.

But there is more, and this analysis of influences cannot but be work in progress. Shakespeare associates Antony with the sun and Cleopatra with the moon (as at *Antony* TLN 2951, 3011, 3490) – then fuses both cosmic bodies to appear in conjunction (TLN 3297). Scholarship has not gone very far in identifying the cultural inspirations, but Horapollo Niliacus's frequently translated *Hieroglyphica* (5th century CE) says that the Egyptians represent eternity by depicting sun and moon, which are eternal elements: "AEVVM innuentes [*sic*], Solem ac Lunam pingunt, quod æterna sint elementa."[129] In Cleopatra's grand concluding dream the two cosmic bodies come together to constitute Antony's face, which assumes a celestial dimension wherein "stucke/A Sunne and Moone" (*Antony* TLN 3296-3297). This recalls Zeus,[130] perhaps, but it has not been observed that Shakespeare's construction is at least as pertinently a feature of Ra which is subsequently given to Horus.[131] Available to Shakespeare, like Horapollo, was Plutarch, who describes how worshipers "solemnize the feast of the nativity or birth of *Orus* eies: at what time as the Sunne and Moone be in the same direct line: as being perswaded that not onely the Moone but the Sunne also is the eie and light of *Horus*."[132] We should not forget that Horus is Isis's son, so that Cleopatra is blending her dream image with Caesarion (her son with Julius Caesar), and by this means subtly enhancing the ultimately futile dynastic threat to Octavius. Yet critics and probably modern playgoers who are not aware of cultural connotations of lines 3296-3297 find that the sun/moon conjunction only brings about an unsatisfactory "imbalance" with "analogical clumsiness" and "asymmetry" without much meaning.[133]

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127. Bevington, *Antony*, 11.

128. Michael Lloyd, "Cleopatra as Isis," *Shakespeare Survey* 12 (1959): 91, 93.

129. Horapollo, *De Symbolica Aegyptiorvm Sapientia* (Cologne, 1631), 7. The author appears to have belonged to the priesthood in the Alexandria region.

130. *Orphica*, recensuit Eugenius Abel, Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum (Leipzig and Prague: G. Freytag, F. Tempsky, 1885), Fragment 123; then later Vincenzo Cartari, *Imagines deorum qvi ab antiqvis colebantvr* (Lyon, 1581), 88-89, De Iove, as partly recorded in Janet Adelman, *The Common Liar: An Essay on* Antony and Cleopatra (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 98.

131. For this feature, see for instance Robert A. Armour, *Gods and Myths of Ancient Egypt*, 2nd ed. (New York and Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2001), 8, 52.

132. Plutarch, "Of Isis and Osiris" in *Philosophie*, 1308 = section 52.

133. As in Yu Jin Ko, *Mutability and Division on Shakespeare's Stage* (Newark: University

But the power claim of a related mythical dimension goes beyond this, when Isis is associated with the moon and Osiris at rhythmic intervals with the sun/Ra;[134] Isis and Osiris consorted together and married.[135] The mythical knowledge becomes standard in alchemical literature: *Rosarivm Philosophorvm* (1550) features a "conivnctio sive coitus" of sun and moon fleshed out into a male and a female monarch who are entwined in a body of water – making perfection or rather completion out of imperfection, "de imperfecto facis perfectum."[136] In another, materialized vein, Albertus's *Liber Mineralium* (1518) presents a conjugal union of sun and moon in a ring.[137] Studying early modern European cosmology, S. K. Heninger explains Albertus: "[t]he endless circle of the ring is, of course, a common symbol of eternity [...] its alpha and its omega are congruous, so that its end is its beginning, and so on"; it becomes "an icon for the completed opus, another stasis which subsumes all change."[138] As the early moderns knew, however, European brands of alchemy originated in northern Egypt (as in the "Dialogue of the Philosophers and Cleopatra," then Zosimos of Panopolis), its mysticism revealed by none other than Isis as in the anonymous and fragmentary treatise "Isis la prophétesse à son fils" (transmitted in a number of manuscripts), and Albertus for instance acknowledges that the mathematical sciences originate in Egypt as a cultural legacy: "mathematicas scientias primū extitisse circa egiptū."[139] We should then not detach the later alchemical literature from the Isis/Osiris material. Indeed, Shakespeare's Egyptian queen shows herself fully aware of the curative and transformative power of alchemy, "that great Med' cine" (*Antony* TLN 565). Accordingly, it is worth considering that alchemy inspires the whole signifying structure of the drama[140] − if we bear in mind its roots in Egyptian myth.

It is enticing to explore the implications further, to gain a more adequate sense of the at least partly effaced African imprint – never disconnected in a mythemic syncretism – on this prominent tragedy. Yet such analytical dimensions are denied or dismissed by critics who instead submit the tragedy to

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of Delaware Press, 2004), 108.

134. Plutarch, *Philosophie*, "Isis" section 52; see also Mark Smith, *Following Osiris: Perspectives on the Osirian Afterlife from Four Millennia* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 302ff.

135. As in Plutarch, *Philosophie*, "Isis" sections 12, 27.

136. *Rosarivm Philosophorvm. Secvnda Pars* (Frankfurt a. M.: Cyriacus Jacobus, 1550), sig. F iiiv.

137. Albertus Magnus, *Liber Mineralium* (Oppenheim: Köbel, Jakob, 1518), heading of Tractatus 3 Book 2.

138. S. K. Heninger, Jr., *The Cosmographical Glass* (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1977), 3-4.

139. Albertus Magnus, *Liber*, sig. I ivv.

140. T. McAlindon, *Shakespeare's Tragic Cosmos* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), 239, has put this forward, referring to Heninger.

a predominantly moral "Renaissance reading,"[141] hence taking a somewhat reductive Roman perspective and focusing rather on what is then constructed as Cleopatra's insidious sexual bait for a foolish Antony. Impulses from much further south accordingly become invisible, as Shakespeare is reappropriated in a self-enclosed Euromorphic sphere of signification. This may possibly be read as congruous with the reconstructed receptive horizon of an educated Renaissance playgoer or reader steeped in emblem literature and Graeco-Roman historiography, but not in any dimensions of a cultural heritage originating outside Europe.

Yet that does not exhaust the receptive options, then as now. We might do well to listen also to Wole Soyinka, the Nigerian writer and 1986 Nobel Prize winner, when he stresses that Shakespeare's Cleopatra is "evoking the deeper mysteries of the cult of Isis" in verse lines whose "awesomeness [...] can only be fully absorbed by an Egyptian, or one steeped in the esoteric cults of Egypt," cults possibly extending to Islam.[142] The result is that in this drama as in none other "Shakespeare's sensuous powers climaxed," when his imageries "finally come home" to Egypt – the Bard's own *terra firma*.[143]

Conclusions

The dramas we have discussed, a famous comedy and a major tragedy, are just two instances in Shakespeare's work where we find suggestive African equivalents and presumable impulses, while these in an adequately dialogic analysis should, like all influences, never be considered on their own. The top-level, transcontinental research cluster in Germany's Excellence Strategy which is devoted to "Africa Multiple" (and which owes much to inspirations from Susan Arndt) is exploring the potential impact of African cultural knowledge on the dramatic oeuvre, the very first time this is happening. It is likely to be unearthing more over time, in examining further relevant artifacts mainly from West Africa (possibly other African regions as well). The scope of this essay can only focus succinctly on evidence from two major drama genres.

It seems fairly safe to surmise that much of Shakespeare's dramatic oeuvre would be unthinkable without such strongly translocal impulses, as West African mythical narratives complement literary works composed earlier by authors of northern African provenience (and other source materials as well). Parallels in several categories between Shakespearean drama and a corpus of such textualities,

141. For instance Peggy Muñoz Simonds, "'To the very heart of loss': Renaissance Inconography in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*," *Shakespeare Studies* 22 (1994): 223.

142. Wole Soyinka, "Shakespeare and the Living Dramatist," *Shakespeare Survey* 36 (1983): 6.

143. Soyinka, "Shakespeare," 8, 10.

as transtextual affiliation,[144] await closer study, while we should bear in mind the politicized process of identity formation which is at stake in canon construction and which affects sources as it does any other literary artifacts and cultural legacies.[145] The construction should be constantly re-negotiated, seeing that exclusion or minimization of the Other actually diminishes the semiotic energies of the Self. Considering the various categories of works with an African background in light of each other enables a fresh perspective on the cultural substance, including legacies of knowledge culture originating from south of the Mediterranean, that is written into early modern English – and not only English – literary art. That *does* make a difference.

There are limitations and caveats. Definitive proof of influence and filiation, rather than probability scaling, is not possible for Shakespearean and other contemporary literature, as sources remain mostly unacknowledged and the plausibility of evidence rests on criteria as specified further above. Also, one should never forget, as Tobin tends to do,[146] that the Bard was "attracted to narratives available in multiple forms,"[147] so that any one source may not exhaust the genealogy and the import of a particular work or its parts. Sources, that is, hardly exist in isolation, as we have seen. Moreover, evidence should not depend on themes and lexical parallels that are early modern commonplaces, or on instances traceable to several analogous publications or documentable earlier European source materials. With this in mind, we can nonetheless assume that influences do not remain separate and detached from a recipient text but rather, on the contrary, become an integral part of it.

In light of the balance of probability, in any case, we should begin regarding key achievements of Shakespeare's work as being inherently non-European, and partly even African in their cultural germination – the opposite of what tends to be assumed. Pursuing this perspectival shift from within a European institution, as the present essay does, should be understood as responding to initiatives like Lekan Balogun's, who has tentatively suggested that Shakespeare himself subsumes Plutarch's Cleopatra and the process of the tragedy in the Yoruba ritual archetype of *orisha*, as presenting both a physical and a spiritual female identity.[148]

Anti-colonial cultural projects have aimed to prove the richness of indigenous African languages and literary imagination, so that Shakespeare's work came to be skillfully translated (into Tswana by Sol T. Plaatje and into Kiswahili by Julius

144. See Mafe ("From Ogún," 59) for the expression, in a related but not identical context.

145. See also Kumar, "Interrogating."

146. John J. M. Tobin, *Shakespeare's Favorite Novel: A Study of The Golden Asse as Prime Source* (Lanham: Univ. Press of America, 1984).

147. Artese, *Shakespeare's*, 3.

148. Balogun, "Ajubaba," 21.

Nyerere) and subsequently adapted with creative intercultural transfer.[149] It has thus enabled African and African-diasporic adaptations by Welcome Msomi (South Africa), Thomas L. Decker (Sierra Leone), Abiola Sobo and Ahmed Yerima (both Nigeria), Aimé Césaire (Martinique), and others. Now that a new departure is emerging, however, it is time to turn this around: we need to (re)discover the richly complex though never isolated African imprint on what we like to think of as being Shakespeare's – and early modern Europe's – "own" work.

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149. For these contexts, see Jane Plastow (Ed.), *Shakespeare In and Out of Africa*. African Theatre 12 (Woodbridge: James Currey, 2013).

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Alienation and Identity Crisis in the Apocalyptic World of Katherine Anne Porter

By Justyna Rusak[*]

The article explores Katherine Anne Porter's existential concerns reflected in her fiction. Applying the tools of biographical and historical criticism as well as textual analysis, the study delves into the disintegrating apocalyptic fictional world of the American South in the tumult of the Great War and the Spanish influenza that constitutes a mirror of the author's own personal tribulations in the context of social and personal upheavals. Strands of Existentialism represented by both Christian and atheist thinkers have been adopted as a background against which Modernist anxieties could be best understood and analyzed. The recurrent motif of time with its elusiveness and relativity tends to combine the seemingly dissimilar voices of selected Existentialists, fictional characters and the author herself in their search for truth, identity and meaning, emphasizing subjectivity as the essential element of cognition. As human anxieties are impossible to be encompassed and cast in the clearly defined borders, spiritual concerns outlined in the article tend to remain a riddle open to a multitude of explanations. However, indirect and implied inclinations towards Christian theology alluded to both in the writer's works and life suggest the adoption of a Kierkegaardian 'leap of faith' by the existential sceptic into an orderly essentialism of the Catholic religion as a solution to all anxieties and uncertainties of life.

Introduction

The aim of this article is to present an introspective study of Katherine Anne Porter's fictional characters in their search for transcendence and an organizing power, based on the selected stories. Applying different aspects of biographical and historical criticism as methodological tools of literary textual analysis, as well as selected strands of broadly perceived Existentialism, the study unfolds different layers of understanding of the author's fiction which appears to be intricately interwoven into its specific social, cultural and political context instead of being an autonomous project created in a cultural void. Renowned in the genre of Southern Literature for her best-selling novel *Ship of Fools* in 1962 and a Pulitzer Prize winner for Fiction in 1966 for *The Complete Stories*, Katherine Anne Porter established her literary place in the circle of other Southern female writers, including Flannery O'Connor, Carson McCullers or Ellen Glasgow. Alienation in the surrounding reality, isolation of characters in the crowd as well as search for truth and preoccupation with individual identity of characters are the main themes pursued by Porter in her fiction revolving around the concept of subjectivity and isolation of individual experience and its fluid interpretation.

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This existential approach appears to be even more relevant in the contemporary context where the threat of war, the pandemic or an overwhelming fear and isolation tend to recur more frequently and haunt the illusory stability and power of the 21-st-century rational mind. Painting an in-depth psychological study of individuals, Porter overtly alludes to her preoccupation with her own confused self. Consequently, the reader, disturbed by the autobiographical undertones in the author's numerous works, is induced to experience the psychological tribulations of the characters' minds. Moreover, the employment of such literary devices as interior monologue, blending dream and reality, or blurring the linear structure of the plot in its spatial and temporal dimension, only reinforces the effect of the author's existential concerns.

While Porter's numerous works reveal a variety of themes and a wide-angled perception of existential dilemmas of individuals thrown in the Heideggerian Dasein, the study of the short novel collection - *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* emphasizes a modernist perception of individuals facing the reality of the postbellum American South and apocalyptic implications of the First World War, so deeply inscribed in the consciousness of the "lost generation" writers, including T.S. Eliot, Ernest Hemingway, Scott Fitzgerald, E.E. Cummings and others. A microcosm of personal introspections with reference to the question of truth, relativity of time, mythmaking and memory, along with numerous allusions to autobiographical details provide a rich background to an existential examination of the inward dissolution of human personality. The problem of subjectivity further developed in "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall" extends the scope of analysis by a religious dimension in its direct relation of the dying individual to personalized God. Instantaneous insight into the wholeness of time juxtaposed with its fragmentariness reinforce the picture of disrupted communication between individuals and the elusiveness of the Absolute. The study thus shows that both works turn out to reflect the human struggle for self-definition in the face of the ineffable and longing for totality in a world threatened by the abyss of existential nothingness.

The collapse of traditional values and the power of the rational mind as well as distrust to any objective truths and authorities (including God) that were brought to light in the era of Modernism, gave rise to the generally felt sense of loss and insecurity in the chaotic and irrational world. Alienation and despair, experienced especially acutely after the outbreak of World War I, seemed to reflect the moods characteristic of broadly perceived Existentialism – both represented by its Christian and atheistic propagators. Following Daniel Joseph Singal's assertion that "Existentialism is the culminations philosophic expression of Modernism"[1], one may further conclude that Modernism and Existentialism were inherent in the southern spirit, and especially in the Southern literature at that period. The inerasable feeling of defeat after the Civil War, successive

1. Daniel Joseph Singal, *The War Within. From Victorian to Modernist Thought in the South, 1919-1945* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 360.

industrialization and unavoidable modernization of the region, which instead of bringing prosperity deepened poverty and economic backwardness, all these factors contributed to literary interests revolving around existential issues, so typical of Modernists. Alienation, being at the heart of early twentieth-century Southern literature, is the effect of the protagonist's struggle with encroaching materialism of the modern era. Disintegration of the family and traditional values as well as haunting memories of the past constitute the price that one has to pay for 'progress'. Shattered identity of an individual together with the undermined identity of the region must again be restored and redefined if the existence in the new, hostile order is ever to be possible.

Katherine Anne Porter's rich symbolism, a thorough insight into human consciousness, employing a stream of consciousness technique in fiction, and caricatured portrayal of characters that are often stricken with the sense of loss or alienation categorized her as a Modernist writer. Carolyn Perry and Mary Louise Weaks point out in *The History of Southern Women's Literature* that Porter "combines the modernist concern for craft with pastoral tensions and an emphasis on interior landscapes of grief, longing and desire."[2] Paul Giles, on the other hand, in *American Catholic Arts and Fiction* turns his attention to the question of the artist's perception of Catholicism. According to him, Catholicism in Porter operates as an aesthetic fiction or a beautiful idea.[3] Adopting a spectatorial position towards institutionalized and ritualized religion, the writer expresses a sense of detachment not only in her fiction but also in some of her essays or interviews. Porter's challenging approach towards the Southern religious heritage is reflected partly through her rebellion against the apparently comforting status quo of tradition and partly through the simultaneous paradoxical attachment to the order that seems to be no longer viable in the modern world. Nevertheless, the existential questions that permeate the writer's fiction seem to indicate the inescapable urge to redefine her own identity in reality where Southern heritage is constantly confronted with modern values.

Pale Horse, Pale Rider Trilogy – Time and Self-discovery

Pale Horse, Pale Rider, a collection of three short novels, seemingly unconnected, illustrates Katherine Anne Porter's attempt to deal with the interpenetration of the past, present and future as inseparable in the process of self-discovery. The main arising questions, suggested by Mark Schorer in the *Afterword* to the Collection may be put this way: "What were we? What are we? What will we be?

2. Carolyn Perry, and Mary Louise Weaks, *The History of Southern Women's Literature* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 256.

3. Paul Giles, *American Catholic Arts and Fiction. Culture, Ideology, Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 353.

Or: From where did we come? Where are we at this moment? Where are we going? The individual is his past, his present, his future,"[4] he concludes. The above questions strike the existential chord and imply the evolutionary way one's identity must trace until it reaches its wholeness.

"Old Mortality" – Between Myth and Reality

"Old Mortality," the first in the collection spans the time between 1885 and 1912. Miranda, the main protagonist and the literary *alter ego* of the artist, observes the world around her through the prism of stories and legends passed down from generation to generation by her relatives. As a small girl, and then a young woman, she is shaped by idealized images aiming at sustaining the beguiling myth of the idyllic South. However, in the course of Miranda's maturing to adulthood, the myths are getting dispersed and what appears to the girl's sight is an intricate fabric of the family history woven out of lies and confabulations. The legends of the angelic beauty of Aunt Amy do not in fact expose her fickleness and infidelity. Uncle Gabriel, her tragic suitor, presented as full of gallantry and chivalry, later turns out as a bulging, embittered drunkard, dissatisfied with his current wife. Cousin Eva, a single middle-aged woman, embittered by not conforming to the idealized picture of a Southern belle, only reinforces the role that myth played in the identification of the Southern families as recently as the beginning of the twentieth century. The past shaping the present is best evident in the old spinster, who due to the lack of a chin, resolves to combat the patriarchal order by taking an active part in feminist activity with the aim of abolishing the values she herself is inherently driven by.

The truth abruptly revealed to Miranda by Cousin Eva during their travel to Uncle George's funeral evokes the feeling of sudden repulsion towards the "living corpses, festering women stepping gaily towards the charnel house, their corruption concealed under laces and flowers, their dead faces lifted smiling."[5] Miranda, once feeling a constituent part of her family ancestry, now feels an outcast, a stranger in the world of the dead. "It is I who have no place,"[6] she ponders. The past, so much cherished by her relatives, and imposed as an inherent element of the present identity becomes a burden for the young girl who desires to break the blood ties that strangle her and limit her freedom. As a result, she longs for self-definition on her own terms in the tangible present. Independence that Miranda announces, however, entails taking responsibility for her own decisions. She asks herself a multitude of questions:

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4. Mark Schorer, *Afterword, Pale Horse, Pale Rider. Three Short Novels* (New York: A Signet Classic, 1962), 167.

5. Katherine Anne Porter, "Old Mortality," *Pale Horse, Pale Rider. Three Short Novels,* 56.

6. Ibid, 59.

> What is life? (…) What shall I do with it? (…) What was good, and what was evil? (…) There are questions to be asked first, she thought, but who will answer them? No one, or there will be too many answers, none of them right. What is the truth, she asked herself as intently as if the question had never been asked, the truth, even about the smallest, the least important of all the things I must find out? And where shall I begin to look for it?[7]

The sudden dread that descends upon her arises from the existential fear one encounters when presented with the infinitude of possibilities. Freedom with no direct aim or no solid base of reference is a terrifying vision for the girl who enters adulthood renouncing the experience of her ancestors. Miranda's rejection of the past, just like Jenny Archbald's from Ellen Glasgow's *The Sheltered Life*, might originate from her immaturity and inexperience. The rebellion against one's heritage, the belief in self-reliance and stubborn insistence on independence typical of each young generation, seem like a perverse self-denial and an attempt to drown out one's inner call of conscience.

What is worth noting is the fact that Miranda's rejection is not so much of the past but of the myth itself. Porter herself ascribes much value to the past, claiming that "of the three dimensions of time, only the past is 'real' in the absolute sense that it has occurred."[8] However, as Cheryl D. Coleman states in "'No Memory is Really Faithful': Memory and Myth in Katherine Anne Porter's 'Old Mortality,'"[9] it would be unwise to expect Miranda to find some objective truth both about her past and present. As each myth contains some grain of truth, Miranda should search for her own truth, relying selectively on the inherited legacy, as no absolute truth is to be learned about her ancestors or about her future.

"Noon Wine" and the Kierkegaardian "Knight of Faith"

Though seemingly unrelated in terms of plot, "Noon Wine" penetrates the existential dimension of subjectivity and examines the social aspect of the suspension of the ethics. To what extent is it possible to ascertain the objectivity of truth concerning both the perception of one's true identity and of the apparent murder committed by Mr. Thompson on Mr. Helton? Observed from two contradictory angles, Mr. Helton appears as a two-faced person. Perceived from the perspective of Mr. Thompson, he is a diligent worker, slightly taciturn and mysterious, yet peaceful and reliable. When taking Mr. Hatch's version into

7. Ibid, 61.

8. Katherine Anne Porter, *The Collected Essays and Occasional Writings of Katherine Anne Porter* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990), 449.

9. Cheryl D. Coleman, "'No Memory is Really Faithful': Memory and Myth in Katherine Anne Porter's 'Old Mortality,'" *The Mississippi Quarterly* 62, no 1-2 (2009).

account, we come across a mentally disturbed psychopath, a murderer, and an unassimilated outcast from a foreign, i.e., hostile culture. As M. K. Fornataro-Neil aptly observed:

> Helton is so firmly embedded in the counternarratives of Thompson and Hatch that it is impossible to uncover any sense of his personal identity. We are given conflicting evidence, both hearsay and actual. Porter so carefully subverts the validity of each narrative that Helton's reality remains a complete enigma.[10]

Eventually, Helton turns out to be a tragic hero, alienated from the American society on the grounds of his foreign descent and his lack of will to conform to the specific cultural intricacies of the South. What Porter depicts as a powerful tool of both uniting and separating people from one another is language. Mr. Helton's inability to communicate fluently in English bars the process of mutual understanding and deprives him of the opportunity to define himself, thus condemning himself to be defined by others.

Apart from the problem of self-definition, the story serves the opportunity to examine the question of truth in relation to Mr. Thompson's case. Recalling the moment of killing Mr. Hatch, he himself emphasizes his personal version of events, justifying his point in committing the deed. The discrepancy between his own persistently repeated version of acting in self-defense and the community's silent belief in his guilt lies in the subjective perception of truth by the protagonist and a distanced, apparently more objective view of the disengaged crowd of spectators. The third-person narration informs the reader that Mr. Thompson "*saw* the fat man with his long bowie knife in his hand (…), he saw the blade going into Mr. Thompson's stomach."[11] It turned out, however, upon catching Mr. Helton and investigation, that "there wasn't a knife scratch on him."[12] The memory started playing a trick on Mr. Thompson as he "couldn't remember hitting Mr. Hatch. He couldn't remember it. He couldn't. He remembered only that he had been determined to stop Mr. Hatch from cutting Mr. Helton."[13] Mr. Thomson's inability to persuade the villagers of his innocence evokes the disconcerting anxiety and isolation. The truth maintained by the protagonist makes him a lonely fighter against the community and even against his disbelieving wife.

His situation resembles the plight of the Kierkegaardian "knight of faith" who must persevere against all odds and rational premises just to defend his right cause. Just like Abraham, who with the faith of a lonesome knight has to abandon

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10. M.K. Fornataro-Neil, "Constructed Narratives and Writing Identity in the Fiction of Katherine Anne Porter," *Twentieth Century Literature* 44, no. 3 (1998): 349.

11. Katherine Anne Porter, "Noon Wine," *Pale Horse, Pale Rider. Three Short Novels* (New York: A Signet Classic, 1962), 98.

12. Ibid, 105.

13. Ibid, 105.

conventional ethics in fight for the intimately revealed truth, so is the state of Mr. Thompson, who getting enclosed within his interiors, resolves to stick to his personal beliefs. The pangs of conscience stemming from the Christian ethics punishing any form of killing, however, evoke the feeling of dread and unbearable remorse: "Mr. Thompson felt he was a dead man. He was dead to his other life."[14] Unable to carry the burden of his own guilt in the eyes of the others, he commits suicide.

Eventually, the question of truth seems to be unresolved. Man's inability to objectively understand what is going on with oneself results in the inner tension deriving from the clash between the social or ethical code of justice and the subjective perception of the right choice. Unlike in "Old Mortality," where the truth about one's identity is tinted by the shades of the past, "Noon Wine" focuses on the present, the "here and now" as determinant in searching the truth about oneself. Mark Schorer mentions the significance of "the sudden unexpected horror of the present, the horror whose truth one could not know until one was inextricably in it, when it proves to be an absolute doom to which one's own nature, however trivially expressed before, now commits us."[15] Only being in the middle of things, is one committed to taking responsibility for the decisions one takes. The intensity of the here and now enfolds the whole spectrum of freedom, which the human being encounters especially in extreme situations. Taking action, one writes the truth, but its interpretation seems yet too complex to undertake.

Trauma and Identity Crisis in "Pale Horse, Pale Rider"

Out of the three stories in the trilogy, "Pale Horse, Pale Rider" seems to be the most evocative in terms of symbolism, and functions as a unifying coda to the problems mentioned in previous works. Miranda, who is twenty-four years old now, appears once again in this story and becomes the central point of psychological insight. Instantaneity of action is achieved by breaking up with linearity of time and change of perspective. Sudden shifts from third-person- to first-person narration, an interplay of conscious thoughts with unconscious dreams, the chaotic intermingling of the past, present and future, extensive streams of consciousness jumbled with abrupt dialogues only reinforce the tension experienced by the delirious mind of sick Miranda. Intensifying symptoms of influenza immerse the heroine into an overpowering state of mental anxiety, where the acuteness of harsh reality pierces her consciousness even more severely in the dream-like state of a near-death experience.

14. Ibid, 108.
15. Schorer, *Afterword, Pale Horse, Pale Rider. Three Short Novels*, 1962, 174.

Obsessed by the continuing war and afraid of the loss of her beloved, Adam, Miranda experiences apocalyptic visions of death and suffering. The terrifying dream of a pale rider accompanying her is like a premonition of death she is bound to encounter:

> The stranger rode beside her, easily, lightly, his reins loose in his half-closed hand, straight and elegant in dark shabby garments that flapped upon his bones; his pale face smiled in an evil trance, he did not glance at her. Ah, I have seen this fellow before, I know this man if I could place him. He is no stranger to me.[16]

Miranda's vision alludes to the Biblical description of the fourth horseman of the Apocalypse, the horseman of Death:

> When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.[17]

Miranda's familiarity with the horseman of death might be interpreted as the foreshadowing of her own death, both in a material or spiritual sense, as well as the death of her husband. The war she has been inevitably entangled in through Adam, has imposed a burden of constant dread and fear for his life. The multifaceted character of war as a source of chaos and destruction of family bonds as well as degeneration of human impulses lies in its deceptiveness. Whether it be an "elegant," smiling figure of the Apocalyptic horseman or an evil face of a bony skeleton, war sets humankind in the Danse Macabre of deadly self-demise. The omnipresence of death Miranda experiences in her illness makes her the warrior herself. Mounting her imaginary horse, Graylie, she spurs him to the race and urges him in the words: "we must outrun Death and the Devil."[18]

Miranda's delirium sharpens her senses of perception. Bodily suffering and internal anguish make her realize the power of her love to Adam and the futility of war and separation, which Adam seems to be negligent of. As a result, lost for words in the face of horrors of war, both Miranda and Adam hide their true feelings, putting on masks of casual indifference and duty. As Sarah Youngblood observes, "war conditions (…) the necessity for a 'code' or 'system' among the younger generation (…), a proper existentialist formula of casualness and flippancy for maintaining cynical control: because the situation is absurd, behave

16. Katherine Anne Porter, "Pale Horse, Pale Rider," *Pale Horse, Pale Rider. Three Short Novels* (New York: A Signet Classic, 1962), 114-115.

17. *The Holy Bible, New International Version, The NIV Minister's Bible,* Revelation 6: 7-8 (Hendrickson Publishers, LLC: Peabody, MA: 1984), 946.

18. Porter, "Pale Horse,…," 114.

as if it were amusing."[19] Hence, the only logical reaction Miranda comes up with is laughter at the thought of war: "'My, it's a funny war,' she said; 'isn't it? I laugh every time I think about it.'"[20] The atrocity of war exceeds Miranda's ability to bear it with existential courage. As if pushing the awareness of Adam's imminent death back to the unconscious, she develops defense mechanisms that enable her to cope with their parting and her own helplessness in the face of overwhelming reality.

As a result, both Miranda and Adam aiming for divergent goals seem to occupy different, independent territories, inaccessible to one another. Although physically together, the young people feel lonely and alienated from their common world and unable to comprehend each other's values. Miranda's realization of them being drawn apart and her ominous visions of Adam stepping "into the blue mist"[21] of death deepen her anxiety and fear, which is illustrated by the following line: "There was only the wish to see him and the fear, the present threat, of not seeing him again."[22] Physical pain accompanied by the existential suffering reaches the climax when Miranda, virtually on the brink of death, experiences her own dying.

The pale horseman of the Apocalypse spreading the seeds of the Spanish influenza brings Miranda to the edge of death. Working as a reporter for *The Blue Mountain News* in Denver during the Great War, she cannot escape falling victim to the sweeping pandemic. The near-death experience that plunges her in the "jungle" of death, "creeping tangles of spotted serpents, rainbow-colored birds with malign eyes, (…) fleshly leaves that glowed with sulphur-colored light and exuded the ichor of death (…)"[23] is like a descent into hell. The recurrent dream of perpetual death and resurrection haunts her, as she envisions the arrows striking her and Adam's body, killing him and leaving her alive.

The story seems to allude to Porter's own life experiences. Soon after the arrival in Denver where Porter was supposed to write for the Rocky Mountain News, she soon fell prey to the great influenza epidemic, popularly called "Spanish flu." With the death toll of several dozen million people all over the world, the pandemic was perceived by some Christians as a fulfilling of the prophecy in Revelation of the end of the world. It seemed that Katherine Anne Porter's end of the world was indeed approaching. Funeral arrangements for her burial were in progress, while an experimental dosage of strychnine turned out to be salutary, and miraculously the woman was gradually rising from the dead.

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19. Sarah Youngblood, "Structure and Imagery in Katherine Anne Porter's *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*," in *Critical Essays on Katherine Anne Porter* (ed.) Darlene Harbour Unrue (New York: G. K. Hall & Co., 1997), 195.

20. Porter, "Pale Horse,…," 128.

21. Ibid, 138.

22. Ibid, 138.

23. Ibid, 145.

This event, however, left the artist transformed forever. As she recalls it later in an interview for The Paris Review:

> It just simply divided my life, cut across it like that. So that everything before that was just getting ready. It took me a long time to go out and live in the world again. I was really "alienated," in the pure sense. It was, I think, the fact that I really participated in death, that I knew what death was, and had almost experienced it. I had what the Christians call the "beatific vision," and the Greeks called the "happy day," the happy vision just before death. Now if you have had that, and survived it, come back from it, you are no longer like other people, and there's no use deceiving yourself that you are.[24]

Risen from the ashes of her former self, with completely white hair that grew in place of the old raven-black curls, Katherine Anne Porter struggled to come to terms with her own distinctiveness that alienated her form other people. Observing the world from the perspective inaccessible to most people, and full of determination to defend her own ground, the artist set out to New York to actively participate in the intellectual and political life, and finally embarked on a challenging escapade to Mexico to participate in the Obregon Revolution in 1921.

Affected by the author's own traumatic recollections, the story boldly explores the problem of death. It is thus presented as expectation, the future prospect. Although ahead, it is constantly present with us. The expectation of death as the breaking moment, is paralleled to "a long march beset with all evils, and the heart fails little by little at each new terror, the bones rebel at each step, the mind sets up its own bitter resistance and to what end?"[25] The unique experience of the presence of death Miranda undergoes through the clinical death, endows her with the coveted knowledge of cognition expected at the ultimate moment of one's existence. Enchanted by the overflowing radiance of the blue morning sky and surrounded by the familiar human beings with beautiful "transfigured faces," Miranda experiences a beatific vision, whose completion and perfection is marred by the lack of Adam. As if summoned by the sense of obligation, she resolves to return to the world of "the dead" only to learn that Adam has died of influenza, leaving her lonely in the imperfect existence of the living "corpses."

Miranda's unique experience, inspired by Katherine Anne Porter's similar encounter, irrevocably changes her outlook on life. The reversal of order, where the living are perceived as the dead, alienates a person from the environment. The knowledge exceeding the capabilities of human perception turns out to be a burden too heavy to carry throughout the remaining time of earthly existence

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24. Barbara Thompson, "Katherine Anne Porter: An Interview," in: *"Flowering Judas." Katherine Anne Porter* (ed.) Virginia Spencer Carr (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1993), 70-71.

25. Ibid, 156.

both for fictional Miranda and Porter herself, which is emphasized by the author many a time in her non-fictional accounts. Misplaced, Miranda ponders: "the body is a curious monster, no place to live in, how could anyone feel at home there? Is it possible I can ever accustom myself to this place? she asked herself. (…) Miranda looked about her with the covertly hostile eyes of an alien."[26] She suddenly feels deprived of the truth to which she had been given access through the fulfillment of her death-wish. Misunderstood by others and disconsolate, she resolves to devote the remainder of her life to expectant longing for the lost personal paradise.

According to David A. Davis, trauma survivors usually do not return to their previous identity and instead create "an identity that incorporates the pre-traumatic identity with the traumatic experience."[27] Memory, as he maintains, plays here a crucial factor in maintaining the remains of the shattered bond between the original identity and the post-traumatic identity. He claims further that "when memory fails, the new identity becomes distorted or dysfunctional."[28] In Porter's novel, the excessive usage of "forgetting" and "remembering" language phrases, as well as recurring flashbacks and sudden shifts of spatial or temporal perspective might indicate the identity crisis on both a biographical and an aesthetic level. The disintegration of Miranda's personal identity after her traumatic near-death experience is also interpreted by Davis as a reflection of the collective memory of the pandemic, which though apparently overshadowed by the atrocities of The First World War, seemed, in Freudian terms, repressed to the deepest layers of the unconscious. Existential angst of the loss of the individual self obtains here a social dimension and its paradoxically universal character is not in any way connected with a system or an ideology of the times, but is a collection of personal traumas that spring from the passionate involvement in an attempt to reestablish one's identity threatened with the ultimate collapse.

Miranda's personal journey to the depth of her being might thus be sketched against the broader socio-historical background of The First World War. In "Nightmare and Apocalypse in Katherine Anne Porter's 'Pale Horse, Pale Rider,'"[29] Jewel Spears Brooker points to the religiously-biblical and archetypically-mythological inspirations stemming from Porter's recreational visit to Basel in 1932, where she became immersed in the medieval atmosphere of the historical city. The illustrated Bibles of the Reformation, Albrecht Dürer's wood engravings of "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" (1498) and "The Knight, Death and the Devil" (1513), Dante's *The Divine Comedy* as well as James Joyce's narrative

26. Ibid, 161.

27. David A. Davis, "The Forgotten Apocalypse: Katherine Anne Porter's *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*, Traumatic Memory and the Influenza Pandemic of 1918," *The Southern Literary Journal* 43, no. 2 (2011).

28. Ibidem.

29. Jewel Spears Brooker, "Nightmare and Apocalypse in Katherine Anne Porter's *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*," *The Mississippi Quarterly* 62, no. 1-2 (2009).

method, all constituted inspiration for Porter's modernist story. All these inspirations, however, seem to be embedded in the author's personal existential tribulations stemming from her war experiences, beatific vision and Catholic faith that add to the story a personal character of an individual search for self-discovery.

Existential Perception of Time

The interweaving of the past, present and future in the story with an emphasis on the mode of expectancy is embedded in the larger perspective of the whole trilogy and reflects Porter's emphasis on the role of time in human endeavors. As each of the stories in the collection changes focus, starting from the past in "Old Mortality" to the present in "Noon Wine" to the future in "Pale Horse, Pale Rider," one realizes how the shift in the perception of time influences the shaping of individual identity of the protagonists. Human inability to escape the interdependent dimensions of time places the individual in a position of suspension and expectation for an indeterminate state of wholeness which is unachievable in terrestrial existence. Porter's preoccupation with the question of time echoes the perennial interest in the inconceivability of time among existentialist thinkers, such as St. Augustine, Martin Heidegger or Jean Paul Sartre, to name but a few. St. Augustine's reflections on time are aptly presented in *Confessions:*

> For if future and past exist, I wish to know where they exist. If I cannot yet know this, I know at least that wherever they are, they are not future or past there, but present. If they are future there also, they do not yet exist there, and likewise if they are past there, they no longer exist there. Wherever and whatever they are, if they exist, they must be present. [30]

Memory of the things past and prediction of the future events are all carried out in the present state of mind, which is constantly fleeting. The quick succession of present moments prevents us from grasping their flow. Hence the perception of human life as holistic unity escapes our capabilities of cognition. As if to counter Socrates' famous quote: "I know nothing except the fact of my ignorance,"[31] St. Augustine confesses: "I am still ignorant as to what time is. (…) Alas for me! I do not even know the extent of my own ignorance."[32] Relativity of time implies also the relativity of one's identity. Only stepping beyond time and consequently beyond human existence, which in Augustinian terms implies eternity, may one intuit the possibility of definite self-cognition and complete self-fulfillment. For

30. St Augustine, *Confessions*, XI, 18, 23 (ed.) Philip Burton, 274.

31. Socrates, *Diogenes Laertius: Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, volume I.

32. St Augustine, *Confessions*, Book XI, Ch. XXV, *Christian Classics Ethereal Library* (tr. and ed.) Albert C. Outler, 2006.

the time being man is condemned to perennial becoming and embeddedness in the state of constant searching.

Sartre's exhaustive study of temporality exhibits the paradoxical nature of time with its relativity and intangibility. In *Being and Nothingness* he argues that: "the past is no longer; the future is not yet; as for the instantaneous present, everyone knows that this does not exist at all but is the limit of an infinite division, like a point without dimension."[33] The elusive nature of time prevents one from encompassing each of the dimensions separately. On the one hand, there is the inaccessible past, seen as a complete entity that consumed its possibilities, enclosed in-itself. On the other hand, the future is perceived as one's "*possibility* of presence to being beyond being,"[34] which is merely a project of one's present For-itself. The present, being the least tangible of all temporal dimensions is perceived as For-itself, which is "present to being in the form of flight."[35] Being in fact a negation of being, Sartre contends that "the Present is *not*."[36] Hence, according to the philosopher, "the only possible method by which to study temporality is to approach it as a totality."[37] This, in Heidegger's view is not possible in the state of Dasein, which as a potentiality-for-Being, lacks totality.

The thrownness of Dasein manifests itself in temporality perceived as possibility. In *Being and Time* Heidegger argues that "the future, the character of having been, and the Present, show the phenomenal characteristics of the 'towards-oneself', the 'backto', and the 'letting-oneself-be-encountered-*by.*'"[38] These three dimensions of time are called by Heidegger as *"ecstases"* of temporality. Temporality, according to the thinker, "is not an entity which first emerges from *itself;* its essence is a process of temporalizing in the unity of the ecstases."[39] Unable to grasp the totality of time, one perceives it as a "pure sequence of 'nows', without beginning and without ending."[40] Being-towards-death constitutes the longing for the totality of the three-dimensional structure of time.

33. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1992), 159.

34. Ibid, 185.

35. Ibid, 179.

36. Ibid, 179.

37. Ibid, 159.

38. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (San Francisco: Harper, 1962), 329.

39. Ibid, 329.

40. Ibid, 329.

Lady on a Deathbed – Agony of an Alienated Soul in "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall"

Porter's preoccupation with the mystery of time and subjective experience also finds an outlet in "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall" (1930), considered one of the finest short stories in her oeuvre. The author paints a psychologically intimate picture of an eighty-year-old woman on her deathbed. With the use of modernist techniques, like stream of consciousness, sudden flashbacks, foreshadowing, unexpected shifts of time and place, omniscient third-person narration intermingling with interior monologue and dialogue, rich religious imagery and symbolism, Porter manages to capture the subjective perception of the dying process. The last minutes of Granny Weatherall's life are a stream of jumbled recollections from her past, interwoven with present sensations, interpreted confusingly by the dying woman.

What strikes the reader is her intense anxiety originating from the obsession with some moment in Granny's past when she had been jilted by her would-be husband, George. Although she got married with another man, John, by whom she had children and who guaranteed her a relatively satisfying life, her mind now shifts reproachfully to the distant moment of betrayal. The past, present and future get blurred in Granny Weatherall's mind, smoothly floating from her hospital bed to the past events, like childbirth, household duties of a young mother, hard times of a widowed woman as a sole breadwinner and Cornelia's house. The time span of half a century seems to have shrunk to one minute, whereas tomorrow is extended to eternity. The focal point for Granny being jilted by her fiancé seems like a recurrent deathblow that with redoubled strength haunts her on her deathbed. She constantly evokes the moment which irreversibly turned her life into endless misery. Granny bitterly asks herself:

> What does a woman do when she has put on the white veil and set out the white cake for a man and he doesn't come? (…) That was hell, she knew hell when she saw it. For sixty years she had prayed against remembering him and against losing her soul in the deep pit of hell.[41]

The significance of Granny's predicament lies in her anxious waiting for that transitory moment of her life and the repetition of the predetermined failure that leaves Granny's soul disconsolate and forever doomed to isolation. As if to reverse the past, she still awaits her beloved fiancé to marry him. In the woman's mind, George is interchangeably replaced with the vision of Hapsy, Granny's youngest daughter. The mother's anxious longing for her child, suggestively alludes to some mysterious bond that joins the three characters together. As

41. Katherine Anne Porter, "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall," in *The Collected Stories of Katherine Anne Porter* (San Diego: A Harvest Book, Harcourt Brace & Company, 1972), 84.

David and Madeline Barnes speculate in "The Secret Sin of Granny Weatherall," Hapsy might have been conceived as an illegitimate child of Granny and George.[42] Acceptance of John's marriage proposal could have absolved Granny of the shame of illegitimacy, yet not of the sense of guilt.[43] The pangs of conscience bring back the reminiscences of the painful truth, which once repressed now returns with redoubled strength.

Rich religious symbolism that reinforces the powerful image of dying might imply a deeper level of Granny Weatherall's anxious anticipation. Persistently returning to the moment of betrayal, the woman seems to sense the dread about being jilted by God at the moment of death. Just like a bride expecting her fiancé to arrive at the altar to become one flesh and one blood, so is now Granny expecting to be embraced by God embodied by her youngest and beloved child. Realizing that time is running low, her hope gradually vanishes, and instead the feeling of overwhelming abandonment descends upon Granny's desperate mind, which is illustrated by the following excerpt:

> Granny made a long journey outward, looking for Hapsy. What if I don't find her? What then? Her heart sank down and down, there was no bottom to death, she couldn't come to the end of it.[44]

The groundbreaking moment of jilting triggers off yet another possibility of interpretation. Hurt by her fiancé, Granny might have simultaneously directed her anger and resentment at God, who remained silent in the face of the woman's suffering. Now abandoned not only by her fiancé, but also by God, she resolves to govern her further life on her own terms. Granny Weatherall thus seems to represent the mind of an existentialist, who, having rejected any external point of reference, adds meaning to her life, relying purely on her strong will and perseverance. For sixty years she seems to have "weathered" all the hardships of everyday struggles. Nevertheless, the moment of dying restores her suppressed faith, which still flickers in the depth of her own interior. Just like the love to George, which cannot be smothered despite his infidelity and the seemingly ordered and satisfying life with another man, neither can Granny renounce her bond with God, despite His apparent absence and ignorance about her plight. The moment of death merges with the wedding day, and the overwhelming fear of being jilted once more reappears. Granny anxiously cries: "God, give a sign!"[45] The acute silence pierces through the remains of her consciousness and the woman seems to sink in the abyss of existential nothingness:

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42. This, however, contradicts the evidence that Hapsy is Ellen's last child.

43. Daniel R. Barnes, and Madeline T. Barnes, "The Secret Sin of Granny Weatherall," *Renascence* XXI, no. 1 (1968): 162-165.

44. Ibid, 88-89.

45. Ibid, 89.

> Again no bridegroom and the priest in the house. She could not remember any other sorrow because this grief wiped them all away. Oh, no, there's nothing more cruel than this – I'll never forgive it. She stretched herself with a deep breath and blew out the candle.[46]

One might wonder, whether the message of existential void is the ultimate interpretation of the highly evocative denouement of the story. Adopting Granny's perspective, one identifies with a human, limited point of view. Her inability to perceive God by means of imperfect senses, does not exclude God's appearance in a more concealed way. Shortly before her death, Granny seems to indeed see Hapsy, whether truly or just as the figment of her imagination, "standing by the bed in a white cap," as if her head was surrounded by a luminous halo, like that of a saint or even God Himself. The reassuring image seems to disperse the hopelessness of existential nothingness of the apparently pessimistic ending of the story.

Conclusions

As presented in the discussion, Katherine Anne Porter's fiction appears to be inseparable from her turbulent life characterized by ebbs and flows of religious courage and passion advancing her to the discovery of the elusive truth. The interpretation of her stories, novels and essays brings to the fore her preoccupation with the question of time in its existential dimension. Relativity of its perception simultaneously accentuates the problem of the subjective truth that both her characters and the author herself must tackle at certain stages of life. The reality sketched by Porter appears as a collage of illusory myths of the past and aspirations of the contemporary generations. Clashing values of the past and present as well as subjectivity of experience lie at the core of the author's fiction. A unique experience of death within the span of Dasein reinforces the intensity of the "here and now" in the self-discovery process, opening the whole spectrum of freedom in (re)creation of one's identity. Being-towards-death is demonstrated as man's ultimate goal and inescapable prospect. Paradoxically, expectation of death in Porter's fiction comes into view as longing for totality in which three-dimensional time mingles into wholeness along with the vastness of space, eventually merging one's fragmented identity into an authentic Being.

Another crucial concern in Katherine Anne Porter's fiction is an Apocalyptic vision of the wartime world with its existential undertones of destruction, alienation or absurdity. The way Porter deals with God's silence reveals the abyss of existential nothingness experienced by an individual in their quest for order and inner comfort. Poses of cynicism or stoicism suggested as imperfect tools of

46. Ibid, 89.

overcoming a sense of existential anxiety and entanglement in enslaving (inter)personal relationships in fact reveal man's powerlessness in transcending one's plight. Porter's rebellious dialogue with an absent God that reappears throughout her life and fiction is a succession of retreats and forward movements on the way to personal maturation towards the acceptance of God as the source of inner peace and a cure to existential grievances. Analyzing both Katherine Anne Porter's life and fiction one can detect a circular movement in her search for true Existenz and genuine identity. The acceptance of the Catholic faith and Southern heritage by the end of Porter's life might be interpreted as the (re)discovery of the writer's own selfhood and could provide a reply to the unanswered questions raised in her fiction.

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The *Ambraser Heldenbuch* – A Major Compilation of Middle High German Narrative Poetry for Posterity Habsburg, German, or Austrian?

By Albrecht Classen[*]

In light of many attempts by recent scholars to come to terms with national concepts of literature, it is amazing to notice that even medieval and late medieval German literature is suddenly functionalized to support ideological, political purposes, so it seems. One of the major cultural-historical objects commonly referred to as the first major indicator of Austrian cultural identity was the famous Ambraser Heldenbuch, written by Hans Ried in Innsbruck on behalf of Emperor Maximilian I. After a critical review of a variety of approaches to the history of 'Austrian' medieval literature, this study examines closely what we can learn from the Ambraser Heldenbuch with regard to such a national reading of 'Austrian' in literary-historical terms.

Introduction: Austrian Literature?

Today, perhaps more than in the past, there are strong efforts to determine Austrian literature as a cultural-historical entity *sui generis*, that is, all by itself, representing Austrian culture and identity, as if politics and literature played the same role. It might be difficult to determine 'Austrian' more in detail, but we would probably not go wrong in claiming specific differences between German and Austrian and Swiss literature, at least today. Even linguistically, Austrian as a language is indeed somewhat different from German, but the overall language system is the same as German in Germany or in Switzerland, both today and in the past.[1] However, each region in the German-speaking world has produced its own dialect and accent, which finds vivid expression now in Peter Pabisch's six-volume study and anthology.[2] Yet this means that, in most cases, we are regularly forced to acknowledge simply a linguistic variant spoken and written in a smaller or larger region.

Literature produced in Munich and its wider radius proves to be different

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1. Peter Wiesinger (Ed.), *Das österreichische Deutsch* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1988); but see now the contributions to Heinz Sieburg, and Hans-Joachim Solms (Ed.), *Das Deutsche als plurizentrische Sprache: Ansprüche – Ergebnisse – Perspektiven* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2017). For the pan-European perspective, see Eva Gugenberger, *Vielsprachiges Europa: zur Situation der regionalen Sprachen von der Iberischen Halbinsel bis zum Kaukasus* (Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 2003). For a useful summary of Austrian German, see: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%96sterreichisches_Deutsch. [Accessed 11 September 2021].

2. Peter Pabisch, *Geschichte der deutschsprachigen Dialektliteratur seit der Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Weidler Buchverlag, 2019).

from that produced in Salzburg (actually, almost nearby), Vienna, or Graz, etc. The same would apply to all other regions of the former Holy Roman Empire of German Nations, which thus would quickly undermine our efforts to establish meaningful categories. Politically, of course, there is a border today, and there are also cultural differences in terms of local cuisine, music, clothing, and maybe also mentality.[3] Austrian politics are different from those in Germany or Switzerland, and we can probably assume that Austrians, in general terms, espouse a unique identity, however explained. Overall, however, the entire effort to distinguish in national terms what we mean as German literature has always been problematic. As the contributors to *Negotiating Linguistic Identity* comment, this phenomenon is not unique to the German-speaking world, but rather characteristic of Europe, particularly today.[4]

What is Austrian Literature? Conceptional and Ideological Debates

This paper does not intend to raise global questions regarding national identity, language, or history, as important as they certainly are within the modern context.[5] After all, political and emotional aspects easily influence each other and mean fairly little in the larger framework, if we might not even have to assume that the notion of an Austrian identity is nothing but the result of constructions, as in the case of French, Spanish, Italian, or British identity.[6]

3. William M. Johnston, *Der österreichische Mensch: Kulturgeschichte der Eigenart Österreichs* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2010).

4. Virve-Anneli Vihman and Kristiina Praakli (Ed.) *Negotiating Linguistic Identity: Language and Belonging in Europe* (Bern, Oxford, et al.: Peter Lang, 2014).

5. Ruth Wodak (Ed.), *Nationale und kulturelle Identitäten Österreichs: Theorien, Methoden und Probleme der Forschung zu kollektiver Identität* (Vienna: IFK, 1996); cf. also Hannes Androsch, *Auf der Suche nach Identität – Österreich: Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft: eine Synthese der Widersprüche* (Vienna: Brandstätter, 1988); Anton Pelinka, *Zur österreichischen Identität: zwischen deutscher Vereinigung und Mitteleuropa* (Vienna: Ueberreuter, 1990); Tymofiy Havryliv, *Identitäten in der österreichischen Literatur des XX. Jahrhunderts* (Lviv, Ukraine: VNTL-KLASYKA, 2008); Luca Lecis, *Between Empire and Republic: Austrian Identity in the Twentieth Century (1918–1995)* (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2020); Ernst Bruckmüller and Peter Diem, *Das österreichische Nationalbewusstsein: Ergebnisse einer empirischen Untersuchung im Jahre 2019* (Vienna: New Academic Press, 2020).

6. See now the contributions to Ladislav Cabada, and Christopher Walsch (Ed.), *Imaginäre Räume in Zentraleuropa: kulturelle Transformationen, politische Repräsentationen und trans/nationale Identitätsentwürfe* (Herne: Gabriele Schäfer Verlag, 2019); and to Klaus Nüchtern and Thomas Walach (Eds.), *Unser Land: wie wir Heimat herstellen* (Vienna: Falter Verlag, 2020). See also Erika Thurner, *Nationale Identität und Geschlecht in Österreich nach 1945* (Innsbruck, Vienna, and Bozen: Studien Verlag, 2019); Ernst Hanisch, *Landschaft und Identität: Versuch einer österreichischen Erfahrungsgeschichte* (Vienna, Cologne, and Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2019); Rudolf de Cillia, Ruth Wodak, Markus Rheindorf, and Sabine

Instead, I want to draw our attention to a remarkable late medieval manuscript that will allow us to problematize the entire issue of 'Austrian' from a historical perspective. The *Ambraser Heldenbuch* was one of the last medieval manuscripts preserving a large number of major German verse narratives (romances and heroic epics) before the interest in and memory of medieval literature disappeared or became lost respectively for almost two hundred years. Studying the *Ambraser Heldenbuch* from our vantage point today, however, might give us an intriguing insight into the entire notion of 'Austrian' in literary-historical terms, as problematic as it might be, when we consider the content of this miscellany manuscript more in detail.

Considering the extent to which research has struggled with the question what constitutes 'Austrian,' it is worth to approach it also from a non-modern perspective to discriminate it better than has been possible in the past. Herbert Arlt informs us, for instance,

> Die Auseinandersetzungen um den Begriff 'österreichische Literatur' widerspiegeln die sich wandelnden Bedingungen und den Stand der Forschungsmethodologien – von Chronologieen über nationale Entwürfe hin zu Darstellungen von Literatur und literarischen Prozessen.[7]
>
> [The struggles with the term "Austrian literature" mirrors the changing conditions and the status of research methodologies – from chronologies to national concepts to the presentation of literature and literary processes).

Josef Nadler, in his grandiose but rather conservative approach, had formulated, reflecting a much older concept,

> So liegt das Schwergewicht des Staates, der Österreich geworden ist, in den Alpen. Aber Wien an der Donau war der Schwerpunkt des großen Gefüges, in das dieses Alpenland mit den Ländern der Sudeten und Karpaten geschichtlich zusammengewachsen war. Dieser staatliche Großraum, im Werden, in der Vollendung, in seinem Abbruch hat das geistige Gesicht der Völker modelliert, die ihn bewohnten und mit ihnen auch als geistige Gesicht Österreichs.[8]
> [Hence, the focus of the nation which turned into Austria, rests in the Alps. But Vienna on the Danube was the focus of the large political composition which had grown historically into this alpine country with the Sudetenland and Carpathian

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Lehner, *Österreichische Identitäten im Wandel: Empirische Untersuchungen zu ihrer diskursiven Konstruktion 1995–2015*. (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2020); Lecis, *Between Empire and Republic: Austrian Identity in the Twentieth Century (1918–1995)*, 2020. The literature on this topic is legion, of course, which indicates the urgent matter which requires intensive investigation today, maybe more than ever before.

7. Herbert Alt, *Österreichische Literatur: "Strukturen", Transformationen, Widerspruchsfelder* (Ingbert: Röhrig Universitätsverlag, 2000), 9.

8. Josef Nadler, *Literaturgeschichte Österreichs* (Salzburg: Otto Müller, 1951), 9.

> lands. This large political unit, in its growth, in its completion, in its collapse, has modeled the intellectual face of the people who inhabit it, and hence also the intellectual face of Austria).

Herbert Zeman insists on the dynastic history of the Habsburg family which shaped in a unique fashion the Austrian identity. Alois Wolf discriminates further: "Sehr Unterschiedliches hat im Laufe der Zeit mitgewirkt, um ihn [the term 'Austrian'] zu füllen: die Gegenreformation, das Barock, der Josephinismus, der Vielvölkerstaat der Habsburger mit Wien als Kaiserresidenz . . . " (Many very different aspects have contributed in the course of time to fill [the term 'Austria] with substance: the Counter-Reformation, the Baroque, the Josephinism, the multinational state of the Habsburgs with Vienna as the imperial residence . . .).[9] Undoubtedly, whatever we might perceive of as 'Austrian,' it is the result of at least a thousand years of cultural history, as Franz Römer has emphasized.[10]

Fritz Peter Knapp had already warned us about a too narrow nationalistic definition of 'Austrian,' offering this perspective:

> Die Abfassung einer *Geschichte der Literatur in Österreich* darf nicht mehr als vaterländische Notwendigkeit im Sinn des in der habsburgischen Donaumonarchie begonnenen und in der ersten Republik abgeschlossenen "Nagl-Zeidler-Castle" bestimmt werden; wohl aber führt sie den modernen Leser durch die Charakteristik der Literaturtradition hin zu einer neuen Identifikation mit der österreichischen Kultur.[11]
>
> [Writing a History of Literature in Austria can no longer be conceived of as a patriotic necessity in the sense of the "Nagl-Zeidler-Castle" which began in the Habsburg Danube monarchy and was then completed in the First Republic. However, by contrast, it takes the modern reader through the characteristics of the literary tradition toward a new identification with Austrian culture.]

Herbert Zeman deserves particular credit for his many efforts in that regard, trying hard to stay clear of a nationalist, patriotic approach and yet to offer an inclusive, pragmatic concept, by way of observing geographic criteria combined with dynastic principles:

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9. Alois Wolf, "Das literarische Leben Österreichs im Hochmittelalter," in *Literaturgeschichte Österreichs von den Anfängen im Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart* (ed.) Herbert Zeman, 1-82. Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1996), 4.

10. Franz Römer, *1000 Jahre Österreich – Wege zu einer österreichischen Identität : Vorträge anlässlich des Dies academicus der Geisteswissenschaftlichen Fakultät der Universität Wien am 10. Jänner 1996* (Wiener Universitätsreden N.F., 6. Vienna: WUV-Wiener Universitäts-Verlag, 1997).

11. Fritz Peter Knapp, *Die Literatur des Früh- und Hochmittelalters in den Bistümern Passau, Salzburg, Brixen und Trient von den Anfängen bis zum Jahre 1273* (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1994), 6.

> Aufgenommen wurden jene Autoren, deren Geburtsort jenen Territorien zugehörte, die im oben beschriebenen Sinn zum historischen Österreich zuzurechnen sind, ferner jene deutsch- und fremdsprachigen Autoren, die vorübergehend oder ab einem gewissen Alter ständig in Österreich lebten und das literarische Österreich beeinflussten.[12]
>
> [Those authors were included whose birthplace belonged to those territories that can be counted as having been part of the historical Austria as described above; then also those German- and non-German language authors who lived temporarily or from a certain age permanently in Austria and influenced the literary Austria].

Joseph P. Strelka points out that in contrast to the Holy Roman Empire, at least in its western dimension, Austria had always a stable capital, a firm center in Vienna, whereas in Germany there was no such firm pivotal point from which a homogenous literary development could emerge.[13] We could cite many other voices who addressed the same issue, but we would not make much progress. The issue itself is highly amorphous and almost subjective, especially since the eighteenth century when nationalism emerged in strong terms and created artificial cultural and linguistic boundaries which had never existed before.[14]

Anyone prior to 1800 would have viewed the situation of Austria in very different terms, although the dynastic conditions had already developed in distinct outlines favoring a separate Austrian identity since the fifteenth century. The major literary history edited by Willi Erzgräber focused on the late Middle Ages illustrates the phenomenon quite impressively, though he might not have intended to reflect on national aspects. There are unique chapters dedicated to Italian, English, French, Czech, Norse, and Dutch literature, but whenever a contributor examines a genre, such as lyric poetry (Alfred Karnein), the only category used to define this along 'national' lines is 'German.'[15]

However, the famous *Ambraser Heldenbuch*, compiled between 1504 and 1516 by the Bozen (today: Bressanone) toll keeper Hans Ried, suddenly has to serve, at least for some scholars, as a major literary representative of 'Austrian' literature.[16] Fritz Peter Knapp has no hesitation to claim this major manuscript and all the

12. Herbert Zeman (Ed.), *Bio-bibliografisches Lexikon der Literatur Österreichs* (Freiburg i. Br., Berlin, and Vienna: Rombach, 2016), XI.

13. Joseph P. Strelka, *Mitte, Maß und Mitgefühl: Werke und Autoren der österreichischen Literaturlandschaft* (Vienna, Cologne, and Weimar: Böhlau, 1997), 17.

14. See now the contributions to Wolfgang Brylla, and Cezary Lipiński (Ed.), *Thalloris: Philologische Studien* 3 (2018), with the thematic focus on *Nationalismen*; cf. als *Im Clash der Identitäten: Nationalismen im literatur- und kulturgeschichtlichen Diskurs* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2020).

15. Willi Erzgräber (Ed.), *Europäisches Spätmittelalter* (Wiesbaden: Akademische Verlaggesellschaft Athenaion, 1978).

16. For a digitized version of the *Ambraser Heldenbuch*, see: https://digital.onb.ac.at/RepViewer/viewer.faces?doc=DTL_3332756&order=1&view=SINGLE.

works contained in it for Austria, so to speak, although he then comments in much more global terms,

> Das A.H. ist v. einzigartiger Bedeutung für d. Überlieferung d. dt. Lit. d. MA, da 15 d. genannten Titel (alle, d. hier mit keiner Hs.-Sigle versehen sind) nur in dieser Hs..erhalten sind. . . . Zudem gibt uns d. Codex einen ziemlich einmaligen Einblick in d. spezielle öst. Lit.situation, was d. Rezeption auswärtiger nicht-lyr. Texte wie d. entsprechende (erweisbare o. vermutete) autochthone Produktion betrifft.[17]
>
> [The Ambraser Heldenbuch is of singular importance for the tradition of German medieval literature since 15 of the mentioned titles (all those that have no manuscript call number) have survived only in this manuscript. Moreover, the codex provides us with a pretty unique insight into the special Austrian literary situation as far as the the reception of foreign, non-lyrical texts and the corresponding (demonstrated or suspected) autochthonous production is concerned.]

He continues: "In d. Ausw. spiegelt sich aber nicht nur d. hierzulande damals verfügbare Tradition weit älterer Texte, sondern auch Maximilians auf Legitimation eigener Herrschaft gerichtete Beschwörung d. 'alten Ritterherrlichkeit'" (ibid, 138; The selection does not only mirror the then available tradition of much older texts, but also Maximilian's insistence on the legitimacy of his own rule by means of the 'old glory of chivalry').

Similarly, in Zeman's *Bio-Bibliografisches Lexikon* (see note 12) we find entries on *Alpharts Tod*, the *Ambraser Liederbuch* [not to be confused with the *Ambraser Heldenbuch*!], the *Buch von Bern* (*Dietrichs Flucht*, *Rabenschlacht*), etc., that is, on those literary texts that we presume had been produced within the geographical and political framework of what we would call Austria today, or the Habsburg Empire prior to World War I. This then invites us to use this major manuscript as a segue to explore more in detail how the term 'Austrian' might even be appropriate, or whether we should not rather reserve it for the modern period when a fully-fledged national concept had emerged, maybe an artificial construct, but still a firm construct after all. Many facets of the concept of the 'nation' have been discussed only very recently, and Daniel Fuld can be quoted here as one of the important voices alerting us to the highly political notion of the 'nation':

> Fragt man, ob und mit welchem Recht sich die Germanistik als 'Nationalphilologie' begreifen kann, so bietet die gängige Neigung zur Identifizierung von Nation und Staat allerdings gerade kein tragfähiges Fundament. Denn die Germanistik ist ja nicht die Wissenschaft von Sprache und Literatur Deutschlands oder Österreichs. Ihre Gegenstandsbereiche sind die deutsche Sprache und die deutschsprachige Literatur

17. Knapp, "Ambraser Heldenbuch," in *Bio-bibliografisches Lexikon der Literatur Österreichs* (ed.) Herbert Zeman, 137-39 (see note 12); here 138.

> und damit, gemessen an politischen Entitäten, von transnationaler Dimension.[18]
>
> [When you question with what justification German Studies can conceive of itself as a national philology, then the usual tendency to identify the nation with the state does not offer a solid foundation. After all, German Studies is not the scholarly investigation of the language and literature in Germany or Austria. Its subject matter are the German language and the German-language literature, which are, compared with the political entities, of a transnational dimension.]

The *Ambraser Heldenbuch* particularly allows us to probe this issue more in-depth because of its highly representative function. It stands out for many different reasons. It was one of the last major collections of medieval heroic and courtly narratives; it constituted a massive literary enterprise funded by Emperor Maximilian I; it preserved a number of significant texts from the history of medieval German literature which are not extant in any other manuscripts (*Kudrun*, *Mauritius von Craûn*, etc., ca. one-third of all texts contained here); it was handwritten at a time when the printing press had already established full maturity; it used parchment and not paper, although the opposite had already become the norm at that time for all book publishing; it developed into a calligraphic masterpiece and was, together with its illustrations, a most representative manuscript contributing to the emperor's overall strategy to present himself as 'the last knight' and as a glorious representative of courtliness and chivalry.[19]

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18. Daniel Fulda, "Hat Nationalphilologie eine Zukunft? Einige begriffliche, institutionelle und politische Überlegungen," in *Deutsche Philologie? Nationalphilologien heute* (ed.) Hans-Joachim Solms and Jörn Weinert, 71-92 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2020), 83. In essence, he is pleading for a national philology which is not essentialist and not extremely cosmopolitan (91). For more on that, see Andreas Rockwitz, "Kulturkonflikte als Kampf um die Kultur: Hyperkultur und Kulturessentialismus," in *Das Ende der Illusionen: Politik, Ökonomie und Kultur in der Spätmoderne*. Diagramme, 29-61 (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2019). I have argued, by contrast, that the notion of the national philology constitutes an outdated concept and was never really valid or embraced in the pre-modern world/ literature, Albrecht Classen, "Die Antwort auf die Frage nach der Zukunft liegt auch in der Vergangenheit: Neue Ansätze zu einer europäisch konzipierten Mediävistik. Oder: Wohin mit der national-geprägten Philologie in Anbetracht von St. Augustin, Martianus Capella, Boethius, Thomas von Aquin oder Christine de Pizan?" *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*. Sonderheft: *Deutsche Philologie: Nationalphilologien heute*, 139 (2021): 34-70; cf. also the other contributions to this volume.

19. Jan-Dirk Müller, *Gedechtnus: Literatur und Hofgesellschaft um Maximilian I* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1982); cf. also Hermann Wiesflecker, *Kaiser Maximilian I.: Das Reich, Österreich und Europa an der Wende zur Neuzeit*. Vol. 5: *Der Kaiser und seine Umwelt: Hof, Staat, Wirtschaft, Gesellschaft und Kultur* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1986).

The Manuscript and its Historical Significance

The manuscript is called *Ambraser Heldenbuch* because it was, mentioned for the first time in 1596 as part of Archduke Ferdinand of Tyrol's collection, housed for several hundred years in the Chamber of Art and Curiosities (*Kuriositätenkabinett*) at Castle Ambras outside of Innsbruck until it was relocated to Vienna in 1806 to the Obere Belvedere, 1891 to the Kunsthistorisches Museum to secure it from the approaching Napoleonic troops, as ordered by Emperor Franz I. Later it was transferred to the Vienna Hof-Bibliothek ("Court Library"), which in 1920 became the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek ("Austrian National Library").[20]

The compound or epithet *Heldenbuch* is due to the presence of a fairly large number of heroic epics, but this is still a misnomer because a good handful of other genres are also included here which certainly balance out the heroic element and inject a strong sense of courtliness as an ideal despite numerous problems raised by the various poets. Following Jan-Dirk Müller, we can probably agree that Emperor Maximilian only intended to put together a collection of major or minor literary works from the Middle Ages, as they just had been available, without any particular system in mind: "Eine gattungsgeschichtlich engere und präzisere Bedeutung von 'Heldenbuch' lag nicht in seinem Interesse" (To define the term 'Heldenbuch' more precisely and more narrowly as to its genre was not in his interest).[21] Though compiled between 1504 and 1516, the volume contains mostly heroic and courtly verse epics from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. However, Hans Ried did not shy away at all from adapting the medieval language into his own early modern Bavarian dialect. Mario Klauer observed the intriguing correlation between the manuscript itself and its scribe because the *Ambraser Heldenbuch* stands exactly at the dividing line between the Middle Ages and the early modern world. In other words, Ried served at a physical border, and the manuscript marked a cultural-historical border, and he himself was not a native to Tyrol, originating from Bavaria.[22] For his patron, however, Emperor Maximilian, this valuable manuscript contributed to his global endeavors to glorify himself through his own 'novels' or 'romances' (mostly autobiographical), architecture, sculptures, and images.

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20. Martin Wierschin, "Das Ambraser Heldenbuch Maximilians I." Part 1: "Der biographische Aspekt," *Der Schlern* 50 (1976): 429-441; Wierschin, "Das Ambraser Heldenbuch Maximilians I." Part 2: "Das Runkelstein-Projekt – Idee und Objektivation," *Der Schlern* 50 (1976): 493-507; Wierschin,"Das Ambraser Heldenbuch Maximilians I." Part 3: "Probleme, Konstellationen und Details der Ausführung: der typologische Aspekt," *Der Schlern* 50 (1976): 557-570.

21. Müller, "Alte Heldenbücher im Kreis Maximilians: Zu einer umstrittenen Bezeichnung," in *Kaiser Maximilian I. und das Ambraser Heldenbuch* (ed.) Mario Klarer, 51-59 (Vienna, Cologne, and Weimar: Böhlau, 2019), 59.

22. Mario Klarer, "Einleitung: Das Ambraser Heldenbuch," in *Kaiser Maximilian I. und das Ambraser Heldenbuch* (ed.) Mario Klarer, 11-24 (Vienna: Böhlau, 2019), 15-16.

The manuscript is decorated, on its cover, with an image of two heavily armed knights, but otherwise, throughout the entire volume, there are mostly small depictions of butterflies, crickets, flowers, small figures, some women and men, and even little angels playing on a musical instrument. There is virtually no thematic connection between these illuminations and the content of the various texts. Although the *Ambraser Heldenbuch* represents truly a monumental effort, a very expensive enterprise, much about its specific origin, the sources, and the purpose ultimately remains unknown to us.[23]

The Content of this Miscellany Manuscript

The best approach to this significant literary document from the early modern age would certainly be the close examination of the content itself, which then will allow us to grasp more in detail why or why not the qualifier of 'Austrian' might be valid here or not. Let us hence reflect on the arrangement and generic characteristics of the individual contributions.

The narratives falling into the category of courtly literature are as follows:

Der Stricker, *Frauenehre* (manuscript d)
Mauritius von Craûn (sole surviving manuscript)
Hartmann von Aue, *Iwein* (manuscript d)
Hartmann von Aue, *Das Büchlein* / *Die Klage* (sole surviving manuscript), and *Das zweite Büchlein* (sole surviving manuscript)
[anonymous] (*Der Mantel*)
Erec (the only more or less complete manuscript; the introduction is missing).

Narratives that belong to the heroic genres are:

Dietrichs Flucht (manuscript d)
Rabenschlacht (manuscript d)
Nibelungenlied (manuscript d)
Diu Klage (incomplete, manuscript d) – a continuation of the *Nibelungenlied*
Kudrun (sole surviving manuscript)
Biterolf und Dietleib (sole surviving manuscript)
Ortnit (manuscript A)
Wolfdietrich A (sole surviving manuscript)

The third group consists of shorter verse narratives, such as *mæren*, or texts of a different type of genre:

23. Hubert Aliade, "Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des *Ambraser Heldenbuchs*," in *Kaiser Maximilian I,* 27-35; Aaron Tratter, "Buchschmuck, Lagen, eere Seiten," *Kaiser Maximilian I.* (see note 21), 37-48.

Die böse Frau (sole surviving manuscript)
Herrand von Wildonie, "Die getreue Ehefrau" (sole surviving manuscript); "Der betrogene Gatte," "Der nackte Kaiser" (sole surviving manuscript); and "Die Katze" (sole surviving manuscript)
Ulrich von Liechtenstein, *Frauenbuch* (sole surviving manuscript)
Wernher der Gartenaere, *Meier Helmbrecht* (manuscript A)
Der Stricker, *Pfaffe Amis* (manuscript W)

Finally, there are two fragmentary texts, both of a very different character:

Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Titurel* (fragment, manuscript H)
Der Priester Johann (fragment, sole surviving manuscript).

Undoubtedly, some of the heroic epics take place in the Alps, though not one of the texts collected here can be specifically identified with that region intratextually. The most famous poem, the *Nibelungenlied*, was certainly written down in Passau upon behalf of Bishop Wolfger von Erlau. The events discussed take place first in Worms on the Rhine (the protagonist Siegfried arrives from the Netherlands), then in Iceland, and finally in Hungary, while the Burgundians, upon their sister Kriemhild's invitation, travel from Worms down to Bavaria, along the Danube into the Wachau region, then Vienna, and from there to the Hunnish kingdom. There is, in short, virtually nothing that could be claimed to be authentically Austrian in that context. The same certainly applies to *Diu Klage*, in which the few survivors do nothing but talk about the horrendous events and lament the tragic outcome. The horrific news is then transported all the way back to Vienna, and then Worms, which closes the narrative cycle.

Thirteenth-century *Kudrun* takes place somewhere near the north-eastern coast of the Holy Roman Empire, whether on the shores of the North Sea or the shores of the Baltic Sea.[24] Both *Ortnit* and *Wolfdietrich A* are generally located in the Alpine region, but the poets demonstrated certainly no particular interest in the political or geographic region. *Dietrichs Flucht* is contained both in the *Ambraser Heldenbuch* as well as in four other manuscripts (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Mgf 1062; Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, Cod 2779; Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, cpg 314; and Innsbruck, Universitätsbibliothek, B III). This clearly indicates that the *Ambraser Heldenbuch* was simply one of a number of other manuscript depositories of this famous epic poem.[25]

Any effort to associate the other texts contained in the *Ambraser Heldenbuch* somehow with the Habsburg dynasty or the Alpine region is bound to fail. The

24. Classen, "Why not *Kudrun*?: A Middle High German Epic Poem as Exciting Literary Entertainment and Relevant Study Object for Post-Modern Readers," *Once and Future Classroom* XVII.1 (2021): 1-21.

25. Elisabeth Lienert, and Gertud Beck (Ed.), *Dietrichs Flucht: Textgeschichtliche Ausgabe* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2003), IX-XXI.

anonymous verse narrative *Mauritius von Craûn*, for instance, perhaps created around 1220/1240, certainly takes place in northwestern France and constitutes a provocative challenge to the traditional norms of courtly culture. It would be virtually impossible to associate this *mære* in any meaningful way with Austria, however we might want to define it, especially because the poet refers to the evil Roman Emperor Nero as a negative foil, and because the protagonist himself, Mauritius, proves to be a rather disappointing character who enforces a sexual reward from his lady after she had broken their 'contract' concerning their love relationship.[26]

We can clearly recognize Hans Ried's dialect language (Bavarian), apart from the fact that the plot is specifically associated with the world of French aristocracy. Nothing suggests either formally or content-wise any association of this text with the Austrian audience, that is the Habsburg court or the Austrian nobility. The anonymous poet had certainly a broader audience in mind, but this highly problematic verse narrative obviously appealed to Emperor Maximilian, maybe because it was predicated on the question of how true knighthood could be maintained under most difficult circumstances. Moreover, the early reference to Troy as the origin of knighthood was certainly of great interest to late medieval readers/listeners, though it remains unclear whether Maximilian had a full understanding of the implied criticism of knighthood itself and its negative fallout.[27]

The fragment of Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Titurel* (ca. 1220), a Franconian from north of Ansbach, presents one of the most enigmatic pieces in courtly medieval literature, with the two protagonists, Sigune and Schionatulander, challenged by a mysterious message embossed by means of gemstones on a dog leash which talks about love as intimately bound with death.[28] When the dog

26. Heimo Reinitzer (Ed.), *Mauritius von Craûn* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2000); the text has been translated into modern German several times, see, for instance, *Morîz von Craûn. Mittelhochdeutsch/Neuhochdeutsch* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1992); reissued with some corrections and an English introduction (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 2000); published online at http://www.gened.arizona.edu/aclassen/morizcomplete.pdf. (2004).

27. Hubertus Fischer, *Ritter, Schiff und Dame: Mauritius von Craûn: Text und Kontext* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag, 2000); Classen, "*Mauritius von Craûn* and Otto von Freising's *The Two Cities*: 12th- and 13th-Century Scepticism about Historical Progress and the Metaphor of the Ship," *German Quarterly* 79, no. 1 (2006): 28-49; Classen, "Courtliness and Transgression at Arthur's Court: With Emphasis on the Middle High German Poet Neidhart and the Anonymous Verse Novella *Mauritius von Craûn*," *Arthuriana* 20, no. 4 (2010): 3-19; Classen, "Disrupted Festivities in Medieval Courtly Literature: Poetic Reflections on the Social and Ethical Decline in *Mauritius von Craûn*, The Stricker's *Daniel von dem Blühenden Tal*, and Heinrich Wittenwiler's *Der Ring*," *Neophilologus* 100, no. 1 (2016): 87-104.

28. Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Titurel* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2003). There are three manuscripts, and the version in the *Ambraser Heldenbuch* (H) is only a copy, so it seems, of the best manuscript in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Munich, cgm 19.

escapes because Sigune had loosened the knot in the leash, she forces her lover to recapture the dog, which will result, however, as we know from Wolfram's *Parzival*, in Schionatulander's death. The text on the leash proves to be a fragment, and Wolfram's own text has survived only as a fragment, perhaps intentionally so.[29] The events take place in an imaginary world of the courts (first part) and in a forest (second part), and there are no elements that suggest a connection to the Austrian Alps.

All the other texts not addressed yet also do not lend any particular weight to the spurious hypothesis that the *Ambraser Heldenbuch* might have served as an early representative of typically 'Austrian' medieval literature. We might even go so far as to question the concept as such because Austria was not even a separate political entity at that time with a sense of cultural identity clearly apart from 'Germany' (or rather: the Holy Roman Empire), whatever that might have meant in the Middle Ages. Late medieval poets such as Hugo von Trimberg were fully aware of the many different dialects, but they did not distinguish, therefore, as historical linguists have confirmed already for a long time, Austrian literature from German literature.[30] In his *Renner* (ca. 1300), the poet informs his audience about the strong role of dialect variants:

> Swâben ir wörter spaltent,
> Die Franken ein teil si valtent,
> Die Beier si zezerrent,
> Die Düringe si ûf sperrent,
> Die Sahsen si bezückent,
> Die Rînliute si verdrückent....[31]
> [The Swabians split their words,
> the Franconians fold them to some extent,
> the Bavarians pull them apart,
> the Thuringians open them up,
> the Saxons pronounce them quickly,

29. Classen, *Utopie und Logos. Vier Studien zu Wolframs von Eschenbach* Titurel (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1990); Alexander Sager, *Minne von maeren: On Wolfram's "Titurel"* (Göttingen: V und R unipress, 2006); As to the fragmentary nature, see, Classen "Der Text der nie enden will. Poetologische Überlegungen zu fragmentarischen Strukturen in mittelalterlichen und modernen Texten," *Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik*, vol. 99: *Anfang und Ende*, ed. Wolfgang Haubrichs (1995): 83-113.

30. See, for instance, Friedrich Kauffmann, *Geschichte der schwäbischen Mundart im Mittelalter und in der Neuzeit: Mit Textproben und einer Geschichte der Schriftsprache in Schwaben* (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2020); Hermann Niebaum, and Jürgen Macha, *Einführung in die Dialektologie des Deutschen* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2006).

31. Hugo von Trimberg, *Der Renner* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1970), 220. cf. also Rudolf Kilian Weigand, *Der 'Renner' des Hugo von Trimberg: Überlieferung, Quellenabhängigkeit und Struktur einer spätmittelalterlichen Lehrdichtung* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2000).

the Rhinelanders press them together. . . .]

In that context, Hugo also turns to the Austrians, the Styrians, the Carinthians, and then to the Bohemians, Hungarians, and Italians, not to speak of the French, English, Norwegians, and Irish, etc., but he dismisses all of those dialects and foreign languages and emphasizes that

Die lantsprâche dâ vor genant
In tiutschen landen sint bekant:
Swer ûz den iht guotes nimt,
Daz wol in sînem getihte zimt,
Mich dünket dern habe niht missetân,
Tuot erz mit künste und niht nâch wân. (22286–91)

[These regional languages mentioned above
are known in the German lands:
he who takes something out of them of value
which seems to fit well into his poem,
does not do badly, so I think,
especially when he does it artfully and not without a plan.]

Hugo does not voice opposition to a flexible language use, as long as it is predicated on a solid and poetically productive employment of the standard language, (Middle High) German. At the same time, he admits that all people tend to lean toward their own dialect as they were born into it (22307). Taking these linguistic statements as evidence, we face a clear documentation that the various regions of modern-day Austria were simply acknowledged as determined by dialects. As much as Hugo himself favored Franconian, his own dialect (22308–21),[32] he did not grant the existence of dialects as a political framework; so, for him there was no 'Austria' as such, especially because "Oesterrîche" (22274; Austria) was not the same as "Stîrlant" (22275; Styria) or "Kernde" (22276; Carinthia).

Within the context of the *Ambraser Heldenbuch*, however, there is one significant exception, Ulrich von Liechtenstein's *Frauenbuch*, from ca. 1257, the only copy of which being extant in this manuscript.[33] Ulrich was squarely

32. David Petry, "'Frankenland hat Ehren viel!': über Heimatgefühl und Frankenlob im 'Renner' Hugos von Trimberg," in *Franken und Forchheim im Mittelalter* (eds.) Andreas Otto Weber and Wolfgang Wüst (Forchheim: Streit, 2004), 53-62.

33. Ulrich von Liechtenstein, *Das Frauenbuch: Mittelhochdeutsch/Neuhochdeutsch* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun. 2003); cf. Wernfried Hofmeister, "Das 'Frauenbuch' Ulrichs von Liechtenstein als eine interdisziplinäre Herausforderung. Ansätze und Forschungsperspektiven," in *Ich – Ulrich von Liechtenstein: Literatur und Politik im Mittelalter: Akten der Akademie Friesach "Stadt und Kultur im Mittelalter" Friesach (Kärnten), 2.–6. September 1996* (eds.) Franz Viktor Spechtler and Barbara Maier, 205-220 (Klagenfurt: Wieser Verlag, 1999). See also the other

situated in the world of Styria, as he also expressed clearly in his *Frauendienst* (ca. 1255), where he combines his literary imagination with his autobiographical concerns. The *Frauenbuch*, a kind of "Minnerede" in which a man and a woman debate the current cultural conditions concerning ethics, the pursuit of love and honor, and the lack thereof.[34] Both speakers are very vocal as to the steady and almost catastrophic decline of all traditional values, but they debate who the culprit might have been. There are even complaints by the woman that men have turned to homosexual practices, which she regards as abhorrent and a clear sign for the loss of all courtly ideals and hence the downfall of the customs of courtly love (637–66).

Ulrich's *Frauenbuch* is placed as the twenty-first work in the *Ambraser Heldenbuch*, so it might not have enjoyed prime importance. Nevertheless, we regard it today as one of Ulrich's most relevant verse narratives which allows us to probe more deeply the discourse on sexuality and love in the late Middle Ages. But the poet does not include any references to the historical or political background for his verse narrative and sets in with his poetic account without any particular explanations, except that a lady and a knight are seated next to each other and embark on this conversation. Their language is determined by the standards of courtly Middle High German, free from local, dialect elements. There are good reasons to assume that the *Frauenbuch* made it into the *Ambraser Heldenbuch* because of personal connections between the poet, a high-ranking Styrian nobleman, and the influential courtier Paul von Liechtenstein (not a blood relative!) in charge of the compilation project on behalf of Maximilian I. Christopher Young points out that Paul originated from a Tyrolean family, but the identity of the patronyms obviously encourage him to include Ulrich's work from ca. 250 years earlier, next to the short verse narratives by the latter's son-in-law, Herrand von Wildonie (d. ca. 1278): "Die treue Gattin" (no. 17), "Der betrogene Gatte" (no. 18), "Der nackte Kaiser" (no. 19), and "Die Katze" (no. 20).[35]

Despite many efforts by various scholars to identify a very specific programmatic structure of the *Ambraser Heldenbuch*, the criteria we could use are

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contributions to this volume. See also the studies in Sandra Linden, and Christopher Young (Ed.), *Ulrich von Liechtenstein: Leben – Zeit – Werk – Forschung* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010).

34. Jacob Klingner, and Ludger Lieb (Ed.), *Handbuch Minnereden* (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2017), vol. 1, 646-650, B402a.

35. Young, ed. and trans. (see note 33), 37-39. See also Volker Zapf, "Herrand von Wildonie," in *Deutsches Literatur-Lexikon: Das Mittelalter*, vol. 5: *Epik (Vers – Strophe – Prosa) und Kleinformen* (ed.) Wolfgang Achnitz, 679-684 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter 2013); for the critical edition, see Hanns Fischer (Ed.), *Herrand von Wildonie* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1969). For an English translation of his texts, see J. W. Thomas, *The Tales and Songs of Herrand von Wildonie*. Translated into English Verse with an Introduction. Studies in the Germanic Languages and Literatures, 4 (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1972).

only rather vague and superficial, and do not necessarily address any kind of national, not even dynastic concerns, despite the significant role of the heroic epics. As Heimo Reinitzer underscores,

> Die wenig differenzierende Einteilung vermischt formale und inhaltliche Kriterien, konstruiert ganz verschieden umfangreiche Teile und muß mit einem Appendix operieren, der in sich uneinheitlich, vom Umfang her unbedeutend und den anderen Teilen unvergleichbar ist.[36]
>
> [The little differentiating division mixes formal and content criteria, creates parts of very diverse volume and has to operate with an appendix which is inconsistent, irrelevant regarding the volume, and not comparable to the other parts.]

The primary concern in the compilation appears to be, following Reinitzer, the emperor's personal tastes and interests. However, the collection proves to be highly uneven, and the entire work appears to be more like a miscellany manuscript without a specific order, apart from major thematic groups within. It would be impossible, hence, to determine any particular Austrian affiliations or preferences.

To repeat our previous observation and to underscore their relevance for the overall assessment, the inclusion of Herrand von Wildonie's verse narratives and Ulrich von Liechtenstein's *minnerede*, his *Frauenbuch*, indicates only the collector's intrigue with courtly literature and its attempts to establish social, ethical, moral, and literary standards. Those were exactly the same values and ideals as at virtually all other aristocratic courts in the late Middle Ages. Reinitzer rightly emphasizes that the theme of courtly love appears to matter most, whether in positive or in negative terms, whether we think of the *Nibelungenlied* – here titled "Das Puech von Chrimhildin von Burgunden" – Hartmann von Aue's *Iwein*, or Ulrich von Liechtenstein's *Frauenbuch*.[37] For Reinitzer, hence, the *Ambraser Heldenbuch* needs to be viewed through the lens of the gender discourse as a fundamental value for the life at court: "Das 'Ambraser Heldenbuch' ist ein Buch, in dem unterschiedliche Heldengeschichte und Heldentum als abhängig von und verbunden mit weiblicher Tugend (und Untugend) gesehen wird" (The *Ambraser Heldenbuch* is a book in which diverse histories of heroes and of heroism are conceived of as dependent on and connected with feminine virtues (and lack thereof).[38]

We have thus moved far away from various attempts to identify this massive and precious manuscript as a mirror of Austrian literature. This cannot mean, however, as Fritz Peter Knapp has repeatedly insisted, that we are here on the trail of a "soziopolitische[n] Sonderweg des deutschsprachigen Südostens im 13.

36. Reinitzer, *Mauritius von Craûn*, 2000, IX.
37. Ibid, see note 36, X-XI.
38. Ibid, see note 36, XII.

Jahrhundert" (socio-politically unique trail of the German-language southeast in the 13th century), implying the unique situation of Austrian literature after all.[39] It seems highly questionable to jump from the reference to local traditions in some of the narratives contained in this manuscript to the assumption that hence there was a local, political interest in these poems as representatives of that region. Austrian scholars like to think that this was a high likelihood, but the evidence does not lend itself for this argument.

Conclusion

Scholarship has consistently identified the *Ambraser Heldenbuch* as a most significant treasure trove of medieval German literature. It was commissioned by Emperor Maximilian I, who was probably closely involved in its creation, but despite all efforts by Austrian nationalists to claim this major work as evidence of a specifically medieval Austrian identity and political entity, neither the circumstances nor the content, the language, the selection of texts, nor the choice of genres justifies this approach. This manuscript preserved many major texts from Middle High German literature, but 'German' here simply means a standard language commonly used at the various courts, and we cannot draw from this *Heldenbuch* as a source of incipient cultural identity as 'Austrian.'

As Hans-Joachim Solms and Jörn Weinert now emphasize, philology as an academic subject matter fundamentally aims at the "'Verstehen' einer umfassend bestimmten Kultur, wobei der Schwerpunkt in der Analyse von Texten als den Objektivationen von Sprache und Literatur besteht" ('comprehension' of a globally conceived culture, the focus of which consists of the analysis of texts as the reification of language and literature).[40] They include also philosophy, law, religion, and art as associated with literature and postulate that all of these constitute a collective of an academic discipline concerned with culture and identity, that is, with the life of people. Their key concept aims at the "gewachsene[] Charakteristika einzelner Kulturkreise" (6; historically grown characteristics of individual circles of culture), which would substitute for the highly ideologized term "Volk" (people). This appears as a useful and pragmatic strategy also vis-à-vis the *Ambraser Heldenbuch*, which should not be 'colonized' for a postmodern notion of Austria as a political entity, especially because such a "Kulturkreis" would be

39. Knapp, "Österreichische Literatur um 1250 und Ulrichs Rezeption der Blütezeit," in *Ulrich von Liechtenstein* (eds.) Linden and Young (see note 33), 99-131; here 100. Later, Knapp formulates his observation that the majority of texts included in the *Ambraser Heldenbuch* were "heimische[ ] Produkte[ ]" (131; homemade products), a claim, however, which cannot really be confirmed when we study the wide range of individual poems.

40. Hans-Joachim Solms, and Jörn Weinert, "Einleitung," in *Deutsche Philologie? Nationalphilologien heute*, 1-8, 5.

embedded in a "Netz aller 'Kulturkreise'" (6; network of all cultural circles). It is understandable that the modern generation of Austrian literary scholars argues strongly in favor of a unique modern Austrian literature,[41] but this should not blind us to the specific historical conditions which facilitated its growth over the centuries.

The *Ambraser Heldenbuch* was certainly a major literary and artistic accomplishment by Hans Ried and his supporters/commissioners. It certainly sheds significant light on the cultural sophistication of the Innsbruck court, but it does not tell us much about late medieval 'Austrian' literature or identity, apart from the fact that Emperor Maximilian continued to pursue a very traditional perspective regarding Middle High German literature, which by itself, however, mirrors, after all, a rather modern approach to his own self, *memoria*.

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41. See, for instance, Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler, Johann Sonnleitner, and Klaus Zeyringer (Ed.), Donald G. Daviau, and Herbert Arit (Ed.), *Geschichte der österreichischen Literatur* (St. Ingbert: Röhrig Universitätsverlag, 1996); Rosa Marta Gómez Pato, and Jaime Feijóo (Ed.) *Literatur aus Österreich – zum Problem der Norm und der Devianz. Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler in memoriam* (Frankfurt a. M., Berlin, et al.: Peter Lang, 2011); Katya Krylova (Ed.), *New Perspectives on Contemporary Austrian Literature and Culture* (Oxford, Bern, et al.: Peter Lang, 2018). The literature on this topic is legion, as to be expected.

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Zoomorphic *Askos* from Beatas Street Necropolis Preserved in the Museum of Malaga in Spain

By Juan Ramón García Carretero[*] & Juan Antonio Martín Ruiz[±]

A terracotta figure which can be dated to the 1st century BC coming from one of the burial areas documented in the city of Malaga (Spain) located in Beatas Street is described. The figure is currently being displayed in the Museum of Malaga and has remained unpublished up until now. It corresponds to a zoomorphic askos *in the shape of a lion whose purpose would be to protect the tomb's owner for the afterlife. The representation of this animal in this pottery shape could be linked with Phoenician female goddesses, particularly Tanit, and it is not very common in the ancient Phoenician colonies around the Mediterranean, being the only finding in* Malaca*, which certainly sparks interest.*

Introduction

The terracotta that we are now analysing comes from some archaeological works conducted by Jose Mayorga Mayorga in 2002 on Beatas Street in Malaga (Spain) (Figure 1, number 6) where a new burial area was documented to increase the set of spots that were used for funerary purposes in this ancient colony founded by Phoenician navigators. Unfortunately, the results obtained during those works have not yet been published so most details about the related context are still unknown. However, we have some partial information on the grave objects which enables us to date the tomb. In addition, this piece offers a very interesting iconography by showing the figure of a lion, a very rare animal within the Western Mediterranean colonial area. Until now it turns out to be the only finding in the city of Malaga and consequently its publication offers unquestionable interest.

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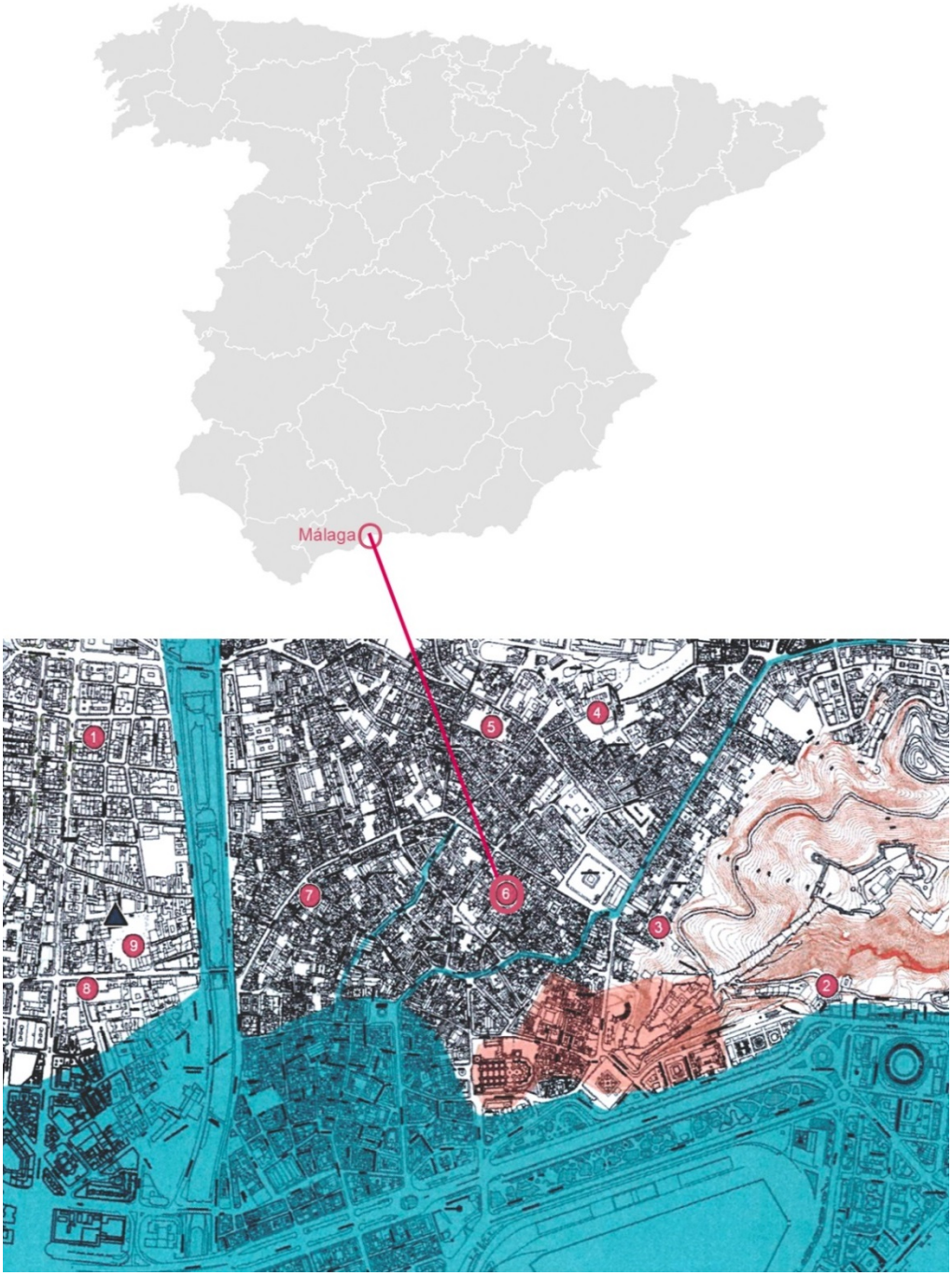

Figure 1. *Situation of Malaga within Spain and Location of Burial Areas: 1, Zambrana; 2, Campos Eliseos; 3, Mundo Nuevo; 4, El Ejido; 5, The Warrior's Tomb; 6, Beatas-Ramon Franquelo; 7, Andres Perez; 8, Marmoles; 9, Tiro-Zamorano; Ancient Malaca Site (red-shaded area); Ancient Coastline and Rivers (blue-shaded area); San Pablo Habitat (black triangle)*
Source: López Chamizo.

Along the next sections, the scarce available information about this burial area will be explained before going on to describe the terracotta from Malaga, to later review the findings of this type of container in the Phoenician colonial sphere, and to end these pages the figure of the lion within the religious and symbolic sphere of this ancient society will be analysed.

As we have commented above, this *askos* remains unpublished since only a minimal reference to its discovery was made in some publications. It is currently kept in the Museum of Malaga where it can be contemplated by visitors in one of the rooms devoted to exhibit the materials from Roman times. We acknowledge the Museum Director Ms. María Morente as well as the rest of the Museum's staff for the assistance they have provided for its study and publication.

The Necropolis

Unfortunately, the necropolis where this piece comes from is very poorly known since it has not been published in depth and therefore, we only have brief details about what was discovered. According to what has been scarcely published, the grave was located on a small hill not far from the old coastline (Figure 1). Four graves altogether were excavated in this hill although the extension of the funerary area is still not known due to the limitations of urban archaeology. The burials all consisted of very narrow pits that had been excavated in the bedrock of the hill. The remains of the cremated individuals, deposited and possibly burnt in an *ustrinum* located near the graves, were accompanied by the elements that made up the grave goods. The whole of the excavated set offers a date ranging from the 1st century BC to the 1st century AD, always considering that future discoveries could extend this time scope.

Regarding the recovered grave goods within the burial area, only two Campanian pottery vessels consisting of a *pyx* and a plate (Figure 2) together with a couple of small coins -sextants from the 5a series of period III minted in Malaca during the 1st century BC- have been revealed[1]. Fortunately, we have some data related to this particular grave designated with number 1 where the terracotta appeared. Consequently, we can indicate that the grave goods consisted of a total of 13 glass paste necklace beads of the so-called "eye" type, two figa-type bone amulets as well as a clay spindle. There was also an unclassified coin, showing a central perforation to be set in a necklace, which had been partially fused to a silver and amber pendant. In addition to them, a shard from a grey clay small jar, a complete bulb Roman unguentarium corresponding to Oberaden 28 shape, a

1. B. Mora Serrano, "La moneda en la ciudad de Malaca (siglos III a. C.-VI d. C.)," in *Moneda i vida urbana. V Curs d'Història monetária d'Hispania*, (MNAC, Barcelona, 2001), 127; P. Corrales Aguilar, and B. Mora Serrano, *Historia de la provincia de Málaga. De la Roma republicana a la Antigüedad Tardía* (Málaga: Cedma, 2005), 66.

shard from the mouth of another unguentarium and one more shard from a Mañá C amphora were unearthed[2]. All this together with the eight shards of the zoomorphic vase described here enable us to date this burial, and therefore the terracotta, to the 1st century BC.

Figure 2. *Campanian Pottery from Beatas Street*
Source: Corrales Aguilar, Mora Serrano, 2005.

The Lion-headed Zoomorphic Vessel

The piece is on show in the Malaga Museum with the display case number A-714. It has not been completely preserved since only eight shards were found. They have been restored into only two parts that, although not connected, enable us to get a fairly approximate idea of its original appearance. They belong to a

2. J. Mayorga Mayorga, M. M. Escalante Aguilar, and M. I. Cisneros García, "Evolución urbana de la Málaga romana. Desde sus inicios hasta el siglo III d. C.," *Mainake* XXVII (2005): 150-151.

clay small vessel of the *askos* type, possibly mould-made, in the shape of a resting lion with its head turned towards the front. It was manufactured with reddish-orange clay including very tiny particles, and later covered with brown slip (Figure 3). The first shard corresponds to the upper front part of the animal measuring 109 mm high, 77 mm long and 53 mm wide, broken on its chest and the beginning of the back. From the rounded head a wavy mane was incised covering the neck and chest. Between the whiskers we find the mouth where a circular perforation designed to pour the liquid was made.

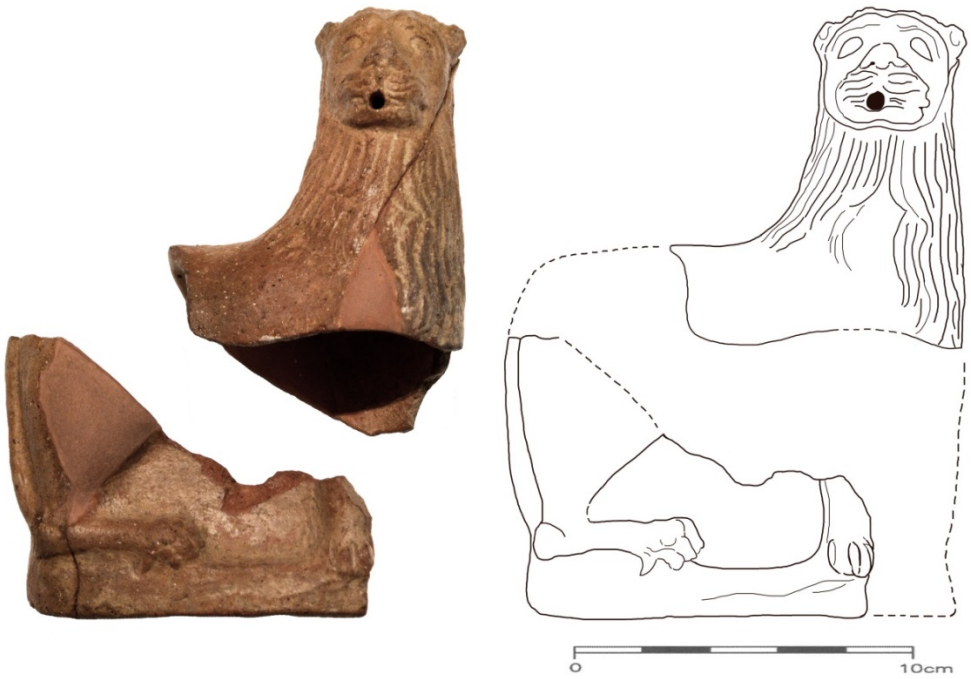

Figure 3. *Zoomorphic Askos from Beatas Street*
Source: Museum of Malaga.

We can also see the snout and the downturned almond-shaped eyes, as well as small protruding ears. On the back of the lion the vertical handle is attached and a small hole is opened at its top to fill the interior (Figure 4). The other preserved shards correspond to the hind quarters that measure 65 mm high, 88 mm long and 53 mm wide, particularly corresponding to the right side, where the leg and its claw have been carefully marked, together with part of the right front leg and claws, in addition to the tail attached to the rear body. The figure rests on a rectangular base with rounded corners to provide a better support.

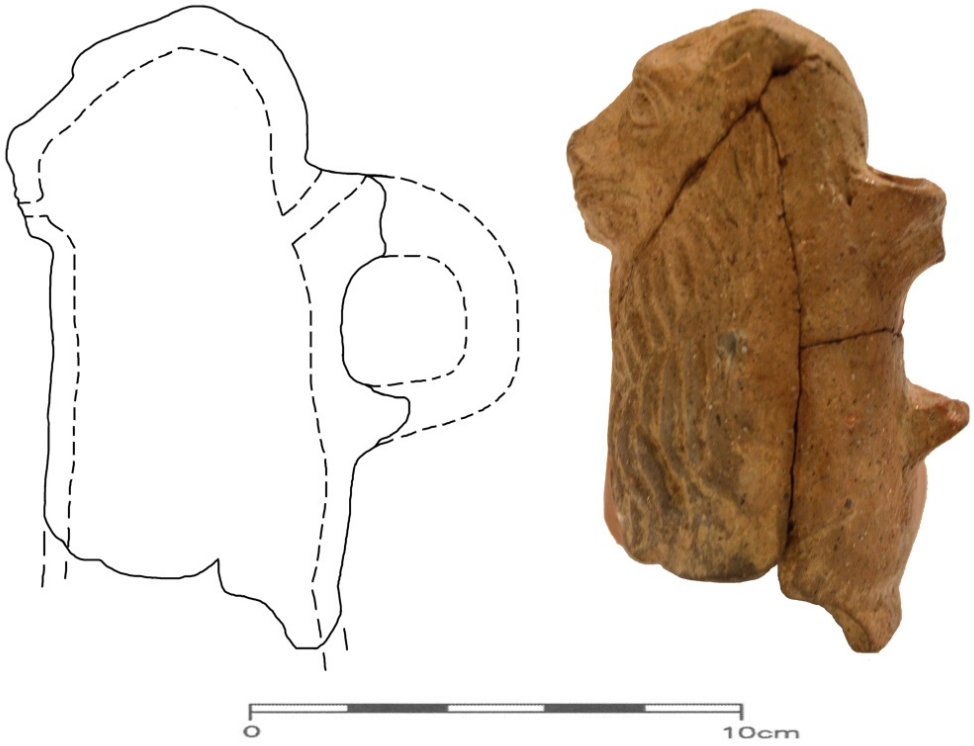

Figure 4. *Profile of the Upper Part with Openings, One on Top of the Handle for Filling and One for Pouring from the Lion's Mouth*
Source: Museum of Malaga.

Its modelling differs from the classic features shown by earlier feline specimens with Neo-Hittite reminiscences, characterized by its rigidity and frontal view showing a straight head with threatening open jaws and hanging-out tongue[3]. In this case we can appreciate that the way of shaping the animal's head is closer to a basalt sculpture from Byblos dated between the 6th-5th centuries BC[4], represented from the same perspective although in the oriental case the two hind legs are located on the same side (Figure 5). Up to now within the Phoenician area in the south of the Iberian Peninsula, the appearance of two zoomorphic pots where lions were represented on their pouring spouts is the only attested evidence. It refers to two painted *guttus* (Figure 6) buried in the Cadiz necropolis which have been attributed to a date around the 4th-3rd centuries BC[5].

3. J. M. Blázquez Martínez, "El arte neohitita y los orígenes de la escultura animalística ibérica y turdetana," *Goya* CXX (1974): 345-348.

4. E. Gubel, "Sculpture," in *Dictionnaire de la civilisation Phénicienne et Punique* (Paris: Brepols, 1992), 401.

5. M. D. López de la Orden, L. C. Zambrano Valdivia, and E. García Alfonso, "Guttus del Museo de Cádiz procedente de la necrópolis fenicio-púnica," *Albahri. Entre Oriente y Occidente. Revista independiente de estudios históricos* 1 (2015): 45-50.

Figure 5. *Lion Sculpture from Byblos*
Source: Gubel, 1992.

These animal-shaped receptacles appeared in the Near East back in the Bronze Age or even earlier, subsequently showing a wide distribution in Phoenician areas such as Crete, Cyprus or the Aegean where black-glazed or red-figured Attic *askoi* have also appeared. They display a certain formal variety because, in addition to representing different species of animals, they can stand on the flat bottom of the vessel, on its four legs or on a raised base. Focusing on the Phoenician area analysed now, we must point out that they are well known in the North African sites with outstanding examples of *askoi* discovered in Carthage, Thapsus, Bulla Regia, Hadrumentum, Cherchell, Tipasa, Gouraya, Rachgoun and Siga. Such vessels are often painted with geometric motifs offering some early dates from the second half of the 8th century BC and depicting a variety of animals such as dolphins, bears, rams, birds, horses, hedgehogs and dogs, but never lions up until now[6].

6. P. Bartoloni, "Viaggiando nel tempo 2: sulle trace degli askoi di Pierre Cintas," *Cartagine. Studi e Ricerche* 3 (2018): 3-10; S. Giardino, "Vases zoomorphes phéniciens et puniques de l'Afrique du Nord: comparaisons, fonctionnalité et symbolisme," in *Cartagine. Il Mediterraneo centro-occidentale e la Sardegna. Societá, economía e cultura materiales fra fenici e autoctoni* (Sassari: SAIC, 2020), 48-53.

Figure 6. *Guttus from Cadiz*
Source: López de la Orden, Zambrano Valdivia, García Alfonso, 2015.

They have also been found in the Phoenician sites on the island of Sardinia[7] where Tharros, Tuvixeddu and Sulci can be included in the list of findings. With an initial date of the 6th century BC, figures of horses, frogs, ducks and pigeons sometimes showing pictorial decoration but, as just commented for the North African area, lion images are not represented.

Although the oldest specimens reach the Iberian Peninsula at a very early date -in Huelva their chronology reaches the last decades of the 9th century BC[8]- it will be well into the second half of the millennium when their number increases, although it must be admitted that they are not very abundant in the pottery collection of these colonial sites. Most findings of this type of zoomorphic vessels appear in funerary contexts such as those discovered on the island of Ibiza, within the necropolises of Puig des Molins, Can Berri den Sergent and Ca na Jondala, buried in the second half of the 5th century BC, with the absolutely unusual feature that one of them shows the name of its owner painted on its surface[9]. Notwithstanding, those from the Cadiz necropolis are found in later tombs, since their presence in dates earlier than the 3rd century BC is very scarce, although the two *guttus* with lion-shaped spouts mentioned above appear a

7. M. Medde "Askoi zoomorfi dalla Sardegna," *Rivista di Studi Punici* 1 (2000): 160-168.

8. F. González de Canales, L. Serrano Pichardo, and J. Llompart Gómez, *El emporio fenicio precolonial de Huelva (ca. 900-700 a. C.)* (Huelva: Biblioteca Nueva, 2004), 53-54.

9. J. M. Fernández Gómez, and M. J. Fuentes Estañol, "Una sepultura conteniendo un askos con inscripción púnica," *Aula Orientalis* 1 (1983): 173-190; J. H. Fernández, M. J. López Grande, A. Mezquida, F. Velázquez, B. Costa, "Una sepultura con askois zoomorfos y una punta de lanza de la necrópolis de Ca na Jondala (Sant Josep de Sa Talaia, Ibiza)," in *Entre los mundos. Homenaje a Pedro Barceló* (Paris: PUF, 2017), 313-316.

century earlier. The same dates apply to the Cadiz pottery kilns, showing that zoomorphic containers were surely manufactured locally[10].

As for the animals represented, they include birds -pigeons and hens or roosters[11]-, although in Ibiza the variety of species is greater as we find pigeons, rams, hedgehogs, deer and horses[12]. Also in Rusaddir, the ancient Melilla, three vessels were found, one of them totally unknown to us, the other two with the images of a dog and a dolphin that still had traces of red paint on its surface[13]. However, both the Cadiz and the Ibizan specimens are supported on small bases or on the legs of the animal thus showing a different model from the Malaga piece which is supported on a rectangular base resembling more to the *askoi* from Melilla, also with the same filling hole over the handle in the back of the dog, and from Cerro del Mar, representing a bear whose date or context is not known[14] (Figure 7).

10. D. Bernal, J. J. Díaz, J. A. Expósito, A. M. Sáez, L. Lorenzo, and A. Sáez, *Arqueología y urbanismo. Avance de los hallazgos de época púnica romana en las obras de la carretera de Camposoto (San Fernando, Cádiz*) (Cádiz: Universidad de Cádiz, 2003), 129, 186 and 192.

11. A. Muñoz Vicente, "En torno a seis *askoi* zoomorfos de la necrópolis púnica de Cádiz," *Boletín del Museo de Cádiz*, V (1992): 8-9; A. M. Sáez Romero, "Uso y producción de askoi en Gadir. Una posible evidencia del culto a Tanit," *L'Africa Romana* XVI (2006): 1972-1973.

12. J. H. Fernández, *Excavaciones en la necrópolis de Puig des Molins (Eivissa). Las campañas de D. Carlos Román Ferrer: 1921-1929* (Eivissa: Museu Arqueólogic d'Eivissa i Formentera, 1992), 73-76.

13. P. Fernández Uriel, and J. M. Saéz Cazorla, "Un guttus inédito procedente de Rusaddir," *Cartagine. Studi e Ricerche* 5 (2020): 8-10; P. Fernández Uriel, R. Gutiérrez González, and J. M. Sáez Cazorla, "Vaso (guttus) en forma de delfín procedente de Melilla en el MAN," in *El norte de África en época romana. Tributum in memorian Enrique Gozalbes Cravioto* (Salamanca: Signifer Libros, 2020), 272-275.

14. J. A. Martín Ruiz, *Catálogo documental de los fenicios en Andalucía* (Sevilla: Junta de Andalucía, 1995), 77.

Figure 7. *Zoomorphic Askoi from Cerro del Mar and Rusaddir*
Source: Martín Ruiz, 1995; Fernández Uriel & Saéz Cazorla, 2020.

Regarding the functionality that these pieces had, we must admit that the topic is still subject to speculation due to the lack of analysis made to their content. As a general rule, it has been accepted that it must have been some liquid or ointment that would slowly drop out of the pot. Even though *askoi* have been contemplated as possible baby bottles[15], the truth is that in Ibiza they have not

15. A. Rodero Riaza, *Colección de cerámica púnica de Ibiza en el Museo Arqueológico Nacional* (Madrid: Museo Arqueológico Nacional, 1990), 20.

appeared associated with any children's tombs[16]. This belief has also been questioned, especially if we bear in mind that the position of the spout is not the most appropriate for this purpose, and also that some of them are painted which could be harmful to the babies' health[17]. However, it has been argued that these vessels did not only have a single function, but rather that their use could vary from one society to another and also over time. Consequently, it has been discussed that they could have been used not only as symbols of divinity to spread liquids in rituals carried out during burial, but also with other functions that are unknown to us[18].

The Lion in the Phoenician Funerary and Religious Sphere

Since the Bronze Age, the lion was related to the Eastern ideological sphere by representing strength and fierceness, being one of the animals preferred by kings and aristocrats for hunting, as would also be in Pharaonic Egypt. For this reason, it does not seem strange that it was finally assimilated to very diverse divinities, generally feminine. As for the Phoenician sphere, it was represented in numerous elements such as sculptures, terracotta, bronze and ivory objects, etc.

Even though it has been pointed out that these zoomorphic images should not always be linked with religious items, since both the manufacturer and the buyer could have ignored this circumstance and have made or acquired them only for artistic or decorative purposes[19], it is generally accepted that among Phoenicians this animal was related to a female divinity imitating what is attested in different Mesopotamian societies. However, there is not complete agreement about who this goddess could be. Consequently, while some authors opt for Astarte[20], many others point out Tanit[21].

Its appearance in graves is explained by being considered an effective protective element, understanding it as a guardian of the tomb. This fact has well been established at least since the end of the II millennium BC as reflected by the

16. Fernández, op. cit. in note 8: 74.

17. Medde, op. cit. in note 9: 168-169.

18. S. Alfaye, "Usos y contextos de los vasos plásticos zoomorfos en la Céltica hispana: verter, sacrificar, alimentar, silbar," *Saldvie* 7 (2007): 71-91.

19. Giardino, op. cit. in note 8: 60.

20. M. Belén, and M. C. Marín Ceballos, "Diosas y leones en el período Orientalizante de la Península Ibérica," *Spal. Revista de Prehistoria y Arqueología* 11 (2002): 172-186.

21. Sáez Romero, op. cit. note 6, 1983-1984; R. Marlasca, "Tanit de las estrellas," in *El mundo púnico. Religión, antropología y cultura material* (Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 2001-2002), 125-127; Fernández, López Grande, Mezquida, Velázquez, Costa, op. cit. in note 7: 327; M. D. Simón Vallejo, J. J. Rubia de Gracia, M. Belén Deamos, and E. Ferrer Albelda, "Un santuario tardopúnico en Mijas (Málaga)," in *IX International Congress of Phoenician and Punic Studies* (Mérida: Junta de Extremadura, 2020), 245-246.

lions sculpted on the famous sarcophagus of King Ahiram I of Byblos, or those that were located in the corners of the funerary monuments of Puente de Noy (Almuñecar, Granada) (Figure 8) and Pozo Moro (Chinchilla, Albacete) dating from the 7th and 6th centuries, respectively[22]. Considering its religious character, its presence is also confirmed in Western Phoenician cult centres such as the Mijas sanctuary where terracottas with this shape have been found, possibly corresponding to offerings made by the faithful[23], or the Ibizan Cap des Llibrell that revealed the remains of a stone altar decorated with two lion heads[24], both dated between the 2nd-1st centuries BC.

The elaboration of terracottas has been attested in Malaga where only the claw-shaped foot of one piece has been unearthed[25], although it is not known what type of object it belonged to. It has been stated that it corresponds to a clay tripod similar to another from Toscanos settlement that has been dated back to the 7th century BC[26]. However, the lack of clay analysis prevents us from determining if this *askos* could have been manufactured in Malaga.

22. M. Almagro-Gorbea,and M. Torres Ortiz, *La escultura fenicia en Hispania* (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 2010), 172-178.

23. Simón Vallejo, Rubia de Gracia, Belén Deamos, Ferrer Albelda, op. cit. en nota 22: 248.

24. J. Ramón, "Investigaciones arqueológicas en el santuario púnico del Cap des Llibrell," in *Atti del V Congresso Internazionale di Studi Fenici e Punici* (Universitá degli Studi di Palermo, Palermo, 2005), 1395-1397.

25. A. Arancibia Román, C. Chacón Mohedano, and B. Mora Serrano, "Nuevos datos sobre la producción anfórica tardopúnica en Malaca: el sector alfarero de la margen derecha del río Guadalmedina (Avda. Juan XXIII)," in *La etapa neopúnica en Hispania y el Mediterráneo occidental: identidades compartidas* (Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 2012), 411.

26. H. Schubart, and G. Maass-Lindemann, "Toscanos. El asentamiento fenicio occidental en la desembocadura del río de Vélez. Excavaciones de 1971," *Noticiario Arqueológico Hispánico* 18 (1984): 149.

Figure 8. *Lion from Puente de Noy (Almuñecar, Granada)*
Source: Martín Ruiz, 1995.

Conclusions

The piece that is analysed in these pages corresponds to a zoomorphic *askos* in the shape of a lying lion with its head turned towards the front, being the first example of this type of vessel that has been found in Malaga. It shows an animal species that has only been attested in the Phoenician westernmost sites, as it has not appeared either in the eastern settlements of the central Mediterranean or in North Africa. Fortunately, despite the scarcity of data on these burials, we know the elements that make up the grave goods that enable us to certainly date it to the 1st century BC. There are not many similar vessels portraying lions within Phoenician contexts either in the shape of *askoi* or *guttus*. This animal is possibly related to the goddess Tanit and the only evidence has been found in Cadiz.

Thus, it is well documented that the person cremated in this grave, whose sex and age is unfortunately not known due to the lack of paleoanthropological analysis, was buried with a wide range of elements intended to guarantee their protection in the afterlife. Such a fact occurs not only, as we have seen, with the very image of a lion that this pottery vessel depicts, but also with the two figa-type amulets and the glass paste necklace beads, intended in both cases to try to avoid evil eye[27]. Regarding its content, the findings in Ibiza lead us to question its possible use as a baby bottle, although it was likely to contain perfumed substances, especially considering that the bore of the spout is extremely small, which would prevent the liquid from coming out fluently.

These receptacles usually appear in funerary contexts in the westernmost Phoenician area such as in Cadiz, Melilla or Ibiza, and perhaps also in Cerro del Mar because it had been preserved in one piece, in the same way as the *askos* that we are now presenting was found in one of Malaga's burial sites.

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27. A. M. Vázquez Hoys, "El ojo de la envidia: la magia de las cuentas y colgantes fenicio-púnicos de vidrio," in *Magia y superstición en el mundo fenicio-púnico* (Museu Arqueólogic d'Eivissa i Formentera, Eivissa, 2007), 143-167; E. Verdú Parra, "Burlarse de la muerte. Un nuevo amuleto de la necrópolis de l'Albufereta," *MARQ. Arqueología y Museos* 6 (2015): 81-85.

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